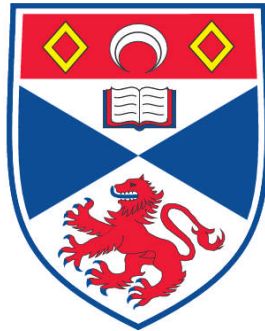


**READING THE SCOTTISH ENLIGHTENMENT : LIBRARIES,
READERS AND INTELLECTUAL CULTURE IN PROVINCIAL
SCOTLAND C.1750-C.1820**

Mark R. M. Towsey

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St. Andrews**



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READING THE SCOTTISH ENLIGHTENMENT

Libraries, Readers and Intellectual Culture

in Provincial Scotland c.1750-c.1820

Submitted by Mark R. M. Towsey for the degree of PhD in the University of

St Andrews, 2nd July 2007

ABSTRACT

The thesis explores the reception of the works of the Scottish Enlightenment in provincial Scotland, broadly defined, aiming to gauge their diffusion in the libraries of private book collectors and ‘public’ book-lending institutions, and to suggest the meanings and uses that contemporary Scottish readers assigned to major texts like Hume’s *History of England* and Smith’s *The Wealth of Nations*. I thereby acknowledge the relevance of more traditional quantitative approaches to the history of reading (including statistical analysis of the holdings of contemporary book collections), but prioritise the study of sources that also allow us to access the ‘hows’ and ‘whys’ of individual reading practices and experiences. Indeed, the central thrust of my work has been the discovery and interrogation of large numbers of commonplace books, marginalia, diaries, correspondence and other documentary records which can be used to illuminate the reading experience itself in an explicit attempt to develop an approach to Scottish reading practices that can contribute in comparative terms to the burgeoning field of the history of reading. More particularly, such sources allow me to assess the impact that specific texts had on the lives, thought-processes and values of a wide range of contemporary readers, and to conclude that by reading these texts in their own endlessly idiosyncratic ways, consumers of literature in Scotland assimilated many of the prevalent attitudes and priorities of the literati in the major cities. Since many of the most important and pervasive manifestations of Enlightenment in Scotland were not particularly Scottish, however, I also cast doubt on the distinctive Scottishness of the prevailing ‘cultural’ definition of the Scottish Enlightenment, arguing that such behaviour might more appropriately be considered alongside cultural developments in Georgian England.

DECLARATIONS

I, Mark R. M. Towsey, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 100,000 words in length, has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

Date Signature

I was admitted as a research student in January, 2003 and as a candidate for the degree of PhD in October, 2003; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St Andrews between 2003 and 2007.

Date Signature

I hereby certify that the candidate has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution and Regulations appropriate for the degree of PhD in the University of St Andrews and that the candidate is qualified to submit this thesis in application for that degree.

Date Signature of Supervisor

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The research upon which this thesis is based has taken in a very wide range of primary sources, located in over 80 libraries and archival repositories in Britain and North America. These include the National Library of Scotland; National Archives of Scotland; National Trust for Scotland at Drum Castle, Haddo House, Leith Hall, Brodie Castle, and Pollock House; the British Library; Cambridge University Library; Bodleian Library, University of Oxford; Beinecke Rare Books Library, Yale University; Library of Congress, Washington DC; Folger Shakespeare Institute Library, Washington DC; National Library of Medicine, Bethesda MD; Grolier Club Library, New York; New York Public Library; University Libraries of Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, St Andrews, Stirling and Strathclyde; Local Library Collections and Archives in Aberdeen, Ayr, Blackburn, Cupar, Dumbarton, Dumfries, Dunbar, Dundee, Dunfermline, Forfar, Glasgow, Greenock, Hawick, Inverness, Kilmarnock, Kirkcaldy, Kirkcudbright, Leadhills, Lerwick, Loanhead, Montrose, Oldmeldrum, Paisley, Perth, Selkirk, Wanlockhead and Wick. My thanks to all the librarians and archivists who assisted my research at these locations and to the many more whose institutions I never visited but who answered my early enquiries with alacrity and diligence. I have also been granted permission to view papers in over 20 separate private archival collections listed in the National Register of Archives. Besides the fine work done by the Secretary of the Register in facilitating such access, I owe a special debt of gratitude to the owners of these papers, and to the owners of numerous private collections who welcomed me into their homes to study their libraries.

The thesis owes a great deal to the intellectual guidance of my supervisor, Dr David Allan, whose ideas, insight and erudition have posed a constant challenge and inspiration since I took his undergraduate course on 'Scottish Historians and the Past, 1707-1832' in my Junior Honours year at the University of St Andrews. I must also thank Michael Bentley, Sandra Cumming, Roger Emerson, Morag Fyfe, Rab Houston, Warren McDougall, Roger Mason, Guy Rowlands, Henry Sullivan, Jack Towsey and Bill Zachs for their various kindnesses, personal or academic. Special thanks go to my parents, whose support has been unflinching throughout my interminable academic career to date, and to Sarah, my taxi driver, motivator and favourite distraction when I needed her most. Finally, I must recognise the support of the Arts and Humanities Research Council, without which this thesis would not have been written.

The thesis is dedicated to the memory of my late teachers, Philip Balkwill and Mark Loughlin.

ABBREVIATIONS

Aitken	W. R. Aitken, <i>A History of the Public Library Movement in Scotland to 1955</i> (Glasgow, 1971)
ALIS	Aberdeenshire Library and Information Service
Alston	<i>Library History Database</i> , www.r-alston.co.uk
Berry	C. J. Berry, <i>Social Theory of the Scottish Enlightenment</i> (Edinburgh, 1997)
BJ18CS	<i>British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies</i>
BL	British Library
Brewer, <i>Pleasures</i>	J. Brewer, <i>The Pleasures of the Imagination</i> (London, 1997)
CC	A. Broadie (ed.), <i>The Cambridge Companion to the Scottish Enlightenment</i> (Cambridge, 2003)
CHLB2	G. Mandelbrote and K. A. Manley (eds.), <i>The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland, Volume II 1640-1850</i> (Cambridge, 2006)
CU	R. B. Sher, <i>Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment: the Moderate Literati of Edinburgh</i> (Edinburgh, 1985)
Crawford, 'Origins'	J. C. Crawford, 'The Origins and development of societal library activity in Scotland' (unpublished MA thesis, University of Strathclyde, 1981)
Darnton, 'First Steps'	R. Darnton, 'First Steps Toward a History of Reading', <i>Australian Journal of French Studies</i> , 23 (Monash, 1986)
<i>Directions</i>	<i>Directions for a Proper Choice of Authors to form a Library...</i> (London, 1766)
Donoghue, <i>FM</i>	Frank Donoghue, <i>The Fame Machine: Book Reviewing and Eighteenth-Century Literary Careers</i> (Stanford, 1996)
Dwyer, <i>VD</i>	J. Dwyer, <i>Virtuous Discourse: Sensibility and Community in Late Eighteenth-century Scotland</i> (Edinburgh, 1987)
Engell, <i>CM</i>	James Engell, <i>Forming the Critical Mind: Dryden to Coleridge</i> (Cambridge MA and London, 1989)
<i>EB</i>	R. B. Sher, <i>The Enlightenment and the Book: Scottish Authors & their Publishers in Eighteenth-Century Britain, Ireland & America</i> (Chicago, 2006)

<i>Fasti</i>	<i>Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanæ</i> , 9 vols, ed. Hew Scott (Edinburgh, 1915)
GUL	Glasgow University Library
Hume, <i>Essays</i>	David Hume, <i>Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary</i> (1741-83; ed. Eugene F. Miller, Indianapolis, 1987)
JHI	<i>Journal of the History of Ideas</i>
Kaufman	P. Kaufman, 'The Rise of Community Libraries in Scotland', <i>Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America</i> , 59 (1965)
Lawson	J. MacFarlane, <i>The Life and Times of George Lawson</i> (Edinburgh, 1862)
LH	<i>Library History</i>
<i>Making British Culture</i>	D. Allan, <i>Making British Culture: English Readers and the Scottish Enlightenment</i> (forthcoming)
<i>Matric. Glas</i>	<i>The Matriculation Albums of the University of Glasgow, from 1827 to 1858</i> , ed. W. Innes Addison (Glasgow, 1913)
<i>Matric. St A.</i>	<i>The Matriculation Roll of the University of St Andrews 1745-1897</i> , ed. J. M. Anderson (Edinburgh, 1905)
<i>Nation of Readers</i>	D. Allan, <i>Nation of Readers</i> (forthcoming, 2008)
NAS	National Archives of Scotland
NLS	National Library of Scotland
NRAS	National Register of Archives for Scotland
<i>Ochertyre</i>	<i>Letters of John Ramsay of Ochertyre 1799-1812</i> , ed. B. L. H. Horn (Edinburgh, 1966)
ODNB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> (2004)
OSA	Sir John Sinclair (ed.), <i>The Statistical Account of Scotland</i> (1791-99; Wakefield, 1978)
Phillipson, 'Culture'	N. Phillipson, 'Culture and Society in the Eighteenth-Century Province: the Case of Edinburgh and the Scottish Enlightenment', in L. Stone (ed.), <i>The University in Society</i> (Princeton, 1974)
Phillipson, 'Definition'	N. Phillipson, 'Towards a Definition of the Scottish Enlightenment', in P. Fritz and D. Williams (eds.), <i>City and Society in the Eighteenth-century</i> (Toronto, 1973)
PRR	J. Raven, H. Small and N. Taylor, (eds.), <i>The Practice and Representation of Reading in England</i> (Cambridge, 1996)

PS	T. M. Devine, and Rosalind Mitchison (eds.), <i>People and Society in Scotland I: 1760-1830</i> (Edinburgh, 1988)
Raven, 'Libraries'	J. Raven, 'Libraries for Sociability: the Advance of the Subscription Library', in <i>CHLB2</i>
Ridpath	<i>Diary of George Ridpath, Minister of Stichel 1755-1761</i> , ed. Sir J. Balfour Paul (Edinburgh, 1922)
St Clair	W. St Clair, <i>The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period</i> (Cambridge, 2004)
SBTI	<i>Scottish Book Trade Index</i>
SEER	P. Wood (ed.), <i>The Scottish Enlightenment: Essays in Reinterpretation</i> (Rochester, 2000)
SHR	<i>Scottish Historical Review</i>
SMSE	C. W. J. Withers and P. Wood (eds.), <i>Science and Medicine in the Scottish Enlightenment</i> (East Linton, 2002)
Spencer, Hume	M. G. Spencer, <i>Hume and Eighteenth-Century America</i> (Rochester NY, 2005)
Spencer, HR	M. G. Spencer (ed.), <i>Hume's Reception in Early America</i> , 2 vols (Bristol, 2002)
SAUL	St Andrews University Library
SV18C	<i>Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century</i>
Varma, ET	D. P. Varma, 'The Evergreen Tree of Diabolical Knowledge' (Washington DC, 1972)
Vickery	A. Vickery, <i>The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England</i> (London, 1998)
YUL	Beinecke Rare Books and Manuscripts Library, Yale University

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INTRODUCTION

‘Enlightenment Everywhere’

Locating the Reader in the Scottish Enlightenment

George Ridpath, minister of Stithell in Berwickshire and author of *A Border History of Scotland and England* (1776), was ‘a man of rare culture, a friend of the most celebrated Scots literati of the time, and an earnest student in many branches of science’.¹ Though he made at least one annual journey to the capital to attend the Church of Scotland’s General Assembly, for the most part Ridpath’s diary demonstrates that he led a quiet existence in rural Roxburghshire, with the leisure time to indulge his favourite pursuits of gardening and reading. As such, this document, with its remarkably complete portrayal of the commonplace interests and values of a provincial clergyman, has hardly featured in modern scholarship on the Scottish Enlightenment.² Yet what Ridpath’s diary illustrates for the student of Hume, Smith *et al* is the extent to which the ‘enlightenment’ produced by such luminaries had percolated through to readers in provincial Scotland. He read with obvious relish the works of his acquaintances David Hume and William Robertson, even though he did not agree with them on every issue, and supported the Moderate *literati* on the contentious issues of the day.³ Above all, he conducted his daily affairs along those very lines that Richard Sher suggests characterised ‘Enlightenment supporters everywhere ... a primary commitment to science, polite learning, toleration, moderatism,

¹ *Ridpath*, viii; the original is at NAS CH1/5/122-3.

² The Scottish Enlightenment was first conceived by William Robert Scott in his pioneering *Francis Hutcheson: His Life, Teachings and Position in the History of Philosophy* (Edinburgh, 1900); see also G. Bryson, *Man and Society: the Scottish Inquiry of the Eighteenth Century* (Princeton, 1945) and H. Trevor-Roper, ‘The Scottish Enlightenment’, *SV18C*, 68 (1967). For discussion of the origin of the term, see John Robertson, ‘The Scottish Contribution to the Enlightenment’ and Richard Sher, ‘Science and Medicine in the Scottish Enlightenment: the Lessons of Book History’, both in *SEER*. The two have recently released two very different book-length treatments: J. Robertson, *The Case for the Enlightenment: Scotland and Naples, 1680-1760* (Cambridge, 2005); R. B. Sher, *The Enlightenment & the Book: Scottish Authors & their Publishers in Eighteenth-Century Britain, Ireland & America* (Chicago, 2006).

³ *Ridpath*, 118, 130-1, 262-64, 319 on Hume’s works; 240-2 on Robertson’s *History of Scotland*; on the attempt to get Lord Kames excommunicated, compare 19 with *CU*, 65-8, 73-4; on the Douglas controversy, compare 118 and 127 with *CU*, 74-93; on the militia debate, compare 111 with J. Robertson, *The Scottish Enlightenment and the Militia Issue* (London, 1985). For a detailed discussion of Ridpath’s reading responses, see below, Chapter 5 and 6.

reasonableness, virtue, justice, improvement, and liberty'.⁴ Though he was not the most original or insightful thinker, his example demonstrates that consumers of the great texts of the Scottish Enlightenment – the men and women who read them, and whose interest made them commercially viable – reflected seriously on what they read and through doing so participated in the experience in a way that modern scholarship has so far grossly underestimated.

I

Peter Gay's seminal interpretation, expounded in the 1960s, argued that the Enlightenment, with its roots in France, was scientific, anti-religious, and possessed with a profound belief in the glorious progress of reason. Intellectuals who demonstrated these characteristics were admitted to a familial group of *philosophes* whose deliberate aim was to bring about the final victory in the battle between reason and irrationality.⁵ This interpretation implicitly denies that the Enlightenment differed from place to place: as one Scottish scholar reflects, Gay envisaged 'a specific, homogeneous movement which had its quintessence in France, and, if other countries are properly to be judged as having undergone Enlightenment, then they must be seen to have shared fully in those very characteristics which marked out the French experience'.⁶ Thus many of the more influential accounts of the Scottish Enlightenment have been inextricably linked to the rarefied terms in which Gay defined the European experience, if not guided strictly by the ideological criteria he lays down for Enlightenment.

⁴ R. B. Sher, 'Storm over the Literati', *Cencrastus*, 28 (Winter 1987-88), 43. R. B. Sher and J. R. Smitten (eds.), *Scotland and America in the Age of Enlightenment* (Edinburgh, 1990) present a very similar check list of 'common values and beliefs that were shared by "enlightened" men of letters everywhere, including science, virtue, reason, toleration, cosmopolitanism, polite learning, critical methods, freedom of the press, and fundamental human rights', 5.

⁵ P. Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation* (2 vols, New York, 1966-9); R. Darnton, 'In Search of the Enlightenment: Recent Attempts to Create a Social History of Ideas', *The Journal of Modern History*, 43 (1971), 113-132.

⁶ D. J. Witherington, 'What was Distinctive about the Scottish Enlightenment?', in J. J. Carter and J. H. Pittock (eds.), *Aberdeen and the Enlightenment* (Aberdeen, 1987), 9; Witherington referred particularly to R. Porter, 'The Enlightenment in England', in his and M. Teich (eds.), *The Enlightenment in National Context* (Cambridge, 1981).

Hugh Trevor-Roper, in his own pioneering articles on ‘The Scottish Enlightenment’, identified a group of six Scottish *philosophes*, including – alongside David Hume, Gay’s ‘complete Modern Pagan’⁷ – Adam Ferguson, Francis Hutcheson, John Millar, William Robertson, and Adam Smith, who were the ‘real intellectual pioneers’, as opposed to the many others who Trevor-Roper dismissed as mere ‘camp followers’. In an interpretation that infamously stressed the significance of ‘alien’ influences – Jacobitism and Episcopalianism – in redeeming Scotland from her seventeenth-century backwardness, Trevor-Roper was primarily concerned with identifying the distinctive set of ideas which characterised Scottish thought – for him, those ideas that addressed the issue of ‘the social mechanism of progress’.⁸

While Trevor-Roper’s vision of Scottish culture in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries has been fully revised, the narrow terms in which his Enlightenment is defined have often been retained. Charles Camic, for instance, chooses to exclude Hutcheson from Trevor-Roper’s list because he belonged to an earlier epoch in Scottish thought. This time Ferguson, Hume, Millar, Robertson and Smith are ‘the known population of enlightened individuals’ in Scotland, their works are ‘the cynosure for all who wish to understand the Scottish Enlightenment’, and the remainder of Scottish society ‘retained the orientations that had been integral to pre-Enlightened Scotland’.⁹ Nicholas Phillipson goes even further, locating Scotland’s distinctive experience in the work of just two men, Hume and Smith, whose ‘polite determinism’ was the ‘trigger which detonated the social and cultural forces which turned Edinburgh into the Athens of Britain’. Quite apart from the latter’s association with Glasgow and the university there, Phillipson asserts that ‘there is an important sense in which the history of the Scottish Enlightenment *is* the history of Edinburgh’.¹⁰

⁷ Gay, *Enlightenment*, 401ff.

⁸ Trevor-Roper, ‘The Scottish Enlightenment’, 1639-1640; idem., ‘The Scottish Enlightenment’, *Blackwood’s Magazine*, 322 (1977). For discussion, see *CC*, 3-4; *CU*, 4-8; Sher, ‘Storm’, 42-4; Berry, 189-90; and C. Kidd, ‘Lord Dacre and the Politics of the Scottish Enlightenment’, *SHR*, 84 (2005), 202-220.

⁹ C. Camic, *Experience and Enlightenment: Socialization for Cultural Change in Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1983), 50; 45; 12; 50-1.

¹⁰ Phillipson, ‘Definition’, 147 and 125; Berry, 189-90. For Smith’s association with Glasgow, see A. Hook and R. B. Sher (eds.), *The Glasgow Enlightenment* (Edinburgh, 1995).

But the quest for Enlightenment beyond France, often tinged with some expectation of national prestige, has led ultimately to a reaction against Gay's definition, encouraging, according to John Robertson, 'an altogether broader appreciation of the ... variety of its intellectual concerns and forms of expression'.¹¹ In Scotland, it has become fashionable to explain intellectual vitality in the eighteenth century by reference to continuities with earlier intellectual traditions and to incorporate the scientific, moral and literary achievements of eighteenth-century Scots into the account of her 'distinctive' Enlightenment.¹² We now have a far greater appreciation of the international prestige and historical significance of Scottish scientists, especially Joseph Black, William Cullen and James Hutton, while Roger L. Emerson has produced reams of empirical evidence to support his view that natural philosophy was central to the development of Scottish thought from the late seventeenth century onwards.¹³ Literary figures like John Home, Henry Mackenzie, James 'Ossian' Macpherson and Sir Walter Scott, are now seen as integral figures, synthesising many of the historiographical and moralistic concerns of their peers, while Scottish *belles lettres* (pioneered by Smith, Robert Watson, Hugh Blair and Lord Kames) is now recognized for its seminal contribution to the development of English literature as an academic discipline in its own right.¹⁴ Most dramatically, given the role of anti-clericalism in Gay's scheme, it is now widely accepted that a distinctive theology was at the heart of the Enlightenment in Scotland, developed by the Moderate

¹¹ J. Robertson, 'The Scottish Enlightenment', *Rivista Storico Italiano*, 108 (1996), 795.

¹² For earlier traditions, see D. Allan, *Scotland in the Eighteenth Century: Union and Enlightenment* (London, 2002); A. Broadie, *The Tradition of Scottish Philosophy* (Edinburgh, 1990); and H. Ouston, 'Cultural Life from the Restoration to the Union', in A. Hook (ed.), *The History of Scottish Literature, II, 1660-1800* (Aberdeen, 1987).

¹³ J. R. R. Christie, 'The Origins and Development of the Scottish Scientific Community, 1680-1760', *History of Science*, 7 (1974); P. Wood, 'The Scientific Revolution in Scotland', in R. Porter and M. Teich (eds.), *The Scientific Revolution in National Context* (1992); A. L. Donovan, *Philosophical Chemistry in the Scottish Enlightenment: the Doctrines and Discoveries of William Cullen and Joseph Black* (Edinburgh, 1975); P. Jones (ed.), *Philosophy and Science in the Scottish Enlightenment* (Edinburgh, 1988); *SEER; SMSE*. For the contribution of Roger L. Emerson, see in particular 'Sir Robert Sibbald Kt., the Royal Society of Scotland, and the Origins of the Scottish Enlightenment', *Annals of Science*, 45 (1988); 'Science and the Origins and Concerns of the Scottish Enlightenment', *History of Science* (1988); 'Science and Moral Philosophy in the Scottish Enlightenment', in M. A. Stewart (ed.), *Studies in the Philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment* (Oxford, 1990).

¹⁴ On Home, see *CU*; H. Gaskell (ed.), *Ossian Revisited* (London, 1991); F. J. Stafford, *The Sublime Savage: James Macpherson and the Poems of Ossian* (Edinburgh, 1988); J. Anderson, *Sir Walter Scott and History* (Edinburgh, 1981); on Mackenzie, see Dwyer, *VD*; M. G. Moran (ed.), *Eighteenth-Century British and American Rhetorics and Rhetoricians* (Westport CT, 1994); R. Crawford, *The Scottish Invention of English Literature* (Cambridge, 1991).

party in the Church of Scotland and dominated intellectually by literary clergymen like Robertson, Blair, Ferguson and Home.¹⁵

Besides this generic inclusiveness, historians have also located the ideas of the most famous figures and ideas within their broader intellectual and cultural context. John Dwyer has argued convincingly for the vitality of moral discourse in eighteenth-century Scotland, including such long forgotten moralists as James Fordyce, John Logan, William Craig and Alexander Abercromby alongside Smith and Hume.¹⁶ Similarly, with lesser-known historians like Hugo Arnot, William Duff, Lachlan Shaw and Gilbert Stuart sharing the stage with their more illustrious peers, David Allan has demonstrated that Enlightenment historians shared a distinct heritage in the humanist and Calvinist scholarship of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹⁷

Though this recent broadening of horizons is a welcome dynamic in the intellectual economy of Scottish Enlightenment studies, the problem with all such extensions is where to stop. In uncovering ‘discourses’ we need to include all authors who might be said to have contributed to a contemporary debate. Yet at some point we have to draw a line between original thought and the collection and reproduction of others’ ideas. Moreover, some scholars have argued stridently that we need to distinguish between the political economy, historiography and philosophy of eighteenth-century Scots – what are traditionally seen as the ‘core concerns’ of the Enlightenment – and their scientific, literary and artistic pursuits. As the leading successor to Trevor-Roper’s approach, Robertson warns that an uncritically inclusive approach to the Scottish Enlightenment harbours a threat to the very notion of the concept: ‘the historian ... might as well accept the existence of a variety of Enlightenments, in the plural, and abandon “the”

¹⁵ CU; R. Sher and A. Murdoch, ‘Patronage and Party in the Church of Scotland, 1750-1800’, in N. MacDougall (ed.), *Church, Politics and Society: Scotland, 1408-1929* (Edinburgh, 1983); I. D. L. Clark, ‘From Protest to Reaction: the moderate regime in the Church of Scotland, 1752-1805’, in N. Phillipson and R. Mitchison (eds.), *Scotland in the Age of Improvement: essays in Scottish history in the eighteenth century* (Edinburgh, 1970; 1996 ed.).

¹⁶ Dwyer, VD; idem., *Age of the Passions*.

¹⁷ D. Allan, *Virtue, Learning and the Scottish Enlightenment: Ideas of Scholarship in Early Modern History* (Edinburgh, 1993). For the historiographical background, see D. R. Woolf, ‘The writing of early modern European intellectual history’, in M. Bentley (ed.), *Companion to Historiography* (London, 1997).

Enlightenment to the lumber room of discarded historical concepts'.¹⁸ The national context approach, in its most extreme expressions, has implied that 'anything goes' in Enlightenment studies, particularly with regard to Scotland. While this is not necessarily a bad thing – even Kant and his contemporaries could come to no agreement on what constituted *Aufklärung*¹⁹ – the 'Scottish Enlightenment' requires some revision for the concept to have any historiographical value, to mark it out, Anand Chitnis argues, from any other 'active cultural age' in Scottish letters.²⁰

II

Quite apart from these as yet unresolved faultlines at the heart of our understanding of the Scottish Enlightenment, there are some who still deny that there was any kind of relationship between Enlightenment writers and the wider Scottish population. They thus cast doubt on the whole notion of a 'Scottish Enlightenment' as it was first conceived by William Robert Scott, who was struck by the widespread 'diffusion of philosophic ideas in Scotland, and the encouragement of speculative tastes amongst men of culture'.²¹ David Hoeveler contends that the *litterati* were 'largely irrelevant to the Scottish population', for example, while John Lough makes 'the obvious point that such Enlightenment as existed in eighteenth-century Scotland was confined to a tiny minority who lived surrounded by a narrow-minded nationalism and bigoted Puritanism which have survived in part down to our own day'.²²

Yet some historians have developed a cultural interpretation that highlights the perceived role of society in supporting Enlightenment. In Glasgow, we are told, the academic Enlightenment was enhanced both by the commercial interests of one of the most dynamic cities in late eighteenth-century Europe and by the city's strong historical

¹⁸ Robertson, 'Scottish Enlightenment', 801; *Case for the Enlightenment*; for discussion of his inheritance of Trevor-Roper's approach, see *CC*, 3, 94.

¹⁹ I. Kant, *What is Enlightenment?* (1784); D. Outram, *The Enlightenment* (Cambridge, 1995), 12.

²⁰ A. C. Chitnis, 'Agricultural improvement, political management and civic virtue in enlightened Scotland: an historiographical critique', *SV18C*, 245 (1986), 476.

²¹ Scott, *Francis Hutcheson*, 265-6.

²² Both quoted by Allan, *Virtue*, 4; J. Lough, 'Reflections on Enlightenment and Lumières', *BJ18CS*, 8 (1985).

predilection for popular Presbyterianism.²³ Aberdeen's professors, meanwhile, developed a brand of Enlightenment that was orthodox and famously reactionary, derived from the traditionally conservative ideology of the city – Episcopalian and Jacobite by instinct – and underpinned by the relatively independent network of north-east gentry and ministers.²⁴ By far the greatest attention has been paid in this regard to polite society in Edinburgh, where religious, legal and cultural institutions supplanted the role of the University in pioneering Enlightenment.²⁵ As we have seen, at least one influential scholar explicitly equates the Scottish Enlightenment with Edinburgh: the polite New Town, we might imagine, was a safe harbour for new ideas that simply could not flourish in the claustrophobic environment of 'Auld Reekie', nor infiltrate the stifling cultural climate of old Scotland.²⁶ However persuasive this 'cultural' definition of the Scottish Enlightenment has proved, though, it has so far down-played the extent to which provincial towns in Scotland experienced a similar revolution in manners. Still more worryingly, it risks concealing the extent to which politeness, sociability and clubbability were core aspects of an 'urban renaissance' that effected elite culture throughout the British Isles – not just in Scotland.²⁷

²³ See Hook and Sher, *Glasgow Enlightenment*; J. D. Mackie, *The University of Glasgow, 1451-1951: A Short History* (Glasgow, 1954); N. C. Landsman, 'Witherspoon and the Problem of Provincial Identity in Scottish Evangelical Culture', in R. B. Sher and J. R. Smitten (eds.), *Scotland and America in the Age of Enlightenment* (Princeton, 1990); idem., 'Presbyterians and Provincial Society: The Evangelical Enlightenment in the West of Scotland, 1740-1775', in J. Dwyer and R. B. Sher (eds.), *Sociability and Society in Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1993); R. B. Sher, 'Commerce, Religion and the Enlightenment in Eighteenth Century Glasgow', in T. M. Devine and G. Jackson (eds.), *Glasgow, Volume 1: Beginnings to 1830* (Manchester, 1995); R. L. Emerson, and P. Wood, 'Science and Enlightenment in Glasgow, 1690-1802', in *SMSE*; R. H. Campbell, 'Scotland's Neglected Enlightenment', *History Today*, 40 (1990).

²⁴ See J. J. Carter, and J. H. Pittock (eds.), *Aberdeen and the Enlightenment* (Aberdeen, 1987); R. L. Emerson, *Professors, Patronage and Politics: The Aberdeen Universities in the Eighteenth Century* (Aberdeen, 1992); S. A. Conrad, *Citizenship and Common Sense: The Problem of Authority in the Social Background and Social Philosophy of the Wise Club of Aberdeen* (New York, 1987).

²⁵ For example, see R. L. Emerson, 'The Social Composition of Enlightened Scotland: the Select Society of Edinburgh, 1754-1764', *SV18C*, 114 (1973) and Phillipson, 'Culture'.

²⁶ The contrast is heavy-handedly drawn by J. Buchan, *Capital of the Mind: How Edinburgh Changed the World* (London, 2003). For the New Town, see M. Cosh, *Edinburgh: The Golden Age* (Edinburgh, 2003); D. Daiches, *Edinburgh* (London, 1978); and the magisterial A. J. Youngson, *The Making of Classical Edinburgh 1750-1840* (Edinburgh, 1966).

²⁷ P. Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town 1660-1770* (Oxford, 1989); P. Clark, *British Clubs and Societies, 1580-1800: The Origins of an Associational World* (Oxford, 2000); idem., *The Transformation of English Provincial Towns, 1600-1800* (London, 1984); Brewer, *Pleasures*; J. J. Looney, 'Cultural Life in the Provinces: Leeds and York, 1720-1820', in A. L. Beier, D. Cannadine and J. M. Rosenheim (eds.), *The First Modern Society* (Cambridge, 1989).

Meanwhile, the presumption still persists that the Enlightenment was actually remarkably well-received by consumers of literature in Scotland. George Elder Davie, for instance, enthuses that ‘the ideas argued over at the dinner tables of Charlotte Square ... were eagerly overheard and assimilated throughout Scotland, and freely commented on and criticised by persons of the most varied backgrounds’.²⁸ Donald Witherington goes further, positing a definition of the Scottish Enlightenment that emphasises the supposed extent of its reception: ‘the really *distinctive* mark of Enlightenment in Scotland is that its ideas and ideals were very widely diffused, in all areas and among a very wide span of social groups, in what was for the time a remarkably well-educated and highly literate population in country as well as in town’.²⁹ But with the exception of some generalist work on clubs and brief studies on Ayr, Haddington and Perth such assertions simply do not stand up to the most basic standards of empirical scrutiny.³⁰

III

In addressing each of these intractable problems, historians have yet to consider more seriously what might be learnt from the experiences of the people who bought and read literature in eighteenth-century Scotland. As one recent advocate of ‘the lessons of book history’ has acknowledged, modern research into the ideas of the Scottish Enlightenment

²⁸ G. E. Davie, *A Passion for Ideas: Essays on the Scottish Enlightenment II* (ed. M. Macdonald, Edinburgh, 1994), 1.

²⁹ Witherington, ‘What was Distinctive?’, 15. On literacy, compare D. J. Witherington, ‘Schooling, Literacy and Education’, in *PS*; R. A. Houston, *Scottish Literacy and the Scottish Identity: Illiteracy and Society in Scotland and Northern England 1600-1800* (Cambridge, 1985); idem., ‘The Literacy Myth? Illiteracy in Scotland 1630-1760’, *Past and Present*, 96 (1982); T. C. Smout, ‘Born again at Cambuslang: New Evidence on Popular Religion and Literacy in Eighteenth-Century Scotland’, *Past and Present*, 97 (1982); and D. Cressy, ‘Literacy in Context: Meaning and Measurement in Early Modern England’, in J. Brewer and Roy Porter (eds.), *Consumption and the World of Goods* (London, 1993).

³⁰ D. D. McElroy, *Scotland’s Age of Improvement: A Survey of Eighteenth-Century Literary Clubs and Societies* (Washington, 1969) is still the major study of eighteenth-century clubbability, though it is in need of some revision in respect of provincial clubs; see also Carter and Pittock, *Aberdeen*; Hook and Sher, *Glasgow*; D. Allan, ‘Provincial Readers and Book Culture in the Scottish Enlightenment: The Perth Library, 1784-c.1800’, *The Library*, 4 (2002); idem., ‘The Scottish Enlightenment and the Politics of Provincial Culture: Perth Library and Antiquarian Society, c.1784-1790’, *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 27 (2003); K. Holcomb, ‘A Dance in the Mind: the Provincial Scottish Philosophical Societies’, *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, 21 (1991). J. Strawhorn, ‘Ayrshire and the Enlightenment’ in G. Cruickshank (ed.), *A Sense of Place: Studies in Scottish Local History* (Edinburgh, 1988); V. S. Dunstan, ‘Glimpses into a Town’s Reading Habits in Enlightenment Scotland: Analysing the Borrowings of Gray Library, Haddington, 1732-1816’, *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, 26 (2006).

and the texts in which they were inscribed has been conducted ‘with little or no reference to ... the reading public that consumed them’.³¹ Conversely, Thomas Munck’s ‘comparative social history’ of *The Enlightenment* (2000) is entirely predicated on the express belief ‘that changes in attitudes and beliefs during the eighteenth century can be studied at least as fruitfully from the vantage point of more ordinary people’: Enlightenment therefore was ‘not merely an elite intellectual pastime, but a real process of emancipation from inherited values and beliefs’.³² The experiences of ordinary Scots, however they might be defined, therefore promise to tell us a great deal about what the Scottish Enlightenment actually was by illuminating the impact made by certain books and ideas on people’s lives, values and thought-processes.

Robert Darnton’s *The Great Cat Massacre* (1984), a discussion of the ways in which ordinary Frenchmen responded to the cultural and intellectual stimuli of the eighteenth century, is particularly relevant in this regard – demonstrating that at least one reader, the merchant Jean Ranson, attempted to live his life by the precepts laid down by Rousseau. Placing particular emphasis on the way Rousseau’s *Emile* (1762) influenced Ranson’s approach to fatherhood, Darnton argues that ‘Ranson did not read in order to enjoy the literature but to cope with life and especially family life, exactly as Rousseau intended’.³³ Darnton’s more general conclusion is that ‘reading and living, construing texts and making sense of life’ were far more closely related in the eighteenth century than they are today, and he presents a convincing case for the broader historical significance of the reading experience:

Think how often reading has changed the course of history – Luther’s reading of Paul, Marx’s reading of Hegel, Mao’s reading of Marx. Those points stand out in a deeper, vaster process – man’s unending effort to find meaning in the world around him and within himself. If we could understand how he has read, we could come closer to understanding how he

³¹ Sher, ‘Science and Medicine’, 113.

³² T. Munck, *The Enlightenment: A Comparative and Social History 1721-1794* (London, 2000), vii; viii.

³³ R. Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and other episodes in French Cultural History* (New York, 1984), 241; see also, idem., *The Kiss of Lamourette: Reflections in Cultural History* (London and New York, 1990); idem., *The Literary Underground of the Old Regime* (Cambridge, MA, 1982). On Darnton, see H. T. Mason (ed.), *The Darnton Debate: Books and Revolution in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1998).

made sense of life; and in that way, the historical way, we might even satisfy some of our own craving for meaning.³⁴

It is therefore to the world of reading that we must turn if we are to begin to understand what the Enlightenment actually meant to ordinary Scots – how it contributed to their knowledge of themselves and of the world around them.

Part I revolves around the means by which individual Scots encountered the books of the Scottish Enlightenment, addressing what Darnton has termed the ‘whos’ and the ‘whats’ that are an essential starting point for any convincing history of reading.³⁵ Thus Chapter 1 attempts to trace which Scottish Enlightenment texts were most often bought by consumers in provincial Scotland by means of an aggregate analysis of 450 surviving library catalogues. Of course, Scots did not have to own books to be able read them. They could also take advantage of the proliferation of libraries that became a major feature of cultural development throughout Britain as the eighteenth century progressed.³⁶ Chapter 2 therefore explores the role of private or proprietary subscription libraries in facilitating access to the books of the Enlightenment primarily through case studies of two libraries whose borrowing records are still extant, allowing us to gauge how often specific titles were taken off library shelves, for how long, and, most importantly, by whom. Subscription libraries also allowed their members to engage in the famously sociable and polite intellectual culture of the metropolitan Enlightenment, and it is the positive contribution to intellectual culture that was made by commercial circulating libraries (more usually condemned for allowing women to indulge their frivolous taste in immoral novels) that provides the focus for Chapter 3. Finally in Part I, our attention turns in Chapter 4 to a detailed comparative analysis of the borrowing records of five libraries founded as charitable endowments and for explicitly religious purposes, demonstrating that even the more conservative book-lending institutions could facilitate the diffusion of Enlightenment books in Scotland.

³⁴ Darnton, ‘First Steps’, 6, 25. For the wider historiographical context, see Ian Jackson, ‘Approaches to the History of Readers and Reading in Eighteenth-Century Britain’, *The Historical Journal*, 47 (2004).

³⁵ Darnton, ‘First Steps’, 7-12.

³⁶ *CHLB2*; Alston.

Of course, to show that readers had the opportunity to read a specific book is not to prove that they ever actually read that book. Nor is it to demonstrate why they read it, whether they understood it, or how they responded to its ideas. In Part II, therefore, attention turns to source material that illuminates the reading experience itself. Accordingly, Chapter 5 considers the various means by which historians can recover historical reading experiences, examining the methodologies involved by exploring how and why Scottish readers in particular turned so frequently to the philosophy, *belles lettres*, history and scientific works of the Scottish Enlightenment. Finally, Chapter 6 will focus more specifically on how Scottish readers imbued the works of Scotland's pre-eminent mind, David Hume, with meaning, indicating at the same time the ways in which reading Hume could make a positive contribution to an individual reader's conception of themselves. It also asks why Hume tended to end up as what Stephen Greenblatt has called the 'alien other' against which the personal identity of readers was constructed in eighteenth-century Scotland.³⁷

The reading experiences surveyed in Chapters 5 and 6 will naturally enough inform wider questions in the history of reading, providing empirical data with which to evaluate the fashionable ruminations of literary theorists.³⁸ These wider historiographical problems will be taken up in the Conclusion, which explores what our closely-focused investigation might teach us about the experience of reading in the past more generally, quite apart from how it informs recent interpretations of the Scottish Enlightenment. As will already be evident, however, before we can consider reading such elaborate meaning into individual responses to encounters with texts it will be necessary to show that Scottish readers could get hold of the books that formed its principal achievement. It is therefore to the material diffusion of the books of the Scottish Enlightenment that we turn in the first instance.

³⁷ Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago and London, 1980; 2005), 9.

³⁸ See introductory discussions in Darnton, 'First Steps', 22; D. Allan, 'Some Methods and Problems in the History of Reading: Georgian England and the Scottish Enlightenment', *Journal of the Historical Society*, 3 (2003), 104-5.

PART I

ENCOUNTERING ENLIGHTENMENT

CHAPTER ONE

‘Profile of a Reader’

Book Catalogues and Provincial Consumption of the Scottish Enlightenment

Introducing the 1743 edition of the Bodleian Library catalogue, Samuel Johnson advised ‘all those who desire any Knowledge of the Literary Transactions of past Ages’ that they ‘may find in Catalogues ... such an Account as is given by Annalists and Chronologers of Civil History’.¹ Pertinently for our own purposes, Johnson argued that book catalogues would appeal especially to ‘those who are pleased with observing the first Birth of new Opinions, their Struggles against Opposition, their silent Progress under Persecution, their general Reception, and their gradual Decline, or sudden Extinction’ – precisely those processes involved in studying the reception of a publishing phenomenon like the Scottish Enlightenment by its immediate consumers. Even though Dr. Johnson had in mind one of the most famous libraries of all, the wider point has not been lost on succeeding historians of ‘the intellectual Revolutions of the World’. As Robert Darnton, the inventor of the term the ‘social history of ideas’, explains, ‘most of us would agree that a catalogue of a private library can serve as a profile of a reader, even though we don’t read all the books we own and we do read many books that we never purchase’.² Crucially, Darnton suggests ‘the study of private libraries has the advantage of linking the “what” with the “who” of reading’, and Mark Spencer, who has studied the reception of the Scottish Enlightenment in colonial America, agrees, explaining that ‘the books

¹ Quoted by A. Taylor, *Book Catalogues: their Varieties and Uses*, revised by W. P. Barlow Jr. (1957; Winchester, 1986), 171.

² R. Darnton, *The Kiss of Lamourette: Reflections in Cultural History* (London and New York, 1990), 162. Darnton elsewhere argues for ‘a broadening of intellectual history’, suggesting ‘that a mixed genre, the social history of ideas, could contribute to a fresh assessment of the age of Enlightenment’; Robert Darnton, *Literary Underground of the Old Regime* (Cambridge MA and London, 1982), viii. For the place of book catalogues in the wider field of book history, see Darnton, ‘First Steps’ and D. Allan, ‘Some Methods and Problems in the History of Reading: Georgian England and the Scottish Enlightenment’, *Journal of the Historical Society*, 3 (2003).

possessed by colonists provide one of the clearer measures of the availability and diffusion of books in the colonies'.³

I

Interest in book catalogues has largely been confined in Scottish historiography to the investigation of celebrity libraries of the past, including the books of the *literati* Hugh Blair, David Hume and Adam Smith.⁴ As an introductory survey of the library of James Craig, planner of the Edinburgh New Town, makes clear, such studies are concerned primarily with intellectual biography. The intention is to uncover the literary and aesthetic tastes of the subject, and especially to identify the specific intellectual influences on his work. A testatory inventory of the books Craig owned thus portrays him 'as a man of his time and as a citizen of the world', while the presence of James Anderson's *Practical Treatise on Smokey Chimneys* (1776) represents the kind of 'business-like manual' an architect like Craig would have consulted as a matter of course in his professional life.⁵

No attempt has yet been made, however, to consider less-celebrated libraries or the promise they might hold out when taken together for understanding the preferences of the wider community of Scottish readers. Even Roger Emerson's use of book-ownership data to challenge the conventional tale of the moribundity of seventeenth-century Scottish culture rests on a tiny sample of major intellectuals, with no attempt to look beyond an

³ *Ibid*, 162; Spencer, *Hume*, 7.

⁴ D. F. Norton and M. J. Norton, *The David Hume Library* (Edinburgh, 1996); H. Mizuta, *Adam Smith's Library: A Catalogue* (Oxford, 2000); H. Amory, 'Hugh Blair', in *Sale Catalogues of Libraries of Eminent Persons*, ed. A. N. L. Munby (London, 1971-75), VII, 159-64. These studies build on a much wider tradition in British historiography, most notably Munby's Herculean 12-volume set of *Sale Catalogues*. Many more examples are discussed in B. Hillyard, 'Working Towards a History of Scottish Book Collecting', in P. Isaac (ed.), *Six Centuries of the Provincial Book Trade in Britain* (Winchester, 1990); *idem.*, 'Scottish Bibliography for the period ending 1801' and D. McKitterick, 'Books Catalogues: Their Varieties and Uses', both in P. Davidson (ed.), *The Book Encompassed: Studies in Twentieth-Century Bibliography* (Cambridge, 1992).

⁵ Iain Gordon Brown, 'Craig's Library: A First Investigation', Kitty Cruft and Andrew Fraser (eds.), *The Ingenious Architect of the New Town of Edinburgh: James Craig 1744-1795* (Edinburgh, 1995), 98, 97; NAS CC8/10/51A and CC8/8/130, ff.261-273.

exceptional coterie of producers of culture.⁶ Alistair Mann, author of a recent monograph on *The Scottish Book Trade 1500-1720*, bemoans this lack of interest in Scottish book catalogues and his pessimism for the state of research into ‘the private world of book dissemination’ is confirmed by Brian Hillyard’s bibliographical survey of work on Scottish private libraries, which makes no mention of the potential rewards of studying aggregate book ownership.⁷

This is particularly surprising when one considers a strong quantitative tradition in the analysis of book catalogues of the past. The most influential model remains Daniel Mornet, whose study of 500 book catalogues from eighteenth-century France was intended to address precisely those kinds of questions which concern us here: how deeply did the Enlightenment penetrate into French society, how often did Enlightenment books turn up in private libraries, and what was the relative popularity of those books? Though strongly contested in the decades since, Mornet’s conclusions were stunning, for as Darnton observes, his ‘approach seemed to knock out some of the pillars of the Enlightenment’.⁸ Many core texts of the French Enlightenment returned a remarkably low score. In particular Mornet could only identify a single copy of Rousseau’s *Social*

⁶ Roger L. Emerson, ‘Scottish cultural change 1660-1710 and the Union of 1707’, in John Robertson (ed.), *A Union for Empire: Political Thought and the British Union of 1707* (Cambridge, 1995), 121-144. For the view that seventeenth-century Scotland was a cultural and intellectual wasteland, compare H. Trevor-Roper, ‘Scottish Enlightenment’, *SVI8C*, 68 (1967); D. Allan, *Scotland in the Eighteenth Century: Union and Enlightenment* (London, 2002); H. Ouston, ‘York in Edinburgh: James VII and the patronage of learning in Scotland, 1674–1688’, in J. Dwyer, R. A. Mason, and A. Murdoch (eds.), *New perspectives on the politics and culture of early modern Scotland* (Edinburgh 1982); idem., ‘Cultural life from the Restoration to the Union’, in A. Hook (ed.), *The History of Scottish Literature, volume 2, 1660–1800* (Aberdeen, 1987); G. Donaldson, ‘Stair’s Scotland: the intellectual inheritance’, in *The Juridical Review* (1981); J. R. R. Christie, ‘The origins and development of the Scottish scientific community, 1680–1760’, *History of Science*, 12 (1974); and numerous contributors to R. H. Campbell and A. S. Skinner (eds.), *The origins and nature of the Scottish Enlightenment* (Edinburgh, 1982).

⁷ A. J. Mann, *The Scottish Book Trade 1500-1720: Print Commerce and Print Control in Early Modern Scotland. An Historiographical Survey of the Early Modern Book in Scotland* (East Linton, 2000), 4; Hillyard, ‘Scottish bibliography’. One isolated example is J. Ferguson, ‘The Laird’s Books: An Eighteenth-Century Library’, *Cornhill Magazine*, CLVI (1937), 90-96, though the wider applicability of his conclusions are strictly limited by the lack of references – and the failure to disclose precisely who the unnamed laird was.

⁸ Darnton, *Literary Underground*, 168. My summary of Mornet’s quantitative approach is derived from Darnton’s discussion, 167-177. He points out elsewhere that ‘seventy years and several refutations later, Mornet’s work still looks impressive’, *Kiss*, 162.

Contract in his entire sample – suggesting that it may not have been as central to the fermentation and progress of the French Revolution as had previously been thought.⁹

David Lundberg and Henry F. May's more recent attempt 'to develop statistical information on the reception in America of certain major authors of the European Enlightenment' is even more suggestive for our purposes in its direct concern with a range of significant Scottish *literati*.¹⁰ They find that Hugh Blair 'achieves immediate and striking popularity' in the book catalogues of post-revolutionary America, and that in the case of Hume's *History*, "correct and graceful style" could weigh heavily even in conjunction with deplorable opinions'.¹¹ Above all, they argue that the 'Common Sense' philosophers Thomas Reid, James Beattie and Dugald Stewart helped deliver the 'triumph of moral and religious conservatism' in nineteenth-century American culture.¹²

These two pioneering studies demonstrate that book catalogues, when taken in a broader perspective, can tell us a great deal about the relationship between the Scottish *literati* and their immediate reading public. Even though they leave so much unsaid about that relationship, they can at least help us trace in broad terms the diffusion of particular types of text and assess the apparent popularity of specific authors and titles. As Darnton has himself made abundantly clear, however, there are very real practical and conceptual problems involved in deriving reading preferences from the evidence provided by book catalogues, and it is to these difficulties that we now turn.

II

Some problems can be easily dealt with. One of the principal criticisms of Lundberg and May's study is that their analysis does not acknowledge the inevitable chronological

⁹ Darnton explores the reception of Rousseau in late eighteenth-century France by a quite different route in *The Great Cat Massacre and other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York, 1984).

¹⁰ David Lundberg and Henry F. May, 'The Enlightened Reader in America', *American Quarterly*, 28 (1976), 262 (hereafter, LM); H. F. May, *The Enlightenment in America* (Oxford, 1976).

¹¹ LM, 269, 271.

¹² *Ibid.*, 270. Book ownership also plays an important part in D. R. Woolf, *Reading History in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2000).

distortions involved in comparing over a long period the relative popularity of books that appeared at different times. Francis Hutcheson’s *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725) can potentially appear in nearly every catalogue in the present sample, whereas a work like Dugald Stewart’s *Philosophical Essays* can only appear in the much smaller proportion of catalogues that postdated its publication in 1810. In attempting to compare their relative popularity it is necessary to present a more sophisticated analysis of the data than simply comparing the aggregate number of catalogues in which they appear (as Lundberg and May do). In fact, we need instead to present this aggregate figure as a percentage of catalogues that post-date each work’s publication.¹³ Through this statistical refinement, we can at least compare the relative popularity of works published at different times, showing in this instance that Stewart’s *Philosophical Essays*, though appearing in fewer catalogues than Hutcheson’s *Inquiry* in absolute terms (60 as opposed to 87), was actually found in a greater proportion of catalogues after its publication – 25% of relevant libraries, as compared to 20%.

Even so, this adjustment cannot resolve the more fundamental problem posed by the very uneven rate of survival of catalogues from different periods in our sample, whereby we have just four catalogues dating to the 1720s as opposed to 101 dating to the 1820s (see Table 1.1) – a dramatic contrast that severely limits the validity of the kind of straightforward chronological analysis conducted by Lundberg and May.¹⁴ No matter how desirable it might be to test the reception of important early works like Hutcheson’s *Inquiry* as they first emerged, therefore, this is clearly impossible with such an uneven sample.

1720s	4	1780s	29
1730s	6	1790s	37
1740s	11	1800s	46

¹³ LM has Stewart’s *Elements* (1792) in 17% of catalogues in their third period (1791-1800), and 12% overall. Hutcheson *Inquiry*, on the other hand, is assigned a score of 13% overall – on first sight, more than Stewart’s *Elements*, even though it appeared in fewer catalogues after Stewart’s *Elements* was published (16 compared to at least 34). Spencer uses the example of Hume’s *History* to telling effect in making this same point, *Hume*, 12-16.

¹⁴ LM break their sample down into four periods characterised by wildly varying periodisations and incomparable numbers of catalogues: 1700-1776 (92 catalogues); 1777-1790 (29); 1791-1800 (119); 1801-1813 (51).

1750s	13	1810s	64
1760s	21	1820s	101
1770s	17	Decade Unknown	99

Table 1.1 Chronological Distribution of Library Catalogues (by decade)

In fact, a more general problem with the quantitative method is that the sources upon which it must be based are generally ephemeral, and suffer from variable and unpredictable attrition rates. We even lack the basic data describing how many people owned books in eighteenth-century Scotland, let alone how many of those book owners ever commissioned catalogues of their collections.¹⁵ William McDonald has identified 191 book auctions in the Aberdeen area from adverts placed in the *Aberdeen Journal* between 1750 and 1800, and found surviving catalogues relating to just 6 of those sales.¹⁶ Two more have since been located but this still represents a stunning rate of attrition – and is even more remarkable for being the only data we have that would allow us to guess how many catalogues might originally have existed in eighteenth-century Scotland.

Quite apart from such difficulties, our sample itself is inevitably skewed in a number of important ways. There was in the first place an obvious social bias in the ownership of books in eighteenth-century Britain as Richard Altick made clear in his pioneering study of the *English Common Reader* (1957), with books still affordable only ‘in a very restricted social context’: a merchant’s clerk ‘would have to choose between buying a newly published quarto volume and a good pair of breeches ..., or between a volume of essays and a month’s supply of tea and sugar’.¹⁷ For those many thousands of Scots who were too poor to own books in our period, book-ownership data is clearly irrelevant to any attempt to understand how (if at all) they experienced the Scottish Enlightenment. Even further up the social scale, a record of the books a moderately affluent professional

¹⁵ Brian Hillyard of the NLS has made some initial efforts to compile a database of early modern Scottish book ownership, and I am grateful to him for allowing me to see the fruits of his early research; for discussion, see Hillyard, ‘Working Towards a History’, 182-3.

¹⁶ W. R. McDonald, ‘Book-auctions and Book-sales in the Aberdeen Area, 1749-1800’, *Aberdeen University Review*, 42 (1967).

¹⁷ R. D. Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public 1800-1900* (Chicago and London, 1957), 41, 51-2; A. J. Gibson and T. C. Smout, *Prices, Food and Wages in Scotland, 1550-1780* (Cambridge, 1995).

owned can only go so far in describing their intellectual proclivities – although there are other ways we can access their reading tastes, as we shall see. On its absence from Craig’s library, for example, Iain Gordon Brown points out that Robert Adam’s *Ruins of Spalatro* was available only in ‘expensive folios, and Craig was not a rich man’.¹⁸ Although George Ridpath owned a small number of books, including Sir John Dalrymple’s *An Essay Towards a General History of Feudal Property*, he was usually forced to access books by other means, which certainly included borrowing the works of Robertson and Hume from friends in Edinburgh and Berwick, as well as from the Subscription Library in nearby Kelso.¹⁹ The absence of a specific work in any catalogue may therefore say far more about that individual’s financial status as it does about their attitudes towards the values and ideas of the Scottish Enlightenment.

It follows that there was also an inbuilt social bias in the type of collections that warranted the production of catalogues in the past, for ‘an owner does not go to the trouble of making a catalogue of his library unless it is a relatively substantial collection that deserves a good record’.²⁰ Rather than being only a measure of reading tastes, then, the existence of a catalogue is in the first instance a gauge of the status of the library and above all, its owner. This fact is reflected in the breakdown of the social status of the owners included in our survey (Table 1.2), which includes as many as 83 peers, knights and baronets, and at least a further 72 owners who can safely be assigned to the landed gentry. Although our sample may well include owners who might be called ‘ordinary’ readers (the professionals, merchants, manufacturers and traders, for instance), it also therefore encompasses some of the most exceptional book collectors in the British Isles – most notably Archibald Campbell, 3rd Duke of Argyll, and his nephew, John Stuart, 3rd Earl of Bute.²¹

¹⁸ Brown, ‘Craig’s Library’, 95; I. G. Brown, *Monumental Reputation: Robert Adam and the Emperor’s Palace* (Edinburgh, 1992).

¹⁹ *Ridpath*, eg 67, 75, 80, 197.

²⁰ Taylor, *Book Catalogues*, 1. Darnton agrees: ‘why should private libraries important enough to have printed catalogues be taken as an indication of a book’s appeal to ordinary and impecunious readers?’ *Literary Underground*, 168. Carlyle thought that ‘a Library is not worth anything without a catalogue; it is a Polyphemus without any eye in his head’; quoted in Arthur L. Humphreys, *The Private Library: What we do know; what we don’t know; what we ought to know about our books* (London, 1897), 81-2.

²¹ *Catalogus Librorum A.C.D.A.* (Glasgow, 1758); *Catalogue of a Valuable and well-known Library...* (London, 1785), with ms annotation ‘Ld Bute’s Duplicates’; *A Catalogue of the Botanical and Natural*

Type/Social Status of Library	No. of Libraries
Professional (including clergy, law, medicine and academic)	97
Titled (including peers, baronets, law lords and knights)	83
Gentry	72
Subscription Libraries	51
Merchants	25
Circulating Libraries	21
Manufacturers	13
Tradesmen	11
Religious/Endowed Libraries	10
Women	6
Book Clubs	5
Schoolmasters	5
Others/Unknown	51

Table 1.2 Breakdown of Type of Library/Social Status of Owner

Moreover, upwardly mobile sections of the professional, mercantile and manufacturing communities were often barely distinguishable from their landed neighbours (and were often interlinked by marriage, education and outlook), and their cultural accoutrements (including books and libraries, as we shall soon see) were merely emblems of their wider political and social status – in short, their books were part of the paraphernalia that marked them out as members of the genteel elite.²² Many individuals in our survey clearly blurred the social distinctions by straddling the divide between successful merchant and landed proprietor – men like Patrick Miller (1731-1815), whose business acumen facilitated his purchase of the Dalswinton estate, near Dumfries, in his 50s, or Henry Monteith (1765-1848), who built Carstairs House, Lanarkshire, in 1818 as an expression of the landed and political status he founded on a series of textile mills. A bibliophile like David Steuart (1747-1824), who was forced to auction off a massive library in 1801 to pay off debts, is even harder to define: a banker, wine merchant and

History Part of the Library of the Late John, Earl of Bute... (London, 1794); *A Catalogue of a Select and Valuable Collection of Books ... the Property of John Earl of Bute, deceased...* (London, 1798).

²² For an illuminating discussion of this issue, see Vickery, who excludes the terms ‘middle’ and ‘upper’ class from her discussion of ‘women’s lives in Georgian England’: ‘In social and administrative terms, east Lancashire was dominated by landed gentry, polite professional and greater commercial families – a local elite who exhibited considerable cohesion... In addition to their shared role in administration, landed gentlemen, professional gentlemen and gentlemen merchants stood shoulder to shoulder on the grouse moor and riverbank’, 31.

property speculator who had been Lord Provost of Edinburgh between 1780 and 1782, he also had strong ties to provincial Scotland as the son of a Perthshire landowner and he eventually retired to a relative's estate near Gretna.²³ By contrast, sources which enumerate the books that belonged to markedly less affluent owners simply do not survive frequently enough to allow us to assess adequately their book preferences.²⁴ The bankrupts James Allan, merchant in Alloa, John MacAlpine, general merchant and trader in Fort William, and John Wilson and sons, ironmasters in Lanarkshire, might all qualify as members of the broadly defined 'middle class', but even in these instances there are clear pointers that a pursuit of gentility through conspicuous consumption – since large libraries were a status symbol as well as a functional facility – actually contributed to their straightened circumstances.²⁵

Beyond the various and inescapable distortions that are built into our sample, however, book catalogues are not necessarily as articulate, precise or even comprehensive as they appear to be on the surface. After all, compilers of catalogues tended to use short-hand, or incorrect or eccentric titles, and they sometimes left out entirely the names of authors, making identification of the original works an often tortuous process.²⁶ This is most problematic here when confronted with the entry 'Hume's Essays', which could refer either to Hume's original *Essays Moral and Political* (1741) or to his *Essays and Treatises* (1753). In this study, the two have been counted as the same work because it is impossible to separate them in most Scottish catalogues after 1753, but as Mark Spencer makes clear in his admirable critique of Lundberg and May's study, the distinction is tremendously important. The *Essays and Treatises* actually served as a digest of Hume's philosophical works in successive editions after 1753, giving readers access not just to

²³ B. Hillyard, *David Steuart Esquire: An Edinburgh Collector* (Edinburgh, 1993).

²⁴ Wills and testaments so rarely include detailed book ownership data that I have not included them in this study; curatorial and tutorial inventories (associated with the inheritance of an estate by a minor) do sometimes include lists of books associated with a deceased landowner's estate (NAS SC series); sequestration processes much more regularly include lists of books owned by bankrupt individuals (NAS CS96 series). On wills, see Woolf, *Reading History*, 132.

²⁵ 'List of Books of James Allan, Alloa, 2 Dec. 1794', NAS CS96/730; 'Inventory of Effects of James Mac Alpine, Fort William, 1822', NAS CS96/162/1; 'Valuation Inventory of Mr. Wilson's Books', NAS CS96/436.

²⁶ A problem encountered in Brown, 'Craig's Library': 'other works appear without authors, which compounds the problem of identifying a book cited by a partial, eccentric or incorrect title', 93.

the aforementioned *Essays Moral and Political*, but also to the *Principles of Morals, Enquiry on the Human Understanding, Political Discourses* and, from 1757, the *Four Dissertations*. The failure of Lundberg and May to acknowledge this, Spencer argues, makes their account of the poor reception of Hume's philosophy in America 'downright deceptive'.²⁷

As the example of Hume's *Essays* makes clear, catalogues can never address many of the more nebulous aspects of the reception of the Scottish Enlightenment, seriously limiting the usefulness of this approach in other ways. For instance, there is usually no indication in these catalogues of which edition of a work appears in a library, making it impossible to distinguish between the reception of different versions of a work like Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), which evolved substantially within Smith's lifetime.²⁸ Catalogues do not usually recognise when texts were published in numbered parts, notably the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (held in 151 catalogues in the sample), one of the most distinctive productions of the Scottish Enlightenment, which was first released in 100 parts between 1768 and 1771.²⁹ Moreover, catalogues are completely silent on those texts that were experienced purely through their being extracted or serialized in magazines, journals and anthologies.³⁰ Although catalogues may give us an indication of the distribution of particular journals like the *Scots Magazine* (copies of which appear in 26% of libraries in the sample after its foundation in 1739), they do not record instances where a reader's sole contact with a specific Scottish Enlightenment text was through reading a critical review of it – meaning that any estimation of the diffusion of these texts based on book catalogues alone can only ever represent a minimum figure.³¹

²⁷ Spencer, *Hume*, 13.

²⁸ For details of its publication history, see Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (eds. D. D. Raphael and A. L. Macfie, Oxford, 1976), especially 15-20.

²⁹ *EB*, 230.

³⁰ 'This method of publication undoubtedly accounted for the spread of many enlightened works'; LM, 264. On anthologies, see St Clair, 66-83, 118, 445, 539-47. Blair's *Lectures* were 'widely reprinted in school anthologies' according to P. H. Michaelson, *Speaking Volumes: Women, Reading and Speech in the Age of Austen* (Stanford CA, 2002), 184.

³¹ Critical reviews are reprinted in J. Reeder (ed.), *On Moral Sentiments: Contemporary Responses to Adam Smith* (Bristol, 1997); I. S. Ross (ed.), *On the Wealth of Nations: Contemporary Responses to Adam Smith* (Bristol, 1998); H. Mizuta (ed.), *Adam Smith: Critical Responses*, 6 vols. (London, 2000); S. Tweyman

Book catalogues, and especially those offered for sale by auction, tend also to be full of lacunae – items blocked together in lots of pamphlets, bound as tracts or in odd volumes usually with little or no indication of their contents. It is inconceivable that a substantial and expensive work like Hume’s *History* would be sold off in such a way. But less saleable volumes certainly did turn up in mixed lots: thus James Macpherson’s *Temora* (1763) was listed in a volume of pamphlets in the auction catalogue of the library of Baron David Hume (nephew and heir of the philosopher),³² while Adam Ferguson’s *Reflections Previous to the Establishment of a Militia* (1756) was itemised in the sales of books belonging to both Professor John Ogilvie and the ‘ancient family of Garthland’.³³

Finally, and with particular regard to sale catalogues (which amount to around a third of our sample), we must be wary of the ‘long-standing practice of salting named sales with indistinguishable other stock’.³⁴ The sale of the collection built up over several generations by the Ferguson lairds of Pitfour in Aberdeenshire is the exception that proves the rule, the auctioneer taking pains to point out that ‘although duplicates, and in some instances, more than two copies of the same book appear in the following Catalogue, not a single volume has been introduced which did not belong to the Pitfour Library’.³⁵ But elsewhere, there are clear hints that the collection we have before us does not present a true picture of an individual’s holdings: Constable, for example, admitted in his sale catalogue for 1800 that ‘the greater number of these volumes were collected by Lord Covington’ (but did not specify which volumes were not), while *A Catalogue of Several Collections of Books Lately Purchased, including the Elegant and Valuable Library of the Late Lord Haddo* (offered for sale by the Aberdeen book-seller Alexander Angus in 1796), typically gave no indication which books belonged to the unfortunate

(ed.), *David Hume: Critical Assessments*, 6 vols. (London, 1995); J. Fieser, *Early Responses to Reid, Oswald, Beattie and Stewart*, 2 vols. (Bristol, 2000).

³² NLS MS 348, 207, Catalogue of the Library of Baron David Hume.

³³ *A Catalogue of Books...comprehending amongst others the LIBRARY of the late Professor Ogilvie of King’s College* (Aberdeen, 1823), 230; *Catalogue of ...the Libraries of the Ancient Family of Garthland...* (Edinburgh, 1814), 38.

³⁴ McKitterick, ‘Books catalogues’, 166. 153 sale catalogues have been included in the survey.

³⁵ *Pitfour Library: Catalogue of the Library of the Late Lord Pitfour..., of James Ferguson Esq. of Pitfour, M., and of Governor Ferguson of Pitfour...* (Edinburgh, 1821), 1.

Haddo and which did not.³⁶ This raises a problem of a quite different order, for it is often impossible to tell from a single catalogue which particular member of a family was responsible for selecting specific books for the library (especially if they had been available for several decades) – or indeed, which individuals read certain books in the collection.

Ultimately, the inescapable fact is that however clearly they appear to describe readers' preferences in the past, catalogues actually say nothing at all about the *use* of books. Indeed in the age of the 'consumer revolution', catalogues may well be much more appropriately viewed as evidence for a 'prestigious form of conspicuous consumption' than as indices of private reading.³⁷ The sheer size of some of the collections in our sample confirms this suspicion: the Earls of Marchmont and Minto had libraries of around 4,700 and 7,600 volumes respectively, while the Duke of Roxburghe's celebrated collection (split between mansions in London and Kelso) consisted of over 9,000 books.³⁸ Even Hume admitted that his own modest collection of around 400 books was 'more than I can use'.³⁹

In fact, as we have already hinted, it has long been recognised that books ranked amongst the most conspicuous status symbols in eighteenth-century British culture, a library being explicitly portrayed as 'certainly one of the greatest ornaments to a gentleman or his family' by an early architectural manual.⁴⁰ As our period progressed, the cultural status

³⁶ *A Catalogue of a Very Valuable and Extensive Collection of Books ... the Property of two Eminent Collectors...* (Edinburgh, 1800), post-script; *Angus & Son Sale Catalogue for 1796: A Catalogue of several collections of books lately purchased, including the elegant and valuable library of the late Lord Haddo* (Aberdeen, 1796).

³⁷ Allan, 'Methods', 103. On consumerism in eighteenth-century Britain, see J. Brewer and A. Bermingham (eds.), *The Consumption of Culture, 1660-1800: Image, Object and Text* (London, 1995).

³⁸ NAS GD158/3000, *A Catalogue of the Right Honourable The Earl of Marchmont's Library, 1776; Catalogue of the Valuable and Extensive Library of the Late Earl of Marchmont* (London, 1830); *Catalogues of the Minto Library, Grolier Club Library*, *08.26/E46/1810 (1810); *08.26/M667/1829 (1829); *08.26/M667/1829 (various dates); *08.26/E46/1820 (1820); *08.26/M667/1825 (1825); Brian Hillyard, 'John Kerr, 3rd Duke of Roxburghe (1740-1804)', W. Baker and K. Womack (eds.), *Pre-Nineteenth-Century British Book Collectors and Bibliographers* (London, 1999); A. Hunt, 'Private Libraries in the Age of Bibliomania', in *CHLB2*, 450; *A Catalogue of the Library of the Late John Duke of Roxburghe...* (London, 1812).

³⁹ Quoted by Norton and Norton, *Hume Library*, 14.

⁴⁰ Thomas Coke (1715), quoted by N. Barker, *Treasures from the Libraries of National Trust Country Houses* (New York, 1999), 16.

assigned to books helped the library itself emerge as a dominant feature in the social life of the leisured classes. Johnson alluded to this transition when he described the famous library at Sir David Dalrymple's Newhailes as 'the most learned *drawing room* in Europe' where the sheer volume and impressive accommodation of books became something of a tourist attraction.⁴¹ The dual-purpose library reached its apotheosis appropriately in the two separate library spaces built for Walter Scott at Abbotsford, separated between a drawing room for show and for social use, and a study for serious reading. The drawing room library was predicated on social interaction and came complete with a 'flirting corner'.⁴²

Moreover, in an age when an individual's books were on public display for the critical inspection of his guests, a library catalogue might be more ready evidence for the influence of the critical reviewers in canon formation than for the owner's own preferences. From the late 1740s, a phalanx of critical reviews emerged (led by the *Monthly* and *Critical Reviews*, founded in 1749 and 1755 respectively) that assumed 'the authority to identify and enforce ... a single standard of taste in an increasingly pluralistic class of readers'.⁴³ Such was their success that, by 1812, Lord Byron could portray their nineteenth-century successors, the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly Reviews*, as 'monarch-makers in poetry and prose'.⁴⁴ As T. A. Birrell argues, the book owner 'now has to show that he has got all the right books, that is to say all the fashionable books, whether or not he has actually read them, or wants to read them' – a notion perhaps uncomfortably familiar to the modern reader.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Johnson's view quoted by Ian Gow, "'The most learned drawing room in Europe?': Newhailes and the classical Scottish library', in Deborah C. Myers, Michael S. Moss, Miles K. Oglethorpe (eds.), *Visions of Scotland's Past* (East Linton, 2000), 94; compare with Ridpath's view, *Ridpath*, 143-4.

⁴² Quoted by Claire Wainwright, 'The Library as living room', in Robin Myers and Michael Harris (eds.), *Property of a Gentleman: The Formation, Organisation and Dispersal of the Private Library 1620-1920* (Winchester, 1991), 19. One of Robert Adam's clients, Clerk of Penicuik, objected that putting the library upstairs in the traditional place would 'have the good effect of freeing it, from turning out to be the loitering resort of the whole of the family'; quoted by M. H. Port, 'Library Architecture and Interiors', in *CHLB2*, 472.

⁴³ Donoghue, *FM*, 21, 18; Engell, *CM*; Ellen Gardiner, *Regulating Readers: Gender and Literary Criticism in the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (Newark and London, 1999); J. P. Klancher, *The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790-1832* (Madison, 1987).

⁴⁴ Quoted by Donoghue, *FM*, 17.

⁴⁵ T. A. Birrell, 'Reading as Pastime: the Place of Light Literature in some Gentlemen's Libraries of the Seventeenth Century', in R. Myers and Michael Harris (eds.), *Property of a Gentleman: The Formation,*

In addition, there were many reasons why particular books turned up in libraries which palpably had little to do with personal reading preferences. Authors would quite frequently present their close friends and relatives (not to mention patrons) with books, so that Craig possessed no less than eight editions of the poetic works of his revered uncle Thomson.⁴⁶ Similarly, landowners often demonstrated their support for local authors by buying up copies of their books, explaining Roxburghe's five copies of Ridpath's *Border History*, or the two copies of Shaw's *History of the Province of Moray* (1775) still held by the Brodie Castle Library.⁴⁷ Finally, there are undoubtedly libraries in our sample that might better be described as professional rather than private – a vocational collection of books which were of use to a lawyer, doctor or clergyman in going about his daily business. In the minutes recording the sequestration of the estate of John MacAndrew, a solicitor, printer and publisher in Inverness, it is noted that 'Mr. Campbell as representing the firm of MacAndrew and Campbell claims retention of the law books as being in his possession' – so some of MacAndrew's books, including John Erskine's *An Institute of the Law of Scotland* (1773) and Lord Kames' *Historical Law-Tracts* (1758), were claimed by MacAndrew's legal partner as the rightful property of their firm rather than forming part of his private collection.⁴⁸

The fundamental problem with book-ownership evidence, then, is that it tells us very little about the meaning or practice of reading for individuals in the past. Our survey of library catalogues in Georgian Scotland demonstrates that certain families and individuals owned particular books of the Scottish Enlightenment, but evidence of their ownership does not constitute proof that the books were ever read – and as Lundberg and May understatedly remark, 'we may assume that ... some were read more intensively than

Organisation and Dispersal of the Private Library 1620-1920 (Winchester, 1991), 129. Birrell despairs that 'After the seventeenth century, you do not need to study the library catalogues to learn about reading habits – that can be done by studying the reviews. Private library catalogues, from the eighteenth century onwards, are primarily only a guide to collecting habits', 128-9. See Paul Kaufman, 'Two Eighteenth-Century Guides to the Choice of Books', *LH*, 1 (1969), 146-52.

⁴⁶ Brown, 'Craig's Library', 93.

⁴⁷ Hillyard, 'John Kerr'; personal search of Brodie Castle Library, National Trust for Scotland.

⁴⁸ NAS CS96/168, Act sequestrating the whole estate and effects of John MacAndrew, Inverness, 1831.

others'.⁴⁹ We buy books for many reasons, to enlighten ourselves certainly, but also to meet a particular professional or personal need, to construct an image of ourselves that we want to present to the world (or to ourselves), to entertain and divert us in the bedroom or in the bathroom – or simply to display on our coffee tables.

In light of this intuitive fact, is an attempt to illuminate the reception of the Scottish Enlightenment by quantitative means worthwhile? Consumers of books in eighteenth-century Scotland formed in the first instance a part of the material and financial crutch of the Scottish *literati*, and whether or not they read them the men and women who bought the works of Hume, Smith, Robertson *et al* were still involved in a very real and practical sense in sustaining the Scottish Enlightenment.⁵⁰ Moreover, in our particular concern for the reception of these books in provincial Scotland it is essential to try to estimate the extent to which they circulated beyond Edinburgh. As will become increasingly clear as this study progresses, however, book catalogues can be of comparative value alongside other sources that allow us to explore the 'hows' and 'whys' of individual reading practices and experiences: without access to the books themselves, it is indisputably the case that eighteenth-century Scots could not have read them.

III

With these ends in mind, we turn now to an analysis of the Scottish Enlightenment holdings of 450 surviving Scottish library catalogues. Of course, Scottish libraries held significant holdings of other types of books, including, to name but a few important features of the literary marketplace in Georgian Britain, novels; the critical reviews; travel literature; political pamphlets; almanacs, advertisements and newspapers; evangelical sermons and other devotional printed matter; trades manuals and professional reference books; and foreign language literature, including books of the continental Enlightenment. Indeed, it seems clear even from the most cursory glance over the catalogues that there were few substantial libraries in Georgian Scotland that did not

⁴⁹ LM, 264.

⁵⁰ EB, 240-1 and 308 on Hume; 245-7 on Blair; and 201, 214, 259-60 and 282 on Robertson.

include Fielding's novels, Anson's *Travels*, or the *Monthly Review*. Moreover, the books of the continental Enlightenment also seem to have found a ready readership beyond the *literati*. Montesquieu's *L'Esprit* was found in 213 catalogues and Buffon's *Natural History* in 150, while the collected works of Rousseau and Voltaire were nearly as widely distributed in Scottish country house libraries as the works of Hume and Robertson. However, this study of Scottish reading takes as its starting point the consumption of a specific body of literature – namely the books of the Scottish Enlightenment as it has been defined in recent scholarship – and to keep the study within reasonable boundaries, our investigation has been limited to these set texts.⁵¹

Table 1.3 therefore presents the 20 Scottish Enlightenment titles that appear most frequently in catalogues in our sample. By far the most popular work selected here is Hume's *History*, listed in 294 separate catalogues and 71% of relevant libraries, dispelling the long-standing myth of this work's unpopularity – despite the undoubted scope for controversy and misreception in Hume's treatment of certain subjects (see Chapter Six, below).⁵² *History* receives further endorsement in the distribution of Smollett's now largely forgotten *History of England* and of the more familiar works of William Robertson, all of which appeared in over 48% of relevant libraries in our sample.⁵³ Robertson's *History of Scotland* ranks second overall, appearing in 264 catalogues and nearly 65% of relevant libraries, while his *Charles V* (with 241 catalogues, 60%), *America* (208, 55%) and even his *India* (which despite the late publication date of 1791, and slightly more obtuse subject matter, appears in 162 relevant catalogues at 48%) appear to reflect the consistently high favour with which the writings of the Historiographer Royal and institutional president of the Scottish Enlightenment were received by contemporary readers throughout the country. Nevertheless, such

⁵¹ For the full list of titles included, see my Bibliography below; cf. *EB*, 43-95, 613-687.

⁵² J. B. Black, *The Art of History: a study of four great historians of the eighteenth century* (1926; New York, 1965), 83. The lavishly printed library catalogue of Kinfauns Castle (1828) reports of Hume's *History* that 'It is a singular fact in the History of Literature that during the first twelve month after the publication of the first division of this work, only FORTY FIVE copies were sold!' Hume's *History* appeared in 44% of American catalogues in LM.

⁵³ On Smollett, see O. M. Brack Jr., 'Tobias Smollett Puffs His Histories', in O. M. Brack Jr. (ed.), *Writers, Books and Trade: An Eighteenth-Century Miscellany for William B. Todd* (New York, 1994); L. M. Knapp, 'The Publication of Smollett's *Complete History and Continuation*', *Library*, 16 (1935).

statistics immediately reflect the influence of the critical press in shaping reading tastes: Smollett, Hume and Robertson were marked out for particular praise by the anonymous author of *Directions for a Proper Choice of Authors to form a Library* (1766), and their works were very widely distributed in libraries throughout the British Isles.⁵⁴

Title	No. of cats	% of libraries
Hume, <i>History</i> (1754)	294	71
Robertson, <i>History of Scotland</i> (1759)	264	65
Robertson, <i>Charles V</i> (1762)	241	60
Burns, <i>Poems</i> (1786)	209	60
Smith, <i>Wealth of Nations</i> (1776)	221	58
Robertson, <i>America</i> (1777)	208	55
Smollett, <i>Humphrey Clinker</i> (and other novels; from 1748)	233	55
Scott, <i>Waverley</i> (and other novels; from 1814)	120	54
Blair, <i>Sermons</i> (1777)	198	53
Macpherson, <i>The Works of Ossian</i> (from 1765)	200	51
<i>Edinburgh Review</i> (1802 onwards)	134	48
Robertson, <i>Historical Disquisition on India</i> (1791)	162	48
Smollett, <i>History of England</i> (1758)	198	48
Blair, <i>Lectures</i> (1783)	168	47
Hume, <i>Essays</i> (1741/1753)	194	45
Thomson, <i>The Seasons</i> (1730)	184	43
Erskine, <i>The Principles of the Law of Scotland</i> (1754)	169	41
Ramsay, <i>Poetic Works</i> (from 1723)	176	41
Thomson, <i>Works</i> (1736)	173	40
Scott, <i>Lady of the Lake</i> (1810)	98	40

Table 1.3: Overall Distribution of Scottish Enlightenment Texts, Top 20

Other key-note works of the Scottish Enlightenment fare similarly well. Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* is the fifth most frequently-distributed work in our sample,

⁵⁴ *Directions*, 12, 16; its authorship is discussed by Kaufman, 'Two Guides'. Hume's *History* appeared in 46% of English libraries; Smollett's *History* in 34%; Robertson's *Scotland* in 38%. Comparisons with English libraries throughout this chapter are based on my own sampling of 50 named sales catalogues from the 1780s and 1790s accessed online at ECCO or held in the British Library's microfilm collection of Sotheby sales, listed in *Sotheby & Co. Catalogues of Sales: A Guide to the Microfilm Collection, 1734-1850 Part 1 Reels 1-71* (1973).

appearing in 221 catalogues and over 58% of libraries post-dating its initial publication in 1776, confirming that this pioneering work in political economy was immediately available to many contemporary readers – and especially so in Scotland.⁵⁵ Meanwhile, though modern commentators might scoff at the relative naivety of John Erskine’s *Principles of the Law of Scotland* (1754) in light of innovations in legal theory pioneered by the likes of Smith, its inclusion in 169 catalogues and 41% of libraries overall reminds us of the great importance of the law in the lives of many Scottish book owners.⁵⁶

The Moderate minister Hugh Blair apparently ranks as the most popular moralist of the Scottish Enlightenment, with the various incarnations of his *Sermons* (from 1777) appearing in 198 library catalogues (52%), while his *Lectures* was the most frequently-distributed work on taste, found in 168 catalogues (47%).⁵⁷ The only other work of ostensibly philosophical intent in our top twenty is Hume’s *Essays*, listed in 194 catalogues, demonstrating again that despite this renowned sceptic’s suspect views regarding religion, morality and British politics, his polite style and reputation as an essayist second only to Addison guaranteed a remarkably high share of the market.⁵⁸ Finally, we see clear evidence for the pre-eminence of the Scottish periodical tradition in the appearance of the *Edinburgh Review* in 134 of our sample catalogues (representing 48% of catalogues compiled after its first release in 1802) – readers attracted as much by the reviewers’ precocious critical commentary, as by their famous political leanings.⁵⁹

Table 1.3 also demonstrates repeatedly the relative importance of imaginative literature. Indeed, the impressive frequency of his published verse within our sample (209, nearly

⁵⁵ R. F. Teichgraber, “‘Less Abused than I had Reason to Expect’: The Reception of *The Wealth of Nations* in Britain”, *Historical Journal*, 30 (1987). *The Wealth of Nations* was found in 16% of English libraries and in 31% of American catalogues; LM.

⁵⁶ John W. Cairns, ‘Legal Theory’, in *CC*, 231. Erskine could be found in over 70% of libraries belonging to legal professionals.

⁵⁷ Blair would appear to have been somewhat less popular in England, each work found in around 20% of the 50 English catalogues sampled here.

⁵⁸ Copies of Addison and Steele’s *Spectator* magazine were found in 290 catalogues. Hume’s *Essays* were discovered in 26% of American catalogues (LM), though note the caveat discussed above; they appeared in 30% of sampled English catalogues.

⁵⁹ For general discussion of the *Edinburgh Review*, see *ODNB* on Francis Jeffrey; J. Clive, *Scotch Reviewers: the Edinburgh Review, 1802-1815* (London, 1957); B. Fontana, *Rethinking the Politics of Commercial Society: The Edinburgh Review 1802-1832* (Cambridge, 1985); D. Roper, *Reviewing before the Edinburgh: 1788-1802* (London, 1978).

60% of relevant catalogues) places Burns at the very centre of Scottish intellectual culture, copies being present proportionately in more collections than any other title except Hume's *History* and Robertson's *Scotland* and *Charles V*. Perhaps less surprisingly, Macpherson's *Ossian's Works* (a collected edition of which was first published in 1765) and Scott's *Lady of the Lake* (1810) achieve frequency rates in keeping with the cultural status achieved by their authors during their own lifetimes. Together with the sustained popularity throughout our period of two Scottish poets of an earlier generation, Ramsay and Thomson, the statistics speak eloquently for the appeal of the poetic muse in Enlightenment Scotland – again, an important revelation given the complete absence of Scottish poets from some prominent recent definitions of the Scottish Enlightenment.⁶⁰ Our book catalogues also demonstrate the popularity of Scottish novelists, with the collected novels of both Smollett and Scott appearing in the top eight most popular works in our sample – and this despite the fact that *Waverley* appeared as late as 1814.⁶¹

IV

One of the primary motivations in turning to this consumer-led perspective on the Scottish Enlightenment is dissatisfaction with competing definitions that prioritise different types of learning, and especially, the faultline between the philosopher's definition of the Scottish Enlightenment and the scientist's definition. It makes sense, then, to turn for further insights into its reception to a more detailed analysis of the same data by genre, allowing us to trace the diffusion of works of philosophy and science that

⁶⁰ Burns and Thomson are not mentioned once in *CC*, while Ramsay is mentioned only in discussion of eighteenth-century Scottish culture (and his poetry not at all) and Macpherson is only mentioned in passing as a historian on 260 and 266. For the view that Scottish poetry of the period was 'so shaped by the physical and intellectual achievements' of Scotsmen in other literary genres 'as to become virtually unintelligible if studied in isolation from them', see J. MacQueen, *The Enlightenment and Scottish Literature Volume 1: Progress and Poetry* (Edinburgh, 1982), quote from 6-7. Sher takes a more nuanced view in *CU*; compare 5 and 12 (where Burns is effectively excluded from the Scottish Enlightenment) and 241-61 (where *Ossian* is convincingly located at the heart of the Moderate *literati*'s agenda for change in Scotland). Macpherson (20%), Ramsay (15) and Thomson (30) were all regularly held by sampled English libraries, though significantly Burns was not; see below.

⁶¹ They are incorporated as one entry each in the dataset due to the large number of collected editions found in the sample.

might have been lost amidst the overwhelming statistical priority of historical and imaginative literature.

Few would disagree that history had an important place in the Scottish Enlightenment, and we have already seen that history was apparently the most popular form of Scottish Enlightenment discourse within our sample of book owners. Table 1.4, then, tabulates the thirty-two historical works that appear in at least 20% of relevant collections in our sample – broadly defined to include alongside mainstream political and polite historians the so-called ‘conjectural historians’ like Smith, Ferguson and Millar who have since been assigned to the modern disciplines of sociology and political economy.⁶²

Title	No. of cats.	% of libraries
Hume, <i>History</i>	294	71
Robertson, <i>History of Scotland</i>	264	65
Robertson, <i>Charles V</i>	241	60
Smith, <i>Wealth of Nations</i>	221	58
Robertson, <i>America</i>	208	55
Robertson, <i>India</i>	162	48
Smollett, <i>History of England</i>	198	48
Erskine, <i>The Principles of the Law of Scotland</i>	169	41
Kames, <i>Sketches of the History of Man</i>	144	38
Ferguson, <i>History of the Progress and Termination of the Roman Republic</i>	129	36
Hailes, <i>Annals</i>	136	36
Ferguson, <i>Essay</i>	137	35
Sinclair, <i>Statistical Account of Scotland</i>	114	34
Guthrie, <i>Geographical Grammar</i>	131	34
Watson, <i>Philip II</i>	115	31
Arnot, <i>History of Edinburgh</i>	107	29
Dalrymple, <i>Memoirs of the History of Great Britain and Ireland</i>	110	29
Laing, <i>History of Scotland</i>	79	27
Henry, <i>History of Great Britain</i>	102	26
Gillies, <i>History of Ancient Greece</i>	87	25
Stewart, <i>Lives of Smith, Robertson and Reid</i>	67	24
Watson, <i>Philip III</i>	76	23
Keith, <i>History of the Affairs of the Church and State in Scotland</i>	98	23
Tytler, <i>Historical and Critical Enquiry into the Evidence Against Mary Queen of Scots</i>	83	21
Stuart, <i>View of Society in Europe</i>	77	21

⁶² H. M. Höpfl, ‘From Savage to Scotsman: Conjectural History in the Scottish Enlightenment’, *Journal of British Studies*, 18 (1978). The rise of history before our period is traced by Woolf, *Reading History*, especially 157.

Kames, <i>Historical Law-Tracts</i>	87	21
Home, <i>History of the Rebellion in the Year 1745</i>	57	21
Stuart, <i>History of Reformation</i>	73	20
Forbes, <i>Life of Beattie</i>	51	20
Millar, <i>Origin of the Distinction of Ranks</i>	75	20

Table 1.4: Distribution of Historiography

The top six works will be familiar by now, and confirm once again the huge popularity of the historiography of Hume, Robertson and Smollett in Scotland, as well as the immediate impact made by *The Wealth of Nations*. Further down the list, works that demonstrate some of the core traits of Scottish Enlightenment historiography as pioneered by Hume and Robertson are prominent, especially Henry's *History of Great Britain* (1771), which was typical in both its polite style and in its much-trumpeted 'new' treatment of the scope of history. Elsewhere, Scottish interest in the development of human society clearly fared well, with Ferguson's nuanced account of the *Essay on the History of Civil Society* appearing in 35% of relevant catalogues, Stuart's controversialist *View of Society in Europe* in 21%, Kames' *Sketches of the History of Man* in 37% and Millar's more technical *Distinction of Ranks in Society* in 20%.⁶³ Even John Home's *History of the Rebellion in the Year 1745* (21% of catalogues after 1802) reflected this obsession with stadial modes of explanation in history, though it probably helped Home's sales that he dealt with a topic that still touched many readers' lives even in the opening decade of the nineteenth century – as *Waverley* was to demonstrate in 1814.⁶⁴

While conjectural history usually looked to antiquity for evidence of the evolution of human society, other works featuring on Table 1.4 remind us of the continuing importance in Scotland more generally of classical culture. John Gillies may not have replicated the success of his more illustrious predecessor as Historiographer Royal for

⁶³ Ferguson's *Civil Society* appeared in 17% of American catalogues, Kames' *Sketches* in 24%; LM. The distribution of these works was also considerably down in English libraries sampled here, with Ferguson found in 18%, and Kames, Millar and Stuart all found in around 10%.

⁶⁴ ODNB; John Ramsay wrote of his eagerness to read Home's *History* in February 1802, but was to be sorely disappointed: 'it is exceedingly below par, and shows only that whatever principles he had 57 years ago, whatever affection for church or state, he has now dropped them, and whether he has taken up anything else does not appear'; *Ochertyre*, 74, 107.

Scotland, but his *History of Ancient Greece* (1786) nevertheless appeared in a quarter of relevant collections,⁶⁵ while even Alexander Adam's schoolmasterly account of *Roman Antiquities* was found in 19% of collections. Meanwhile, Ferguson's own favourite work, the *History of the Progress and Termination of the Roman Republic*, outstripped the performance of his more-renowned work on the evolution of human society, due perhaps to its familiar subject matter and more immediate relevance to European affairs in the 1790s.

As Ferguson ably demonstrated in drawing allusions between events in modern France and classical Rome, antiquity did not merely provide source material for conjectural history. It also provided instructive lessons for the possible fate of the burgeoning British Empire in the best tradition of philosophical history. Another prominent historian in our sample, Robert Watson, sought his philosophical lessons in the experiences of Spanish imperialists in the sixteenth century. His histories of the reigns of *Philip II* (1777) and *Philip III* (1793) were listed in 31% and 23% of relevant collections overall, but were in particular vogue throughout Britain in the years immediately following their publication – *Philip II* appearing in 35% of relevant catalogues between the late 1770s and 1801, and *Philip III* in 45% of catalogues in the same period.⁶⁶ As we shall see in Chapter Five, they were taken by many readers to inform issues with vital implications for the future viability of the British Empire, especially in North America.

Quite another type of history that clearly attracted a considerable proportion of Scottish readers was the sub-genre of biography. Dugald Stewart's biographies of Reid, Smith and especially Robertson proved particularly popular, at least one of which appearing in nearly 24% of relevant catalogues.⁶⁷ Here, and in the reception of Sir William Forbes'

⁶⁵ ODNB; D. Allan, 'The Age of Pericles in the Modern Athens: Greek History, Scottish Politics and the Fading of Enlightenment', *Historical Journal*, 44 (2001), 391-417. Gillies appeared in just two English catalogues sampled here.

⁶⁶ D. Allan, 'Anti-Hispanicism and the Construction of Late Eighteenth-century British Patriotism: Robert Watson's *History of the Reign of Philip the Second*', *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 77 (2000), 423-449. *Phillip II* appeared in 20% of sampled English catalogues in this period.

⁶⁷ Boswell's more renowned *Life of Samuel Johnson* (1791), written in London about an English author, appeared in 34% of relevant libraries; his *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides* proving far less popular in Scotland than elsewhere, listed in 22% of libraries.

Life of Beattie (in 20% of collections after 1807) and Smellie's *Literary and Characteristical Lives* (appearing in 12% of catalogues post-dating its publication in 1800), Scottish readers registered their patriotic pride in the group of literary celebrities who have since come to represent the Scottish Enlightenment. Indeed, it is plausible that such commemorative works provided a ready-made entry point into their most popular and influential ideas for a new generation of readers in the first decades of the nineteenth century.

It is often forgotten that some Enlightenment historians took up the partisan battles of Scotland's controversialist past. The enigmatic Mary Queen of Scots remained an especially contested subject throughout the period, her polite condemnation at the hands of Robertson merely serving to fan the fires of controversy further. William Tytler's 'Vindication' was distributed through 21% of relevant collections in the entire sample, and in 35% of libraries in the north east, alluding to the continuing persistence of local Jacobite sympathies there after 1745. Gilbert Stuart's *History of Scotland from the Establishment of Religion to the Death of Mary Queen of Scots* (a scathing riposte to Robertson published in 1782) appeared in 19% of relevant catalogues, while even Walter Goodall's one-eyed *Examination of the Letters of Mary Queen of Scots* (1754) could be found in nearly 15% of relevant collections.⁶⁸ Interestingly, English contributors to the controversy like John Whitaker featured far less frequently in Scottish libraries – perhaps confirming the role of local loyalties in bolstering the sales of Goodall and Tytler, as well as reflecting the deep-seated 'Scottishness' of the Stewart dynasty with which Queen Mary was commonly associated.⁶⁹ Conversely, English readers tended to ignore Goodall and Tytler in favour of more conventional authorities like Robertson and Hume.⁷⁰ Meanwhile, though Hume's *History* was unjustly suspected of its own political biases (see below, Chapter 6), works embracing either side of the Whig-Tory divide were well received by Scottish book owners in our sample – including Sir John Dalrymple's

⁶⁸ K. O'Brien, *Narratives of Enlightenment: Cosmopolitan History from Voltaire to Gibbon* (Cambridge, 1997); L. L. Bongie, 'The Eighteenth-Century Marian Controversy and an Unpublished Letter by David Hume', *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 1 (1963-1964).

⁶⁹ B. Lenman, *The Jacobite Cause* (Glasgow, 1986); idem., *The Jacobite Clans of the Great Glen 1650-1784* (Aberdeen, 1995); E. Cruickshanks and J. Black (eds.), *The Jacobite Challenge* (Edinburgh, 1988); D. Szechi, *The Jacobites, Britain and Europe, 1688-1788* (Manchester, 1994).

⁷⁰ The two Scottish vindications of Mary's conduct were found in around 5% of sampled English libraries.

Memoirs of the History of Great Britain and Ireland (distributed through 29% of collections after 1771), in fact a polemical attempt to prove the Whiggish character of the ‘Glorious Revolution’.⁷¹

One final conclusion that can be drawn from an analysis of the relative popularity of historical works of the Scottish Enlightenment is that a good reception was guaranteed for all things Scottish. As we have seen, Robertson’s *History of Scotland* was the second most popular work in the entire sample, but that was entirely symptomatic of the Scottish reading public’s appetite for works that dealt with all aspects of the Scottish past. Lord Hailes’ *Annals of Scotland* (1776), a forensic account of transactions in medieval Scotland, appeared in 36% of relevant catalogues, and set the tone for Scottish Enlightenment historians who explored the earliest history of Scotland – including Lord Kames’ *Historical Law-Tracts* (which appeared in 21% of catalogues after 1758), John Pinkerton’s controversial *Enquiry into the History of Scotland* (18% after 1789), and Thomas Innes’ *Critical Essay on the Ancient Inhabitants of the Northern Part of Britain* (16% after 1729), which deconstructed the potent mythology of Scotland’s foundation.⁷² Such works were barely known beyond the Scottish border, all found in considerably less than 5% of sampled English library catalogues.⁷³ It may therefore be the case that David Allan’s conclusion for associational readers in Perth – that Scottish ‘historical and antiquarian concerns ... had become an obsession’ there – holds true for consumers across the country (see Chapters 2 and 5, below).⁷⁴

⁷¹ Dalrymple’s *Memoirs* earned a glowing reference from John Ramsay of Ochtertyre, a staunch Whig who considered it ‘one of the most pleasing pieces of history I know’; *Ochtertyre*, 101. The work was well received in England too, found in 20% of sampled English catalogues.

⁷² T. Innes, *A critical essay on the Ancient Inhabitants of the Northern Parts of Britain or Scotland*, ed. George Grub (1729; Edinburgh, 1879); C. Kidd, *Subverting Scotland’s Past: Scottish Whig Historians and the Creation of an Anglo-British Identity 1689-c.1830* (Cambridge, 1993), 107; A. Ross, ‘Some Scottish Catholic Historians’, from *The Innes Review: Scottish Catholic Historical Studies*, 1 (Glasgow, 1950); J. F. McMillan, ‘The Innes brothers and the Scots College, Paris’, from E. Cruickshanks and E. Corp (eds.), *The Stuart Court in exile and the Jacobites* (London, 1995).

⁷³ Hailes’ *Annals* and Kames’ *Historical Law-Tracts* were found in just two English catalogues, Pinkerton’s *Enquiry* in three, and Innes’ *Critical Essay* in one.

⁷⁴ D. Allan, ‘Provincial Readers and Book Culture in the Scottish Enlightenment: The Perth Library, 1784-c.1800’, *The Library*, 4 (2002), 383.

Indeed, generic analysis of the distribution of historical works in our sample reveals considerable enthusiasm for local and regional history.⁷⁵ Hugo Arnot's *History of Edinburgh* (1779) found its way into nearly 29% of collections and Shaw's *History of Moray* was distributed through 17% of relevant libraries, while William Nimmo's *General History of Stirlingshire* (1777), Ridpath's *Border History*, John Gibson's *History of Glasgow*, William Maitland's *History of Edinburgh* (1753), David Ure's *History of Rutherglen and East Kilbride* (1793) and William Semple's edition of George Crawford's *History of the Shire of Renfrew* (1782) could all be found in more than 10% of relevant collections. Once again, such works were extremely rare in English libraries: not a single copy of Arnot, Semple, or Ure was discovered in our sample of 50 English catalogues, while Nimmo, Shaw and Gibson were each listed just once. Moreover, book owners in provincial Scotland were most amenable to authors who wrote about the areas in which they lived. Shaw's *History of Moray* appeared in 29% of libraries in Aberdeenshire and a further 24% of Highland libraries, but in much less than 20% elsewhere in Scotland. Nimmo's *Stirlingshire* reached a peak distribution rate of 26% in libraries in and around Stirling and Perth, but was found in less than 10% elsewhere. Most dramatically, Ridpath's *Border History* found a welcome home in 48% of libraries in Roxburghshire and Berwickshire, though there were only three copies in Aberdeenshire and the Highlands and just two in the South West.

It is likely that provincial readers' 'obsession' with Scottish history also informed their reception of particularly popular works of imaginative literature in our sample, as listed in Table 1.5. Scott's *Marmion* (appearing in 36% of collections after its publication in 1808) actually dealt with a particularly traumatic scar in the national memory, the slaughter of the flower of the Scottish nobility at the battle of Flodden Field,⁷⁶ while Ossian is well known to have addressed a specific need at the heart of the Scottish psyche for an ancient, national poet – the Scottish Homer.⁷⁷ At the same time, as Blair

⁷⁵ For the wider context in which these works appeared, see R. Sweet, *The Writing of Urban Histories in Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1997).

⁷⁶ *Marmion* made a much less impressive impact on American readers, found in just 6% of library catalogues after 1801; LM.

⁷⁷ Ramsay of Ochtertyre called Ossian the 'Highland Homer', and was probably typical in thinking that 'we meet [therein] with a delicacy of sentiment, strains of tenderness and effusions of passion that bespeak that

demonstrated in his *Critical Dissertation* (itself identified in just 23 libraries in our sample, though further copies were probably ‘hidden’ in catalogue entries of ‘Ossian’s Works’), Ossian fitted the conjectural historians’ image of a poet in the earliest stages of social development – as we have seen, an historiographical mode of thinking to which Scottish book buyers enthusiastically subscribed. The same point might be made of Scott’s novels (found in 54% of catalogues after 1814), especially *Waverley*, which regardless of its impressive sentimental appeal and consummate narrative style also tapped into many of the core historiographical themes that had been developed in the Scottish Enlightenment.⁷⁸ Moreover, Scott’s *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (31% of collections after 1802)⁷⁹ and Ramsay’s various collected ballads (41%) drew directly on provincial oral traditions – and hence tapped into the same cultural priorities that drove interest in Scottish regional history and antiquities.

Title	No. of cats.	% of libraries
Burns, <i>Poems</i>	209	60
Smollett, <i>Humphrey Clinker</i>	233	55
Scott, <i>Waverley</i>	120	54
Macpherson, <i>The Works of Ossian</i>	200	51
Thomson, <i>The Seasons</i>	184	43
Ramsay, <i>Poetic Works</i>	176	41
Thomson, <i>Works</i>	173	40
Scott, <i>Lady of the Lake</i>	98	40
Scott, <i>Marmion</i>	91	36
Scott, <i>Lay of the Last Minstrel</i>	90	34
Mackenzie, <i>Man of Feeling</i>	123	32
Scott, <i>Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border</i>	87	31
Mackenzie, <i>Man of the World</i>	108	28

genius which does not often appear in the world’; *Ochertyre*, 106-7. The best introduction to the cultural significance of Ossian in eighteenth-century Scotland remains *CU*, 241-61; see also R. Sher, “‘Those Scotch Imposters and Their Cabal’: Ossian and the Scottish Enlightenment”, in R. L. Emerson, G. Girard and R. Runte (eds.), *Man and Nature: Proceedings of the Canadian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 1 (London, Ontario, 1982); F. J. Stafford, *The Sublime Savage: A Study of James Macpherson and the Poems of Ossian* (Edinburgh, 1988). For a broader perspective, see various contributions to H. Gaskell (ed.), *Ossian Revisited* (London, 1991) and his (ed.), *The Reception of Ossian in Europe* (Bristol, 2004). Ossian was considerably less popular in English catalogues, though its appearance in 20% of sampled libraries reflects the generally positive view of the ‘translations’ in the critical press.

⁷⁸ J. Anderson, *Sir Walter Scott and History* (Edinburgh, 1981); Duncan Forbes, ‘The Rationalism of Sir Walter Scott’, *Cambridge Journal*, 7 (1953-4); P. D. Garside, ‘Scott and the “Philosophical” Historians’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 36 (1975).

⁷⁹ Listed in 4% of American catalogues after 1802 (just 2 catalogues); LM. *Lay of the Last Minstrel* was listed in just 12% of catalogues in America, 34% in Scotland.

Mackenzie, <i>Julia de Roubigne</i>	103	27
Fergusson, <i>Poems</i>	92	24
Wilkie, <i>The Epigoniad</i>	87	21
Ramsay, <i>Gentle Shepherd</i>	88	20
Beattie, <i>Minstrel</i>	72	20

Table 1.5: Distribution of Imaginative Literature

The popularity of the vernacular poetry of Robert Burns and Robert Fergusson can be more firmly explained by this patriotic appetite for specifically Scottish themes, especially as neither poet registered particular appeal beyond the Scottish border. It is certainly noteworthy that at 60% Burns achieves such an outstanding distribution rate in libraries across Scotland (only in libraries in Fife does its distribution dip below 50%) when it was apparently found in somewhat less than a quarter of English library catalogues.⁸⁰ Even the supposedly-neglected Fergusson appears in 24% of relevant catalogues in our survey, implying that his poetry was apparently better received than many of the major works of the Scottish Enlightenment – particularly in the Lowlands, since copies turn up less frequently in libraries north of Perth.⁸¹ Perhaps, then, it was the vernacular style which these two poets shared in common that appealed particularly to a Scottish audience, serving it seems as a welcome antidote to the cultural Anglicisation to which Scottish audiences were increasingly being subjected as the eighteenth century progressed.⁸² They must have been a great deal more familiar to readers in provincial Scotland than works aimed explicitly at expunging the Scots language from polite letters, with Beattie’s effort appearing in 7% of relevant libraries and Sir John Sinclair’s in just 5%.⁸³ Perhaps, then, imaginative literature and history sat side by side in contemporary

⁸⁰ Burns appeared in just one English catalogue sampled here, though David Allan’s unpublished research puts the figure more realistically at around 20%.

⁸¹ Fergusson’s poetry was only discovered in one English catalogue sampled here.

⁸² On cultural Anglicisation see R. Crawford, *The Scottish Invention of English Literature* (Cambridge, 1998); D. Daiches, *The Paradox of Scottish Culture: the Eighteenth-Century Experience* (London, 1964); K. G. Simpson, *The Protean Scot: The Crisis of Identity in Eighteenth-Century Scottish Literature* (Aberdeen, 1988).

⁸³ [James Beattie], *A List of two hundred Scotticisms. With Remarks* (Aberdeen, 1779); Sir John Sinclair, *Observations on the Scottish Dialect* (London, 1782); J. G. Basker, ‘Scotticisms and the Problem of Cultural Identity in Eighteenth-Century Britain’, in John Dwyer and Richard B. Sher (eds.), *Sociability and Society in Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1993). Provincial responses to such works are discussed in Chapter 5 below.

libraries in celebrating and commemorating the cultural identity of the Scottish nation as its distinct political identity was fast receding from living memory.⁸⁴

Outright patriotism certainly accounts for the diffusion of William Wilkie's now obscure *Epigoniad*. Critically, it was an absolute flop, at least in England: 'if bad rhimes [sic] are to be deemed, as some think they are, a capital defect', a reviewer in the *Monthly Review* wrote, 'our Author will be capitally convicted on many an indictment in the court of criticism'.⁸⁵ Yet it was included in Alexander Wedderburn's famous list of Scotland's greatest literary endeavours alongside Robertson's *History of Scotland*, and even Hume hailed it as 'one of the ornaments of our language'.⁸⁶ As Richard Sher argues, 'it was a continual source of embarrassment to Scottish men of letters that their country appeared in the eyes of the world to be an unpoetic nation', and Hume was soon to be found exhorting friends in London 'that you have so much love for Arts, & for your native Country, as to be very industrious in propagating the Fame of it'.⁸⁷ Here was the Scottish Homer (or Pope), a national epic poet to be promoted on behalf of Scotland in the bear-pit of London's salon circuit – so it is no surprise to find it as a badge of honour in the collections of 87 patriotic Scottish book owners.

Elsewhere, Table 1.5 does not deliver too many surprises: we have already noted the diffusion of the narrative fiction of Scott and Smollett, and it is simple enough to explain their popularity as novels explicitly intended to entertain readers.⁸⁸ Similarly, the popularity of Henry Mackenzie's novels (each appearing in around 30% of relevant libraries) reflected approval for the moral stance they propagated (see below, Chapter 2),

⁸⁴ A point argued forcefully by Janet A. Smith, 'Some Eighteenth-Century Ideas of Scotland', N. Phillipson and R. Mitchison (eds.), *Scotland in the Age of Improvement: Essays in Scottish history in the Eighteenth Century* (1970; Edinburgh, 1996).

⁸⁵ Quoted by E. C. Mossner, *The Forgotten Hume: Le Bon David* (Columbia, 1943), 72-73. Modern students have concurred with the contemporary English critics: Sher calls it 'a ponderous self-consciously Homeric epic', *CU*, 256, while Mossner suggests a possible remedy for modern readers who have actually read the thing: 'I hereby solemnly affirm that I have no intention of following eminent precedent in founding an *Epigoniad Club* to consist of those who have had the temerity to read the entire epic', 216. English catalogues sampled here would appear to endorse such assessments, with the *Epigoniad* appearing in just one catalogue.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, quoting Hume, 74. Sher quotes Wedderburn in *CU*, 88; *EB*, 68, 74-6, 626-7.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, quoting Hume, 75.

⁸⁸ James Lackington's anecdote about the ubiquity of Smollett's novels is reproduced in Brewer, *Pleasures*, 188.

as well as the sentimental world view they appeased.⁸⁹ And while we have already highlighted the reception of vernacular poets, the popularity of Scottish anglicised poets must not be underplayed. Beattie’s hymn to the progress of genius, *The Minstrel* (1771) appeared in 19% of relevant collections, while Thomson enjoyed even more success, suggesting that Craig’s decision to decorate his design for the Edinburgh New Town with stanzas taken from his uncle’s *Seasons* was entirely appropriate in commemorating the nation’s most celebrated poet of nature.⁹⁰

When we turn to a genre more closely related to the traditional concept of Enlightenment itself, philosophy, we find that works in this subject apparently enjoyed significantly less success in reaching a contemporary Scottish audience. Table 1.6 presents the twenty most popular works of philosophy (broadly conceived) and it is immediately noteworthy that distribution rates for works in this category are markedly lower across the board than distribution rates in history or imaginative literature.⁹¹ Nevertheless, it is also clear that many of these works were capable of reaching a surprisingly wide audience, with ten works found in 90 catalogues or more, and with seventeen works being distributed through more than 20% of relevant collections.

Title	No. of cats.	% of libraries
Blair, <i>Sermons</i>	198	53
Blair, <i>Lectures</i>	168	47
Hume, <i>Essays</i>	194	45
Smith, <i>Theory of Moral Sentiments</i>	155	38
Beattie, <i>Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth</i>	139	36
Kames, <i>Elements of Criticism</i>	136	34
Reid, <i>Inquiry into the Human Mind</i>	128	32
Campbell, <i>Dissertation on Miracles</i>	107	27
Reid, <i>Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man</i>	90	26
Stewart, <i>Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind</i>	84	25
Reid, <i>Essays on the Active Powers of Man</i>	86	25
Stewart, <i>Philosophical Essays</i>	60	24
Alison, <i>Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste</i>	83	24

⁸⁹ For two contrasting views of Mackenzie, see H. W. Thomas, *A Scottish Man of Feeling* (London, 1931) and Dwyer, *VD*. Mackenzie was considerably less popular south of the border, with copies of each novel discovered in just two catalogues in our sample of English libraries.

⁹⁰ A. J. Youngson, *The Making of Classical Edinburgh 1750-1840* (Edinburgh, 1966); *ODNB*.

⁹¹ Dwyer, *VD*.

Campbell, <i>The Philosophy of Rhetoric</i>	88	23
Gregory, <i>Comparative View</i>	91	23
Fordyce, <i>Sermons to Young Women</i>	88	22
Hutcheson, <i>Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue</i>	87	20
Beattie, <i>Essays on Poetry and Music</i>	70	19
Gregory, <i>A Father's Legacy to his Daughters</i>	69	18
Beattie, <i>Elements of Moral Science</i>	60	18

Table 1.6: Distribution of Philosophical Works

As we have seen, the top-rated work of ‘philosophy’ is actually a collection of sermons which might on the face of it be more reasonably included in a survey of religious literature. However the pre-eminence of Blair’s *Sermons*, which evolved from the single octavo volume issued in 1777 to a multi-volume collection as its marketable potential became increasingly apparent, demonstrates at once the immense appeal of the ‘virtuous discourse’ of the Moderate party in the Church of Scotland.⁹² Blair offered reassuring moral guidance on a whole range of every-day issues in a style much more akin to elegant *Spectator* than Presbyterian firebrand.⁹³ Others capitalised on the same fertile market, including James Fordyce, whose *Sermons to Young Women* appeared in 23% of libraries after 1766, and John Gregory, whose *Father’s Legacy to his Daughters* (1774) was listed in 18% of relevant catalogues. Offering their readers reassuring advice on how to cope with a wide range of real life problems, their ‘virtuous discourse’ was a great deal more readable and more immediately useful than moral philosophy of the more technical sort.⁹⁴

Meanwhile, Blair’s *Lectures* (1783) was the most frequently distributed Scottish work on taste in our sample, in 47% of relevant collections.⁹⁵ Kames’ *Elements of Criticism* (listed in 34% of libraries after 1762),⁹⁶ Archibald Alison’s *Essays on the Nature and Principles*

⁹² Dwyer, VD. Blair’s *Sermons* were nearly as popular in America, appearing in 36% of catalogues overall and 53% between 1801 and 1813; LM.

⁹³ St Clair, 270-3. John Ramsay condemned the sentimental preaching of the Moderates as ‘spiritual blamange [sic] ... with [which] nothing will go down but the ice cream of *sentiment* heightened by the raspberry flavour of style pushed to extreme’; *Ochertyre*, 74.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 275; Pearson, *Women’s Reading*, 46-7. Fordyce appeared in around 20% of English libraries sampled here; Gregory, 10%.

⁹⁵ Blair’s *Lectures* were listed in 37% of libraries in America; LM.

⁹⁶ In 31% of American catalogues; LM.

of *Taste* (25% after 1790),⁹⁷ Campbell's *Philosophy of Rhetoric* (23% after 1776) and Beattie's *Essays on Poetry and Music* (19%, also after 1776) all made this one of the most distinctive features of the Scottish Enlightenment, helping to found the modern academic discipline of literary criticism.⁹⁸ What made Blair by far the most successful exponent of this sub-genre was his appeal to the lowest common denominator, once claiming to have based his discussions 'on plain common sense, so as to be intelligible to all, without any abstruse metaphysics'.⁹⁹

To turn to main-stream philosophical texts, it appears that Hume was, perhaps surprisingly in light of the critical savaging his sceptical views endured in his own day,¹⁰⁰ the pre-eminent Scottish philosopher in contemporary book collections. The *Essays* in their various guises were together found in 194 of the 450 catalogues surveyed (45% of relevant libraries), supporting the common argument that the *Essays* were the primary vehicle through which Hume's more controversial views reached contemporary readers.¹⁰¹ Indeed, Hume famously testified to the poor reception of the *Treatise of Human Nature* so it is no surprise to find copies in just 35 libraries in our sample, but the works through which he hoped to popularise his philosophical approach apparently fared even less well. The *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748) was found in 34 catalogues (around 8% of relevant collections), while the *Enquiry Concerning the*

⁹⁷ Ramsay of Ochtertyre condemned Alison as a 'mellifluous sentimental preacher', considering his sermons and rhetoric alike to be the worst manifestations of the contemporary craze for 'vapid ... *mild* religion'; *Ochtertyre*, 122-3.

⁹⁸ The contrast between Blair and Kames and the rest was even more pronounced elsewhere, with Beattie's *Essays* and Alison's *Essays on Taste* each listed in only 7% of library catalogues in America; LM. On the Scottish aesthetes, see Crawford, *Scottish Invention*; Engell, *CM*, Ch8; M. G. Moran (ed.), *Eighteenth-Century British and American Rhetorics and Rhetoricians* (Westport CT and London, 1994); and L. L. Gaillet (ed.), *Scottish Rhetoric and its Influences* (Mahwah NJ, 1998). Phillipson argues of 'that quintessentially polite discipline' that it was the 'most characteristic preoccupation of the Scottish Enlightenment', 'Culture', 438.

⁹⁹ Quoted by *ODNB*.

¹⁰⁰ Critical responses are surveyed in J. Wright, 'The *Treatise*: Composition, Reception and Response', in S. Traiger, *The Blackwell Guide to Hume's Treatise* (Oxford, 2006); see also R. L. Emerson, 'The "affair" at Edinburgh and the "project" at Glasgow: the politics of Hume's attempts to become a professor', in M. A. Stewart and J. Wright, *Hume and Hume's Connexions* (Pennsylvania, 1995), especially 10-14; G. E. Davie, *A Passion for Ideas: Essays on the Scottish Enlightenment II* (ed. M. Macdonald, Edinburgh, 1994), 11; and Spencer, *HR*, II, 83-5.

¹⁰¹ *EB*, 45-50; Spencer, *HR*, II, 5; idem., *Hume*, 13-20. N. Phillipson rather underplays the popularity of the *Essays*, suggesting that the '*Essays, Moral, Political and Literary* did not sell well', and ignoring the impact made by the *Essays and Treatises* entirely; *Hume* (London, 1989), especially 2.

Principles of Morals (1751) appeared in 13 catalogues and the *Abstract of the Treatise of Human Nature* (1740) in just 2. However, as we have seen, the *Principles of Morals* and *Enquiry* were both included in editions of the *Essays and Treatises* from 1753, so the vast majority of Hume's most controversial philosophy was thus much more readily accessible in provincial Scotland than these statistics would suggest. Indeed, this surprising implication of our analysis is endorsed by the relatively wide distribution of Hume's *Dialogues of Natural Religion* (in 17% of libraries after 1779) and *Political Discourses* (15% after 1752).¹⁰²

Meanwhile, Beattie, Reid, Campbell, Stewart, Alison and Gregory were all drawn into publishing in response to the provocative implications of Hume's philosophy. The fact that their works were all found in more than 20% of relevant collections therefore suggests that in yet another sense Hume was absolutely central to the whole phenomenon.¹⁰³ Our table shows that Beattie's bombastic style was apparently the most well-received antidote to Hume's philosophy in Scotland, his *Essay on Truth* (in fact a step-by-step refutation of Hume's philosophy) appearing in 36% of relevant collections.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, the high distribution of the more studious works of Reid and Stewart suggests that their uniquely Scottish brand of 'Common Sense' philosophy (so influential at American colleges in the nineteenth century) was much better received in Scotland than in other areas for which data has been collected.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, university graduates seem to have been particularly alive to the appeal of Scotland's 'Common Sense' philosophers: 52% of medical professionals owned copies of Reid's *Inquiry*, while the same work appeared in 41% of libraries belonging to church ministers. The profile of Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) also deserves comment, found in around 38% of relevant collections – making it one of the most popular philosophical works of the

¹⁰² The *Dialogues* were found in just 9% of American catalogues; LM.

¹⁰³ Davie, *Passion for Ideas*, 11; Phillipson, 'Definition', 142-5.

¹⁰⁴ The *Essay on Truth* was found in just 13% of library catalogues in America; LM. Beattie was also the most popular item of Common Sense philosophy in English libraries, appearing in 25% of sampled catalogues as opposed to the 20% in which Reid's *Inquiry* appeared.

¹⁰⁵ Reid's *Inquiry* was restricted to 14% of libraries in America, and his *Essays* to 17%; Stewart's *Elements* were found in 12%; LM.

whole period, and confirming modern assessments putting it at the heart of Scottish ‘discourse on the passions’.¹⁰⁶

By contrast, our tabulation of the distribution of selected scientific and medical works of the Scottish Enlightenment appears to marginalise the position of science in contemporary culture. Pioneering figures like the chemist Joseph Black, the geologist James Hutton, and the medical men William Cullen and the two Alexander Monros, whatever the undoubted strength of their intellectual and pedagogical achievements, made very little impact. Robison’s 1803 edition of Black’s lectures, for example, appears in just 17 catalogues (representing just over 6% of relevant libraries), while the most widely distributed works of Cullen and Monro *primus* are listed in less than 10% of relevant collections.¹⁰⁷ Even Playfair’s supposed popularisation of Huttonian geology apparently appears in only 8% of collections post-dating its publication in 1802, with Hutton’s *Theory of the Earth* (1795) itself appearing in 6%.¹⁰⁸

Title	No. of Cats.	% of Libraries
Buchan, <i>Domestic Medicine</i> (1769)	121	31
Ferguson, <i>Astronomy Explained upon Sir Isaac Newton’s Principles</i> (1756)	117	28
Smellie, <i>Philosophy of Natural History</i> (1790)	89	26
Ferguson, <i>Lectures on Mechanics</i> (1760)	86	21
Kames, <i>Gentleman Farmer</i> (1776)	77	20
Simson, <i>Elements of Euclid</i> (1756)	83	20
MacLaurin, <i>An Account of Newton’s Philosophical Discoveries</i> (1748)	77	18
Anderson, <i>Essays on Agriculture</i> (1775)	64	17
Dickson, <i>Treatise of Agriculture</i> (1762)	63	16
Simson, <i>Elements of the Conic Sections</i> (1735)	60	14
MacLaurin, <i>Treatise on Algebra</i> (1748)	54	13
Sinclair, <i>General View of the Agriculture of Scotland</i> (1795)	38	12
Home, <i>The Principals of Agriculture & Vegetation</i> (1756)	48	12
Dickson, <i>Husbandry of the Ancients</i> (1788)	37	11

¹⁰⁶ Dwyer, *Age of the Passions*, ch1; idem., *VD*, ch7; for a range of new perspectives, see L. Montes and E. Schliesser (eds.), *New Voices on Adam Smith* (Abingdon, 2006). It was found in 25% of sampled English catalogues; and in 23% of American library catalogues, LM.

¹⁰⁷ They fared a great deal better in the libraries of 23 medical men in our survey: Cullen’s *Synopsis* appeared in 69% of medical libraries, for instance, Monro’s *Anatomy of the Human Bones* in 59% and the *Edinburgh Medical Essays* in 64%.

¹⁰⁸ For a less than flattering contemporary view of the ‘ridiculous’ Huttonian philosophy as elaborated by Playfair, see *Ochertyre*, 166.

Table 1.7: Distribution of Science, Agriculture and Medicine

However, Table 1.7 demonstrates equally clearly that some scientific or medical works were capable of reaching a significant proportion of the Scottish reading public. William Buchan's *Domestic Medicine* was found in over 30% of relevant catalogues, putting it on a par with Scott's *Marmion*, Reid's *Inquiry* and Ferguson's *Essay*. This reflects Buchan's immense popularity throughout the English-speaking world, yet he barely figures in modern commentary on the medical Enlightenment.¹⁰⁹ Buchan's appeal, and indeed his originality as a publishing phenomenon, lay in his accessibility: *Domestic Medicine* was explicitly marketed as a new kind of work, based on the belief that medical knowledge should be available to all. It was intended to be read by the layman both as a general guide to healthy living and as a manual to help readers diagnose and treat their own illnesses, complete with lists of remedies and a detailed dispensatory – and was thus of immediate practical relevance to contemporary Scottish households that had little or no access to professional medical provision.¹¹⁰

Other scientific works of the Scottish Enlightenment that were particularly well distributed have in common this practical role. The next two most popular medical works were also self-help guides, the expatriate Scottish physician George Cheyne's *On Health and Long Life* (1724) enjoying a distribution rate of nearly 10%, and Andrew Duncan's *Edinburgh New Dispensatory* (1802) appearing in 13% of relevant libraries.¹¹¹ Much more impressive are the distribution rates for texts that contributed to the great Scottish enterprise of agricultural improvement. Lord Kames' *Gentleman Farmer*, the quintessential Scottish attempt to wed Newtonian science to agriculture, was apparently

¹⁰⁹ Copies of *Domestic Medicine* appeared in 25% of English catalogues sampled here.

¹¹⁰ ODNB; C. E. Rosenberg, 'Medical Text and Social Context: Explaining William Buchan's *Domestic Medicine*', in *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 57 (1983), 22-42; R. B. Sher, 'William Buchan's *Domestic Medicine*: Laying Book History Open', in P. Isaac and B. McKay (eds.), *The Human Face of the Book Trade: Print Culture and its Creators* (Winchester, 1999).

¹¹¹ Duncan's *Edinburgh New Dispensatory* appeared in 59% of relevant medics' libraries, Cheyne's *On Health*, 36%. Cheyne was very well-received in England, his *Essay on Health and Long Life* (1724) appearing in 20% of sampled English catalogues, and his *English Malady* (1733) and *Essay on Regimen* (1740) in 16%.

the most successful of these in 20% of relevant libraries. James Anderson's digest of *Essays on Agriculture* (1775) appeared in nearly 17% of relevant libraries (and in 36% of libraries in his native north east), while Adam Dickson's *A Treatise on Agriculture* (1762) and Francis Home's *Principles of Agriculture and Vegetation* (1757) appeared in 15% and 11% respectively, confirming Munby's suspicion that 'most libraries reflected the overriding interest of the British upper classes in the improvement of their estates'.¹¹²

One final feature of Table 1.7 is noteworthy in this discussion, the prominence of mathematical literature. Explications of ancient geometry by the Glasgow Professor Robert Simson do well, perhaps on the basis of the continuing profile of classical culture.¹¹³ Gentlemanly interest in theoretical mathematics was also reflected in the distribution of Colin MacLaurin's *Treatise on Algebra* (1748) through 13% of relevant libraries, while the degree to which Scots engaged in the popularisation of science in eighteenth-century British culture is further demonstrated by the dramatic reception of two Scottish popularisers of Sir Isaac Newton.¹¹⁴ Colin MacLaurin's *Account of Newton's Philosophical Discoveries* (1748), thought to be one of the more important foundation texts of the Scottish Enlightenment itself, could be found in over 18% of relevant collections, while *Astronomy Explained upon Sir Isaac Newton's Principles and Made Easy for those who have not Studied Mathematics* (1756) by the Banffshire natural philosopher James Ferguson is listed in 28% of relevant collections.¹¹⁵

¹¹² A. N. L. Munby, 'The Library', Roy Strong, Marcus Binney and John Harris (eds.), *The Destruction of the Country House 1875-1975* (London, 1974), 107.

¹¹³ J. Burnett, 'Robert Simson's Euclid and the Fowlis Press', *Bibliothek* 11 (1982-3), 136-48.

¹¹⁴ On the popularisation of science in eighteenth-century Britain, see Roy Porter, *Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern World* (London, 2000), 142-9; Simon Schaffer, 'Natural Philosophy and Public Spectacle in the Eighteenth Century', *History of Science*, 21 (1983), 1-43; Larry Stewart, 'The Selling of Newton: Science and Technology in Early Eighteenth-Century England', *Journal of British Studies*, 25 (1986), 179-92; idem., *The Rise of Science: Rhetoric, Technology and Natural Philosophy in Newtonian Britain 1660-1750* (Cambridge, 1992); Jan Golinski, *Science as Public Culture: Chemistry and Enlightenment in Britain, 1760-1820* (Cambridge, 1992). On the place of Newtonianism in Georgian sociability, see Christie, 'Origins and Development'; R. L. Emerson, 'The Philosophical Society of Edinburgh': '1737-1747', '1748-1768', and '1768-1783', *British Journal for the History of Science* (1979, 1981, 1985); S. Shapin, 'The Audience for Science in Eighteenth-Century Edinburgh', *History of Science* (1974); idem., 'Property, Patronage, and the Politics of Science: The Founding of the Royal Society of Edinburgh', *The British Journal for the History of Science* (VII, 1974); G. Kitteringham, 'Science in Provincial Society: The Case of Liverpool', *Annals of Science* 39 (1982): 329-33.

¹¹⁵ J. R. Millburn, *A Bibliography of James Ferguson, F.R.S. (1710-76)* (Aylesbury, 1983); idem., *Wheelwright of the Heavens: The Life and Work of James Ferguson, FRS* (London, 1988). MacLaurin's *Account* was particularly commended in *Directions*, and appeared in 38% of sampled English catalogues; at

V

Quantitative analysis of aggregate book ownership therefore illuminates the extent to which certain books were acquired by consumers living in various parts of provincial Scotland. Moreover, some evidence associated with private libraries (which, as we have seen, constitute the vast majority of our sample) shows how such books could be used. Most importantly, and as numerous scholars have pointed out, it is not enough simply to add up how many libraries owned a copy of David Hume's *History*, to take one immensely popular title, since each copy may have reached many individuals. Quite apart from formal book-lending institutions that offered 'public' borrowing facilities in provincial Scotland (see below, Chapters 2-4), informal borrowing 'existed on an extensive and unquantifiable scale'.¹¹⁶ John Brewer suggests that 'among the professional classes and minor gentry of provincial towns and rural villages, there was always a bibliophile or two who would lend out his books', while St Clair argues that 'the households the writer probably had in mind were typically a gentleman, his wife, and sons and daughters, and often included unmarried sisters, widowed sisters, and governesses', not to mention estate workers, servants, gardeners *et al.*¹¹⁷ Indeed, it may well be more appropriate to talk of 'privy libraries' in the Georgian period rather than strictly 'private libraries', especially as the library had become a public venue explicitly intended for the reception of guests, to encourage polite sociability and even to facilitate a degree of chaperoned courtship.¹¹⁸

least one of Ferguson's many publications appeared in 34% of English catalogues, reflecting his status as a popular itinerant lecturer across Britain; Porter, *Enlightenment*, 143.

¹¹⁶ R. A. Houston, *Literacy in Early Modern Europe: Culture and Education, 1500-1800* (London, 1988), 210; Woolf, *Reading History*, Ch4.

¹¹⁷ Brewer, *Pleasures*, 186; St Clair, 235; see also Barker, *Treasures*, 3; Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History* (New Haven and London, 1978), 180. Munby argues that 'in more leisurely days when visitors came for a month and when the winter mud made the surrounding lanes all but impassable, self-sufficiency in reading matter assumed an importance which it is difficult to envisage'; 'The Library', 106-7.

¹¹⁸ 'Privy library' is used by W. H. Sherman, 'The Place of Reading in the English Renaissance: John Dee Revisited', in *PRR*; for the view that social exchanges in the domestic sphere had a 'public' function, see especially Vickery, 195ff.

The best evidence we have that ‘privy’ borrowing from private collections was widespread comes in the form of notes explicitly giving permission for borrowing. The laird of Grant drafted a memo on 6th December 1765, for instance, that empowered his clerk ‘to lend out of the Library to any of the Gentlemen of this Country what books they may want for their amusement’, although he insisted ‘you are to let no one what-ever go into the Library, only let them tell you the books they want & you will give them out. And as I would not chuse to have too many out at a time, never give out above six at once in whole’.¹¹⁹ On occasions, moreover, it is obvious that the bond of trust that underpinned ‘privy’ borrowing had clearly broken down – giving further proof that such borrowing was commonplace, even if it was not always administered according to best practice. Lists of missing books from eighteenth-century libraries are a common occurrence in the archival collections of Scotland’s landed families. Equally, library owners frequently called for the return of books, not having recorded precisely who had borrowed what. This was clearly the case with the laird of Monymusk who asked for the following printed circular to be distributed at churches, inns and book shops across the region:

Whereas many Books have been borrowed from the library of Monymusk, and have not been Returned, which renders many sets incomplete, it is entreated that those possessed of such would return them immediately to Monymusk house or to the Publisher of this paper – and if any by accident should appear at sales with the ffamilys Arms or Sir Archibald Grants Name in them – beg that they may be retained or that the family or Publisher may be acquainted which will be Gratefully acknowledged.¹²⁰

Others kept detailed loans registers which have come down to us, and these constitute the most detailed evidence for how ‘privy’ borrowing functioned, how regularly books were borrowed from private collections, who was most likely to take advantage of such facilities, and, most importantly, which titles were taken off the shelves most frequently. One such register survives for the Castle Grant Library, for instance, between 1707 and 1744, while another survives for the collection at Glamis Castle between 1740 and

¹¹⁹ NAS GD248/25/2/20, Order by James Grant of Grant anent loan of books from Castle Grant Library, 6 December 1765.

¹²⁰ NAS GD345/800/10, Library Notes at Monymusk House.

1754.¹²¹ More pertinently for the present study, a number of detailed registers survive for country house libraries from the 1760s through to the first decades of the nineteenth century – precisely the period when we would expect to find the works of the Scottish Enlightenment finding a receptive audience.

Borrowing registers at Brodie, Craigston and elsewhere confirm that the family library was one of the main focuses of genteel sociability in rural Scotland, with ‘privy’ borrowing readily extending to other neighbouring families. The Urquharts of Craigston lent books to many of the major landed families in Aberdeenshire, including representatives of the Fergusons of Kinmudie, the Frasers of Philorth, the Gordons of Fyvie, the Menzies of Pitfoddles, the Ogilvies of Auchiries and the Turners of Turnerhall. The Brodie Castle register features an even more bewildering range of lairdly families, perhaps reflecting the greater prestige of the Brodie family: borrowers included the Gordon Cummings baronets of Altyre, including Lady Cumming Gordon of Forres House; the Rose lairds of Kilravock; the Brander lairds of Pitgavney; Sir Thomas Dick Lauder, baronet and novelist of Relugas; William McIntosh Esq. of Millbank, near Nairn; Lewis Brodie Dunbar of Lethen and Burgie; Robert Innes, laird of Leuchars; Alexander Falconar, laird of Blackhills; Sir James Dunbar of Boath; Norman McLeod of Dalvey; and the Russell family of Earlsmill. Clearly, books were one of the ways by which such individuals and families engaged with each other – allowing them to impress their neighbours with their impeccable taste, as well as providing ample materials on which to base their polite conversation and sociable interaction.

That seems to have been particularly the case for gentlewomen in provincial Scotland, with private libraries apparently providing a venue for their sociable reading of many of the most distinctive books of the Scottish Enlightenment. The Brodie sisters of Burgie, the Russell sisters of Earlsmill and Elizabeth Rose of Kilravock all used the Brodie Library in the 1780s, almost certainly on the invitation of young women in the Brodie household. They were joined in using that library by at least ten other ladies, while at

¹²¹ NAS GD248/485/8, Catalogue of Books at Castle Grant; NRAS 885 Box 67, Glamis Castle Library Borrowing Register.

Craigston, female readers were even more prevalent. Mary Abernethie of Banff, Anne Arbuthnott of Peterhead, Janet Cumine of Banff, Miss Cumming of Pittalie, the Fraser sisters of Philorth, Anne Keith, Miss Ogilvie of Auchiries, Miss Skene of Banff, Bess Turner of Turner Hall, Betty Urquhart of Blyth and many others tended to borrow the same kind of texts – namely, the polite histories of Hume and Robertson, and the *belles lettres* of Campbell, Kames and Mackenzie. Miss Urquhart of Craigston, notably the sole member of the family to sign her name in the borrowing register, perhaps invited them to Craigston in part to use the library, and it may be that she initiated there an informal reading club for likeminded genteel ladies in the area between Turriff, Banff and Peterhead.¹²²

More broadly, though, it is clear that ‘privy’ borrowing was not confined to the landed classes in provincial Scotland. In fact, benevolent landed families could also extend their largesse to members of the professional classes and, indeed, even further down the social scale. Thus the Brodies lent books to physicians, surgeons and lawyers from nearby Nairn, Elgin and Inverness, enjoying particularly close links with medical men charged with the care of the army garrison at Fort George – not to mention many of the officers stationed there. Church of Scotland ministers were equally welcome to borrow books from the Brodie Castle Library, as they were at Craigston, with Rev. Alexander Rose of Auchterless and Rev. Robert Duff of King Edward’s being particularly frequent visitors. The advocate John Erskine of Cambus lent books to Charles Hope, advocate and future Lord Granton, Lord Napier, soon to win celebrity as an army officer, and William Greenfield, a future Moderate minister and ultimately Hugh Blair’s unfortunate successor at the University of Edinburgh.¹²³ Meanwhile, Thomas Crawford Bt. of Cartsburn lent books to magistrates, writers and physicians in nearby Greenock, as well as to more lowly members of the community like John Wilson, schoolmaster, who borrowed Innes’ *Critical Essay* in 1773, the carpenter Archibald Lang, the wigmaker James Stewart and the barber John McLeod.¹²⁴ Indeed, ‘privy’ borrowing may well have been a major source of books for working men who could not afford them in rural Scotland: the

¹²² Craigston Castle Library, borrowing register.

¹²³ NLS MS 5118-20, Notebooks of John Erskine of Cambus; *ODNB*.

¹²⁴ NLS MS 2822, Catalogue of Books of Thomas Crawford of Cartsburn.

Lochend poet and shepherd Alexander Bethune (born in 1804) enthused that ‘after it became known that we were readers, the whole of our acquaintances, far and near, and even some people whom we could hardly number as such, appeared eager to lend us books’.¹²⁵

As one might expect, ‘privy’ borrowing often meant simply the loan of specialist material to professional researchers. Roxburghe made his Library at Floors open to ‘bona fide scholars’ – Joseph Ritson and Sir Walter Scott were both well qualified and made full use of the extensive collection in their researches into Scottish Border ballads.¹²⁶ This was particularly the case with scientific and medical literature, the kind of material that was vital for someone’s career but that only tended to be available in the largest or most specialised collections. George Sinclair, surgeon in Thurso, borrowed six anatomical books from his kinsman William Sinclair Esq. of Lochend, on 12th April 1794, while the medical men who frequented the Brodie Castle Library borrowed works like the *Edinburgh Medical Essays* and Duncan’s *Medical Commentaries*.¹²⁷ Ridpath borrowed Cleghorn’s *Epidemical Diseases* from a surgeon in Kelso, while he sourced agricultural manuals like Home’s *Principles of Agriculture and Vegetation* and Miller’s *Gardeners’ and Florists’ Dictionary* from neighbouring landowners.¹²⁸ The Uruqharts of Craigston were also happy to lend out books like Anderson’s *Essays on Agriculture* and Dickson’s *Treatise on Agriculture* to local workers, including John Marr, an estate worker from nearby Turriff, and Alexander Reid, the Craigston gardener, while Monymusk queried whether some books missing from his collection in 1759 (including Miller’s *Dictionary*) had been lent to the head gardener, William Lunny.¹²⁹

The same was apparently true for the more technical works on philosophy and history that we have seen were not as widely distributed as the most popular productions of polite learning, but that were nevertheless obtainable from private collections by those who were interested in reading them. George Ridpath was again typical in this regard,

¹²⁵ Quoted in J. Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Class* (New Haven CT, 2001), 60.

¹²⁶ Hillyard, ‘John Ker’, 198-9

¹²⁷ NAS GD136/1195; Brodie Castle Library register.

¹²⁸ *Ridpath*.

¹²⁹ Craigston Castle Library borrowing register; NAS GD345/800/16, Library records, Monymusk House.

borrowing rare, ephemeral or expensive works like Ferguson's attributed *History of Peg*, Fordyce's *Dialogues Concerning Education* and Logan's *Treatise on Government* from friends in Edinburgh and neighbouring Roxburghshire landowners.¹³⁰ Robert Innes of Leuchars, who would no doubt have owned his own library, borrowed Millar's *English Constitution* from Brodie Castle, while Ferguson's *Essay* and *History of the Roman Republic* were both borrowed by various interested parties. At Craigston, Ferguson's *Essay* was borrowed three times as was Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws*, while much rarer material like Lord Hailes' *Memorials and Letters* and Steuart's *Principles of Political Oeconomy* were also withdrawn by curious friends and associates of the Urquharts. Even in the 'Athens of the North', works that are generally considered important components of the Scottish Enlightenment were borrowed from private book collectors presumably because they were not readily available elsewhere, including, again, Ferguson's *Essay*, Millar's *Distinction of Ranks*, Hutcheson's *Essay and Inquiry*, and Lord Monboddo's *Origin and Progress of Language*, which were all amongst the more technical works lent out by Erskine of Cambus from his townhouse in the New Town.

Finally, however, 'privy' borrowing also gives a further insight into the sheer popularity of polite literature. At both Brodie and Craigston, Hume's *History*, Robertson's *History of Scotland, America and Charles V*, Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* and *Moral Sentiments*, Watson's *Philip II*, Dalrymple's *Memoirs*, Henry's *History*, Blair's *Lectures* and Kames' *Sketches* were borrowed with equal rapacity by men and women, by landed elites and the professional classes. Ridpath borrowed Fordyce's *Sermons*, Home's *Siege of Aquileia*, Smith's *Moral Sentiments* and *Ossian's Works* from his neighbours, while another Church of Scotland minister, David Cruden of Nigg, loaned out his own copies of Robertson, Reid, Beattie and Campbell to fellow ministers and professionals in and around Aberdeen.¹³¹ Books lent out by Erskine of Cambus when he left Edinburgh for the summer months, meanwhile, included Blair's *Lectures*, Kames' *Elements of Criticism*, Hume's *Essays*, Watson's *Philip II* and a collected edition of the *Mirror*. Not only were

¹³⁰ *Ridpath*.

¹³¹ *Ridpath*; NAS CH2/555/29, Commonplace Book of Dr David Cruden, minister of Nigg.

such impeccable instances of polite learning amongst the most widely distributed works in provincial Scotland, then, they also consistently rated as the most regularly used books in private collections.

VI

To a certain extent, of course, it is clear that the reading preferences investigated in this chapter were not distinctively Scottish, but instead reflected the success of the emerging engines of criticism in imposing uniformity on the British ‘nation of readers’, in Samuel Johnson’s memorable phrase.¹³² That Scots bought and presumably read Hume, Robertson, Ferguson, Smith and Blair in their droves is unexceptional, even though their popularity demonstrates that the distinctive ideas of the Scottish Enlightenment were indeed circulating in provincial Scotland. Their works were amongst the most popular throughout Britain, commended in the most glowing terms in the leading critical reviews and in numerous works on literature, good taste and library formation. Nonetheless, it seems equally clear that the Scottish reading public did exhibit its own distinctive preferences in certain areas. Scottish library owners were apparently more eager consumers of the distinctive conjectural history of the Scottish Enlightenment than their English neighbours, and seem to have been considerably more receptive to the Common Sense school of philosophers who responded to Hume’s dangerous scepticism. More dramatically, Scottish consumers bought particular books that English consumers seem largely to have ignored, including regional historiography by the likes of Nimmo, Shaw and Ridpath, the controversialist Marian historiography of Tytler and Goodall, and the vernacular poetry of Burns and Fergusson that all promoted the persistence of a distinctively national identity in the century after Union.

However, to return to Darnton’s suggestion that catalogues can ‘serve as a profile of a reader’, there is an awful lot that they leave unsaid, not least that ‘we don’t read all the

¹³² Samuel Johnson, *Prefaces, Biographical and Critical, to the Works of the English Poets*, 10 vols. (London, 1779-81), VIII, 33.

books we own and we do read many books that we never purchase'.¹³³ Although they must form an essential part of any convincing history of readers, therefore, book catalogues can only ever be a first step in attempting to trace the reception of a body of literature by historical readers, and we must draw on the full range of further sources, including information on borrowing from libraries and evidence of individuals' reading experiences, to arrive at a more complete picture of their reception of the Scottish Enlightenment. Before we can introduce documentary evidence that illuminates the reading experience itself, then, we must first explore more fully the institutional framework within which many Scottish readers encountered the core texts involved, and it is to the formal book-lending institutions of Georgian Scotland that we now turn.

¹³³ Darnton, *Kiss*, 162.

CHAPTER TWO

‘All the Partners may be Improved and Enlightened’

Subscription Libraries

On the 1st May 1770, twenty gentlemen met in a tavern in Kirkcudbright with big plans. As the minutes record,

The meeting unanimously agree that a Public Library, established at this place upon a proper foundation and under proper regulations, will be attended with great improvement as well as entertainment; and many of them having previous to this day considered the matter privately, they composed a set of articles which they were of opinion might be properly submitted to the consideration of the subscribers.¹

The original founders constituted the great and the good of the local community. They included Provost William Lenox and six more merchant councillors, four local landowners, three farmers, William Laurie and John Buchanan, collector and surveyor of the customs respectively, as well as representatives from each of the traditional professions – the parish minister, Robert Muter, two lawyers (Matthew Buchanan and John Thomson, who was awarded honorary membership for drawing up the regulations) and the surgeon John Walker.

On the most functional level, their new library was intended to facilitate ‘the immediate purchasing a collection of the most valuable books on antient and modern history, voyages travels Belles Letteres Agriculture etc.’, bringing within their collective compass a collection of prestigious and canonical books that most of them would not have been able to afford individually.² They thus tapped into a growing fashion across Britain that sought to institutionalise the informal circulation of books that we introduced at the end

¹ Hornel Library MS4/26, Minute Book of the Kirkcudbright Subscription Library, 1 May 1770; for a general description of the Library, see F. J. L. Brown, ‘Kirkcudbright Public Library: an examination of an eighteenth century Scottish Subscription Library’ (unpublished dissertation, held by Stewartry Museum).

² Kirkcudbright Minutes, 1 May 1770.

of Chapter 1.³ But such private subscription libraries did not simply facilitate access to many of the books which interest us in this study. They also allowed provincial Scots to engage in some of the leading priorities of the intellectual culture of the Scottish Enlightenment, including the pursuit of politeness, sociability, and, above all, improvement.⁴ As the Kirkcudbright subscribers agreed, their misleadingly titled ‘Public Library’ (the name denoted their public-spirited associationalism) was explicitly intended to contribute to the ‘great improvement’ of intellectual culture in the town: ‘We the following subscribers considering the great utility of the above plan for establishing a public library at Kirkcudbright, do heartily approve of the same’.⁵

I

Despite Paul Kaufman’s pessimism that evidence for historical library provision in Scotland is ‘widely scattered, obscure, uncharted, often painfully scant – and much that is so sorely needed is apparently lost’, enough material does survive to support a nationwide comparative analysis for the age of Enlightenment.⁶ We know that at least fifteen subscription libraries were founded before 1790, and a further 37 dated to the 1790s. If this represented quite slow progress compared to England (where there were nearly 100

³ For Scottish subscription libraries, see Kaufman; K. A. Manley, ‘Scottish Circulating and Subscription Libraries as Community Libraries’, *LH*, 19 (2003); Crawford, ‘Origins’; for the British context, see Raven, ‘Libraries’; P. Kaufman, *Libraries and their Users: Collected Papers in Library History* (London, 1969); Allan, *Nation of Readers*.

⁴ Phillipson, ‘Culture’; idem., ‘Politics, Politeness and the Anglicisation of Early Eighteenth-Century Scottish Culture’, in R. Mason (ed.), *Scotland and England, 1286-1815* (Edinburgh, 1987); idem., ‘The Scottish Enlightenment’, in M. Teich and R. Porter (eds.), *The Enlightenment in National Context* (Cambridge, 1981); *CU*. On politeness in British culture, see Brewer, *Pleasures*.

⁵ Kirkcudbright Minutes, 1 May 1770; for discussion of the use of the term ‘public library’ in the Georgian period, see J. Innes, ‘Libraries in Context: Social, Cultural and Intellectual Background’, in *CHLB2*, 297-8; M. Powell, ‘Endowed Libraries for Towns’, in *CHLB2*, 83. On the growth of associationalism in Britain, see P. Clark, *British Clubs and Societies, 1580-1800: The Origins of an Associational World* (Oxford, 2000); and on the wider context, P. Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town 1660-1770* (Oxford, 1989). For the classic argument that such associative activities joined with commercial developments in contributing to the ‘expansion of the public sphere’ in eighteenth-century Britain, see J. Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (1962; trans. T. Burger; Cambridge, 1989), discussed in depth in J. Van Horn Melton, *The Rise of the Public in Enlightenment Europe* (Cambridge, 2001); Dena Goodman, ‘Public Sphere and Private Life: Toward a Synthesis of Current Historiographical Approaches to the Old Regime’, *History and Theory*, 31 (1992), 1-20; A. J. la Vopa, ‘Conceiving a Public: Ideas and Society in Eighteenth-Century Europe’, *Journal of Modern History*, 64 (1992), 79-116; Munck, *Enlightenment*, 14-7.

⁶ Kaufman, 234.

by 1800), the spread of associational reading in provincial Scotland over the next thirty years, with 203 founded between 1800 and 1830, lent credence to claims leading up to the Public Libraries Act (1850) that ‘in the boroughs of Ayr and Kilmarnock, and in almost every borough in Scotland there were excellent libraries established without any help whatever from that House’.⁷ Subscription libraries had been founded in traditional county towns like Perth, Dumfries, Kirkcudbright, Stranraer, and Cupar, but also in the industrial towns that were becoming such a dominant feature of the Scottish urban landscape, such as Falkirk, Greenock and Kilmarnock.⁸ There were limits to this initial phase of expansion, though, with only five subscription libraries north of the Tay by the turn of the nineteenth century, and associational library activity in the far north was still confined to major urban centres even in 1820, found only in Inverness, Wick, Peterhead, Banff and Tain.⁹

However, the definition of such institutions has always proved something of a stumbling block, with the wide variety of names given to them by contemporaries enhancing the confusion – the Dumfries Gentlemen’s Library (founded around 1750), the Ayr Library Society (1762), the Campbelltown Public Library (1790?), the Newton (Edinburgh) Parochial Subscription Library (1792?), the Cumnock Athenaeum (1792), and the Strichen Subscription Circulating Library (1815?) to name but a few variations on the theme.¹⁰ Subscription libraries, in fact, were just one of a range of different types of institution that provided book-lending facilities in eighteenth-century Scotland, none of which were ‘public’ in the sense that modern Public Libraries are funded by the tax payer. Subscription libraries themselves were essentially private clubs: members paid an entry fee and an additional subscription each quarter for an equal share in the society; the

⁷ Alexander Oswald MP of Auchencruire, quoted by Aitken, 1. For background, see K. A. Manley, ‘Engines of Literature: Libraries in an Era of Expansion and Transition’, in *CHLB2*, 509-10.

⁸ For a detailed case study on the Perth Library, see D. Allan, ‘Provincial Readers and Book Culture in the Scottish Enlightenment: The Perth Library, 1784-c.1800’, *The Library*, 4 (2002). The Subscription Library in Cupar is discussed in Paula Martin, *Cupar: The History of a Small Scottish Town* (Edinburgh, 2006), who wrongly identifies it as a commercial venture.

⁹ For a fuller account of the distribution and development of Scottish subscription libraries, see Alston; Crawford, ‘Origins’; and Manley, ‘Scottish Circulating and Subscription Libraries’, 185-94. For the broader British perspective, see *Nation of Readers*; and *CHLB2*.

¹⁰ Alston.

library they accumulated over the years was intended to be permanent.¹¹ As members of the Renton Subscription Library founded in 1797 explained,

One working man ... cannot have a library of his own; but a number of such men united may, if they choose, soon have one among them: by their mutual concurrence and co-operation, a joint stock may be raised, proper books may be purchased and all the partners may be enlightened and improved by the reading of them, at a comparatively trifling expense to each.¹²

The typical 'Book Club' tended to be less formal and much smaller, with books being sold off to finance the frequent turnover of stock.¹³ However, there is very little evidence that they functioned in any way differently from subscription libraries in book selection and intellectual outlook – and in reality, the boundaries could often be blurred even on the crucial matter of book stock. The Peterhead Reading Society, on the face of it a typical book club in the sense that membership hovered at around thirty for its first five years, addressed the fine detail of the turnover of books in their first meeting in 1808:

The meeting thought it would be expedient to determine in the outset of the institution whether the books to be purchased by means of the first subscription are to be sold at the end of the year, or are to be reserved to form the foundation of a Public Library in the Town of Peterhead? After deliberating on the subject it was the opinion of the meeting, that the object of the subscribers would be most effectually attained by the immediate formation of a Permanent Library; and therefore, they unanimously agreed and resolved, that the books to be purchased by them shall be reserved for this purpose, whilst at the same time, they consider that it will be proper occasionally to dispose of such books as may be found on examination to be unworthy of a place in their collection.¹⁴

Rather than disposing of books as a matter of course to refresh the collection, then, associational readers in Peterhead agreed from the outset only to sell those they

¹¹ For a useful summary, see St Clair, 263, Table 13.1. For subscription fees and other aspects of their administration, see Manley, 'Scottish Circulating and Subscription Libraries'; Allan, 'Provincial Readers'; idem., *Nation of Readers*; Crawford, 'Origins'; Crawford, 'Models'.

¹² *Catalogue of Renton Library...* (Glasgow, 1819), 5.

¹³ For examples, see K. A. Manley, 'Rural Reading in North West England: The Sedbergh Book Club, 1728-1928', *Book History*, 2 (1999); J. Morley, 'Newark Book Society 1777-1872', *LH*, 1 (1968-9).

¹⁴ ALIS, Ab75 A9, Sederunt Books of the Peterhead Reading Society, 1808-29, 4-5.

considered ‘unworthy’ of a ‘permanent collection’ – though they never clarified in writing how they would decide on the ‘worthiness’ or otherwise of specific titles.

The outstanding distinction in book provision during this period was, in fact, the difference between these associational libraries – that is, these subscription libraries and book clubs that were defined by the active association of their members (and by the ‘worthiness’ of their intentions, as we shall see) – and the circulating libraries which were usually run out of the back of bookshops. Circulating libraries were certainly an important access point for Scottish Enlightenment texts in some towns in provincial Scotland, but they were overtly commercial ventures and whatever the enlightened tone of their advertising, they were run for profit rather than intellectual or cultural aspirations – as we shall see in Chapter 3.

II

This returns us to the fact that associational libraries were essentially private clubs of like-minded individuals, so in order to understand them we need to know just who the individuals involved in their foundation were, and what social groups they represented. Unsurprisingly, many of these libraries drew on the support and patronage of traditional landed elites. We have it on good authority that the Duke of Roxburghe helped rescue the Kelso Subscription Library from financial ruin,¹⁵ while subscribers to the Fowlis Library in Angus expressed their gratitude to ‘the Honourable Baron Sir Patrick Murray of Ochertyre, for his very kind and liberal conduct in building ... without any solicitation a handsome and convenient room to contain their Books’.¹⁶ Many were also subscribers: Kelso featured four baronets and two nobles (including Roxburghe), the Ayr Library Society listed the Law Lords Alloway and Craig amongst its subscribers, as well as two baronets and at least eleven members of the Ayrshire gentry, and the Hamilton

¹⁵ *Ridpath*, 6 November 1759.

¹⁶ Dundee City Archives, CH2/254/10, Fowlis Library Minute Book 1815, 1821-67, 29 November 1827.

Subscription Library could boast the Duke of Hamilton, his wife and his brother, the MP Lord Archibald Hamilton, as members.¹⁷

These prominent subscribers could usually bring to provincial libraries impeccable intellectual links with the metropolitan Enlightenment, none more so than William Craig, Adam Smith's favourite student, who along with the novelist Henry Mackenzie was a principal contributor to the literary periodical, *The Mirror*.¹⁸ It is important to note, though, that such individuals rarely featured in the day-to-day running of subscription libraries, and were usually more significant for their prestigious patronage and financial support rather than their active participation – rather like royal patrons of charitable organisations today. The 8th Earl of Galloway, whose father was a founding subscriber to the Wigtown Subscription Library, was thanked by the committee for his donation of a richly-bound presentation copy of *Caledonia* in February 1813, but does not appear anywhere else in either the Minute Book or, still more revealingly, in the Borrowing Registers.¹⁹ The 4th Earl of Selkirk, a dogged improver of his Kirkcudbrightshire estates and a former student of Francis Hutcheson at Glasgow, subscribed £3 3s. when he signed up to the Kirkcudbright Subscription Library (others paid just a guinea) but was never mentioned again in the society's minutes.²⁰

In fact, it is abundantly clear that the prime movers in subscription libraries in Scotland were the traditional literate elements of provincial society, the professional classes, doctors, surgeons, lawyers and, above all, church ministers – as in England, where professionals dominated associations like the Amicable Society in Lancaster, the Bradford Library and Literary Society, and the Liverpool Library.²¹ The Ayr Library

¹⁷ *Catalogue of the Books in Kelso Library* (Edinburgh, 1793); Carnegie Library, Ayr, 672QC, Minutes of the Ayr Library Society, 31 January 1776-1875; *Names of Subscribers to the Hamilton Subscription Library* (Glasgow, 1824).

¹⁸ *ODNB*; Dwyer, *VD*, 24; 28-9; 51; 54-5; 103; 143-5.

¹⁹ Hornel Library MS11/28, Wigtown Library Borrowing Book 1797-1799; MS5/27, Wigtown Library Regulations and Minute Book.

²⁰ Kirkcudbright Minutes, 1 May 1777. The 5th Earl was also a silent partner of the Kirkcudbright Library, though he was a keen student of political economy and a former student of Dugald Stewart at Edinburgh.

²¹ D. Allan, 'Eighteenth-Century Private Subscription Libraries and Provincial Urban Culture: The Amicable Society of Lancaster, 1769-c.1820', *LH*, 17 (2001); Daphne Roberts and Bob Duckett, 'The Bradford Library and Literary Society, 1774-1980', *LH*, 22 (2006); M. K. Flavell, 'The enlightened reader

Society, for whom the most complete subscription lists survive, was typical: of 327 members over a forty year period, 33 were lawyers, 26 were ministers, 18 were physicians or surgeons and eleven were bankers.²² Meanwhile, 98 subscribers to the Hamilton Subscription Library included eleven ministers (four of whom served on the committee for 1824), eight physicians, six lawyers, three surgeons and five army officers – besides at least 26 gentlemen.²³ Even the Leadhills Subscription Library, long a celebrated bastion of ‘working-class’ learning, originally provided intellectual sustenance for the professional managers of the Leadhills Mining Company – including Matthew Wilson, senior clerk and a regular companion of the mine manager, the university-educated James Stirling, Robert Whitfield, another clerk, and the village surgeon, James Wells.²⁴

The same professions were also instrumental in the foundation and management of subscription libraries – not least Wells himself, who was the first President of the Leadhills Reading Society. Five ministers, eight lawyers and two surgeons were intimately involved in the foundation of the Perth Library in 1786, while four ministers and two lawyers attended the first meeting of the Duns Subscription Library in 1768 – one of whom was Adam Dickson, author of a popular pair of works on agricultural improvement.²⁵ That these professions should provide an impetus to provincial Enlightenment should be no surprise: the church and the law provided many of the

and the new industrial towns: a study of the Liverpool Library 1758-90’, *BJI8CS*, 8 (1985). See also, Raven, ‘Libraries’; *Nation of Readers*; P. Kaufman, ‘The Community Library: A Chapter in English Social History’, *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, New Series 57:7 (1967), 25-38.

²² Ayr Minutes.

²³ *Hamilton Subscribers*.

²⁴ John Crawford points out that ‘the evidence suggests that not only were the miners not the founders of the library, they were not even its original membership’, ‘Leadhills Library and a Wider World’, *Library Review*, 46 (1997), 539-553. The original list of Leadhills members from 1741 is held at NLS Acc. 3076. For discussion of ‘working class’ libraries in Scotland, see Crawford, ‘Origins’, Chaps 4 and 6; J. C. Crawford, ‘The Ideology of Mutual Improvement in Scottish Working Class Libraries’, *LH* 12 (1996), 49-61; idem., ‘Reading and Book Use in Eighteenth-Century Scotland’, *Bibliothek*, 19 (1994), especially 36; J. C. Crawford and Stuart James, *The Society for Purchasing Books in Wanlockhead 1756-1979* (Glasgow, 1981); A. R. Thomson, ‘The use of Libraries by the Working Class in Scotland in the Early Nineteenth Century’, *SHR*, 42 (1963), 21-9; B. Burgh, ‘Libraries and Literacy in Popular Education’, in *CHLB2*, especially 379.

²⁵ Scottish Borders Archive and Local History Centre, DL/3/1, Record of the Laws, Regulations, and Proceedings of the Subscribers for a Public Library at Dunse, 1768-1850. On Perth, see Allan, ‘Provincial Readers’; on Dickson, see *ODNB*.

Scottish Enlightenment's greatest minds, and were the two most firmly established institutions in eighteenth-century society.²⁶ Churchmen, lawyers and doctors also tended to share in common a university education, giving subscription libraries a direct link to the Scottish Enlightenment as it was produced at the Scottish universities.²⁷

Nevertheless, elements of society not usually associated with Enlightenment also subscribed to associational libraries in this period. The founders of the Forfar Subscription Library, for instance, included a baker, a brewer, a cobbler and a watchmaker, as well as 12 merchants, and just one clergyman – Reverend John Webster, a St Andrews University graduate and the son of a former Bailie of Forfar.²⁸ The Ayr Library Society, meanwhile, embraced 32 merchants, 3 tanners, 2 bakers, 2 cabinet makers, and one tailor.²⁹ If merchants and tradesmen provided the rank and file of many subscription libraries, so too did tenant farmers drawn from each library's rural hinterland. The Selkirk Subscription Library, whose borrowing registers survive for the years 1799-1816, included 18 tenant farmers,³⁰ while 63 subscribed to the Duns Subscription Library in its first 30 years – accounting for roughly a quarter of each society's total membership.³¹ The Kirkcudbright Library, like many others, combined the rural and urban elements of provincial society, subscribers decreeing from the outset that the managerial committee be split formally between the two – so the first committee featured John Buchanan, surveyor of the customs, writer Matthew Buchanan, surgeon John Walker and Reverend Robert Muter 'for the town', and Reverend John Scott of Twynholm and farmers John Ewart, David Maitland and John McNaught 'for the country'.³²

²⁶ Phillipson, 'Culture'; *CU*.

²⁷ For the relationship between the Scottish Enlightenment and the universities, see *CU*; P. Wood, *The Aberdeen Enlightenment: The Arts Curriculum in the Eighteenth Century* (1993); R. L. Emerson, *Professors, Patronage and Politics: the Aberdeen Universities in the Eighteenth Century* (Aberdeen, 1992).

²⁸ *Regulations and Catalogue of Books Belonging to the Forfar Library 1st May 1795* (Dundee, 1795).

²⁹ Ayr Minutes.

³⁰ Scottish Borders Archives and Local History Centre S/PL/7/1 and 2, Selkirk Subscription Library Registers, 1799-1808 and Daybook, 1808-1814.

³¹ Duns Proceedings.

³² Kirkcudbright Minutes.

By contrast, many subscription libraries also attracted a smattering of support from men associated with Scotland's burgeoning industries. The Dundee Public Library, for instance, counted thirteen manufacturers amongst a total membership of around 200, while the Kilmarnock Subscription Library had ten. Subscription libraries associated with the lead mining works at Leadhills and Wanlockhead, and the antimony mine at Westerkirk have come to be synonymous with the 'Democratic Intellect' in Scotland, and associational readers in Leadhills in the late 1740s included the blacksmith John Wilson and the leadwasher John Weir.³³ At the Renton Library near Dumbarton, meanwhile, subscribers were mostly drawn from the local printworks and bleachfields, and also included smiths, engravers, and schoolmasters,³⁴ and the Loanhead Subscription Library in Midlothian was patronised by two paper manufacturers, besides five grocers and a tallow chandler.³⁵

Moreover, where evidence survives to allow us to reconstruct their composition, it seems that managerial committees were not the exclusive preserve of the professional and landholding elites. Of course, the deep-seated social deference that continued to define relationships in Scottish society until well into the nineteenth century was reflected in the management of library associations throughout this period. Landowners James Laurie of Barnsone, Alexander Gordon of Carletoun and David Blair esq. were chosen successively to preside over early meetings of the Kirkcudbright Public Library, though Provost William Lenox seems to have held particular sway over his fellow subscribers, instigating important motions in the library's ongoing affairs and insisting that the 'existence of the society depends upon enforcing the original regulations with the utmost strictness'.³⁶ Indeed, many more subscription libraries could boast close links with the ruling elites of provincial towns: James Riddoch Esq. of Cairnton, Provost of Kirkwall, sat on the committee of the Orkney Library, while Bailie Kenneth Macleay of the Caithness Banking Company and local agent for the British Society for the Encouragement of Fisheries was President of the Wick Subscription Library in 1825. But

³³ Crawford, 'Leadhills Library'.

³⁴ Dumbarton Library, Minute Book of the Renton Library.

³⁵ Midlothian Local Studies Library, ML4/1, Minute Book of the Loanhead Library.

³⁶ Kirkcudbright Minutes, 1-15.

at the same time, more lowly social groups were not excluded from subscription library management. At the Dundee Public Library, for instance, the 135 individuals who served on the committee between 1796 and 1821 included 21 merchants, five brewers, grocers, and shoemakers, four bakers and three manufacturers,³⁷ while bakers, brewers, grocers, merchants and a sugar refiner served on the committee of the Greenock Subscription Library in its first thirty years.³⁸

Finally, it is also clear that some subscription libraries could allow a role for women in the intellectual culture of provincial Scotland.³⁹ Of course, they were not encouraged everywhere, and there were no female members of the subscription libraries at Hawick and Forfar, for instance.⁴⁰ Also, it was perfectly possible for women to become members of subscription libraries by default, inheriting their share from deceased relatives, as was evidently the case for the three female members of the Kirkcudbright Subscription Library, like Agnes Cairns, daughter of the founding member David Cairns, whose subscription lapsed when she was later married as Mrs Hamilton.⁴¹ They were regularly admitted too on the basis of living family connections, so for instance the sole female member of the Selkirk Subscription Library was Miss Plummer, evidently given special dispensation as the daughter of the laird of Middlestead, Andrew Plummer, an especially prominent agitator in the affairs of the society.⁴²

³⁷ Dundee Central Library, Lamb Collection 316 (6), Minute book for the public library at Dundee, 1796-1825.

³⁸ Watt Library, R023.2, Greenock Library Minute Book from 5th January 1794 till 18th October 1815; J. T. Hamilton, *Greenock Libraries: a Development and Social History 1635-1967* ([no place], 1968).

³⁹ For women in eighteenth-century Scotland, see Rosalind K. Marshall, *Virgins and Viragos: A History of Women in Scotland from 1080 to 1980* (London, 1983), especially Ch.10; Katharine Glover, 'The Female Mind: Scottish Enlightenment Femininity and the World of Letters. A Case Study of the Women of the Fletcher of Saltoun Family in the Mid-Eighteenth Century', *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, 25 (2005), 1-20; W. W. Knox, *The Lives of Scottish Women: Women and Scottish Society 1800-1980* (Edinburgh, 2006); Jane Rendall, 'Clio, Mars and Minerva: The Scottish Enlightenment and the Writing of Women's History', in T. M. Devine and J. R. Young (eds.), *Eighteenth-Century Scotland: New Perspectives* (1999); idem., 'Introduction' to William Alexander, *History of Women, from the Earliest Antiquity to the Present Time*, 2 vols. (1779; Bath, 1994).

⁴⁰ *Hawick Subscription Library: List of Present Proprietors of Hawick Library, and Catalogue of the Library* (Hawick, [1810?]); *Forfar Catalogue*.

⁴¹ Kirkcudbright Minutes. Duns Subscription Library regulations on the transference of shares were typical: 'It shall be in each proprietors power to transfer his share, at his pleasure; and if not transferred, at his death, it shall descend to his heirs', Duns Proceedings, 3.

⁴² The minutes of the Selkirk Subscription Library do not survive, but Andrew Plummer of Middlestead is listed as one of the most active members by T. Craig-Brown who had seen the minute book before its

Elsewhere, though, subscription libraries welcomed women on their own terms: the Wigtown Subscription Library had seven women in a total membership of 63, for instance, while Hamilton had 21 female members and Ayr 52.⁴³ Indeed, though women were generally excluded from the management of subscription libraries, the Ayr Library Society appointed a female librarian in 1805.⁴⁴ Furthermore, when women were admitted as members, they could exploit lending facilities with all the enthusiasm of their male counterparts. Five women borrowers at Wigtown accounted for 123 loans between 1796 and 1799, out of a total of 701 for the whole association.⁴⁵

As ‘one of the few quasi-public places where respectable women could go alone’,⁴⁶ subscription libraries could therefore allow women to explore new roles in society, enabling some to participate personally in the overwhelmingly masculine culture of the Scottish Enlightenment. But they also allowed women to become consumers of the Scottish Enlightenment in ways much less accessible to the historian – whether this be in borrowing books under a husband’s or a father’s name, or in the sort of scene frequently depicted in contemporary literature and correspondence of reading as a communal family experience. Indeed, the founders of subscription libraries usually took these circumstances into account when they framed constitutions. Article 10 of the constitution drawn up by members of the Kirkcudbright Library proposed ‘That if a member shall lend any book or books which he has from the Library he shall pay a fine of five shillings for the first offence, ten shillings for the second, and in case of a third offence he shall be struck off from the society altogether. But this law is not to extend to those who live within the family of the subscriber’.⁴⁷ Typically, the proposal was one of the few

destruction: see ‘Selkirk Subscription Library’, *Southern Register*, 23 May 1901, a copy of which is pasted in the Selkirk register. Plummer was Sheriff of Selkirkshire in 1793; *Lawson*, 219.

⁴³ Wigtown Borrowing Book; *Hamilton Subscribers*; Ayr Minutes. Allan finds a similar story in English subscription libraries, with women being excluded from some libraries but making up as much as 20% of the membership in others; see his forthcoming *Nation of Readers*, ch4, 13-16; on women in book clubs, ch5, 15-17. Such evidence counters traditional claims that women were excluded from associational reading: Raven, ‘Libraries’, 251, 254; St Clair, 250.

⁴⁴ Ayr Minutes.

⁴⁵ Wigtown Borrowing Book.

⁴⁶ J. Pearson, *Women’s Reading in Britain, 1750-1835: A Dangerous Recreation* (Cambridge, 1999), 161.

⁴⁷ Kirkcudbright Minutes.

approved by a later meeting of subscribers without comment – evidently family borrowing was one of the least controversial aspects of subscription library management.⁴⁸

III

Mention of borrowing returns us to the prime function of these institutions, the provision of books on a collective basis to groups of readers who usually could not afford an extensive library of their own. Given this, an obvious place to start in assessing their contribution to the reception of a given body of literature is the surviving catalogues. To date 51 catalogues have been located and examined, which constitutes a sample of around 20% of all institutions we know about – encompassing the largest subscription libraries for which we have evidence, such as the Edinburgh Subscription Library and the Glasgow Public Library, as well as much smaller associations of the kind we have introduced, including the Renton Library and the Peterhead Reading Society.⁴⁹

In fundamental ways, and for very good reasons that we shall explore in due course, the catalogues of Scottish associational libraries reflected very closely the reading tastes evident in Chapter 1. Polite historiography was once more the pre-eminent genre, and Robertson's works joined Hume's *History* as the most widely distributed books of any kind in associational collections. They were usually joined by Scottish conjectural history, with the likes of Kames' *Sketches*, Ferguson's *Essay*, Millar's *Distinction of Ranks* and *Historical View* and Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* being very widely available. All of these titles were equally popular in England,⁵⁰ but subscription libraries often offered works in regional historiography that were far less readily available south of the border like Shaw's *History of Moray*, Ridpath's *Border History*, Ure's *History of Rutherglen*, Semple's updated edition of Crawford's *History of Renfrewshire*, Gibson's

⁴⁸ Typically, the Kirkcudbright committee were more concerned with extracting money from subscribers. On 7 August 1778, 'It was represented by the cashier that no less than twenty eight members have never yet paid up their first annual subscription, although an advertisement was inserted in the Dumfries newspapers two months ago desiring them so to do'; Kirkcudbright Minutes.

⁴⁹ Many are listed in Alston; J. C. Crawford, 'The Bibliography of Printed Catalogues Issued by publicly available libraries in Scotland, 1765-1930: an analysis of the database', *The Bibliothek* 23 (1998), 27-48.

⁵⁰ On reading tastes in English subscription libraries, see *Nation of Readers*.

History of Glasgow and especially Arnot's *History of Edinburgh*. Indeed, David Allan has argued convincingly that the curators of the Perth Library 'wished to impose a coherent institutional acquisitions policy' that stressed the cultural significance of 'Provincial Histories – by which are understood the histories of particular Counties, Parishes, Cities, Towns, Villages, Monuments of Antiquity etc.'⁵¹ The prevalence of such works in other subscription library catalogues would therefore suggest that the Perth cultural manifesto may have been shared by associational readers as far afield as Orkney, Greenock, Dumfries and Duns.

Looking beyond the pre-eminence of history, associational readers were also enthusiastic consumers of the poetry of Scott, Burns, Macpherson, Ramsay and Fergusson, and the novels of Smollett and Scott. Indeed, Scott made an immediate impact on the intellectual horizons of subscription library members with *Waverley* itself appearing in nearly all catalogues after 1814, and with works by 'the author of *Waverley*' dominating commission lists throughout the 1810s and 1820s.⁵² A more distinctive feature of subscription library catalogues was their particular enthusiasm for the works of Henry Mackenzie. As John Dwyer has pointed out, Mackenzie's 'important moral parables' contributed to a sentimental ethical programme that was distinctive of the 'virtuous discourse' of the Scottish Enlightenment, and associational readers seem to have been particularly receptive to this agenda.⁵³

Of philosophy more generally, associational readers habitually bought many works that were characteristic of the Scottish Enlightenment, including Smith's *Moral Sentiments* and the works of Reid, Beattie and Stewart – probably as 'standard' texts that any respectable library collection should possess. The presence of Hume's *Essays and Treatises* in roughly two-thirds of catalogues also gave them a digest of his main works, as we have seen, including access to the *Principles of Morals*, the *Enquiry on the Human*

⁵¹ Quoted by Allan, 'Provincial Readers', 380.

⁵² Greenock Minutes; Greenock Recommendations Book; Wigtown Minutes, 2 October 1806; Dundee Public Library Minutes, 25 June 1821; Fowlis Minutes, 11 November 1829.

⁵³ Dwyer, *VD*, 142. Mackenzie's *Man of Feeling* was also included in most collections in England, according to *Nation of Readers*.

Understanding, the *Political Discourses*, and, from 1757, the *Four Dissertations*, as well as the impeccably Addisonian *Essays Moral and Political*.

It is a more convoluted picture for the headline works of the scientific Enlightenment in Scotland. The near total absence of medical works merely reflected the policy habitually adopted that specialist vocational material should be avoided to save the collection from being hijacked by particular interest groups.⁵⁴ This is not to say that associational readers were uninterested in science more generally, however. Members were encouraged to come to terms with Newtonian science by the frequent acquisition of MacLaurin's *Account of Newton* and Ferguson's *Astronomy*, and catalogues also reflected associational interest in agricultural improvement by the promotion of works like Kames' *Gentleman Farmer*, Dickson's *Treatise* and Anderson's *Essays on Agriculture*. Polite interest in natural history was reflected in the popularity of Smellie's *Philosophy of Natural History*, as well as his translation of Buffon's *Natural History*, while associational readers' support for pioneering Scottish Enlightenment science was demonstrated by their relative enthusiasm for Hutton's *Theory of the Earth* – which together with Playfair's *Illustrations* enjoyed a distribution profile in associational library catalogues out of all proportion to their distribution in other types of library. Institutions like the Greenock Subscription Library, which became inextricably associated with James Watt, clearly conceived themselves as institutional sponsors of Scottish science at the cutting edge of contemporary research.⁵⁵

IV

Surviving catalogues therefore suggest that associational readers in Scotland identified themselves squarely with important elements of the Scottish Enlightenment, often, though not always, reflecting reading tastes across Britain as a whole. However, as one

⁵⁴ Subscribers to the Kilmarnock Library agreed that 'books of the most utility to the members in general are to be preferred to those which respect particular professions, party work or controversy'; rule 8 of the Duns Subscription Library's constitution decreed that 'no books professedly wrote upon any subject in Divinity, Law or Physick shall on any account be purchased and all books shall be in the English language'.

⁵⁵ The Greenock Subscription Library was known from the early years of the nineteenth century as the Watt Library.

recent commentator on the history of reading has advised ‘conclusions based upon analyses of library catalogues must remain highly speculative’, for the very reasons we discussed at length in Chapter 1.⁵⁶ Most fundamentally, catalogues can give no sure proof that the particular books which interest us were even taken off the library shelves, an especially acute problem when we are dealing with collections that potentially represented the preferences of multiple interest groups – as was patently the case at most subscription libraries in Scotland.

By all means, scraps of documentary evidence suggest that members did borrow Scottish Enlightenment works. A long list of books apparently ‘lost’ from the Duns Subscription Library compiled in April 1798 included Robertson’s *History of Scotland* and Ferguson’s *Essay*, while Blair’s *Lectures* and Kames’ *Sketches* were returned in an amnesty on overdue books held later that year.⁵⁷ The clerk of the Dundee Public Library, meanwhile, reported in September 1797 that ‘the Librarian presented the 2nd volume of Essays by Mr. D. Hume Esq. which had lost 16 pages of the notes at the end of the book. But after examining the persons who had lately read the book, the committee could not ascertain by whom or in what way the book had lost the same’.⁵⁸

Whether or not the Dundee managers were right in presuming that those who had *borrowed* Hume’s *Essays* had therefore *read* them, institutional borrowing records, in the extremely rare instances where they survive, do help establish the broader reading preferences of subscribers. Unfortunately, the borrowing records of just one subscription library have been studied in print to date for the whole of Great Britain – the borrowing registers of the Bristol Library Association, which was hardly typical given its size and the affluence of its clientele.⁵⁹ Over a ten year period, Paul Kaufman found that the historiography of Hume, Robertson, Watson and Henry dominated borrowings at Bristol, and they were joined in tabulations of the most popular texts by specialist works like

⁵⁶ Jan Fergus, ‘Provincial Servants’ Reading in the Late Eighteenth Century’, in *PRR*, 158.

⁵⁷ Duns Proceedings, 25 April 1798.

⁵⁸ Dundee Public Library Minutes, 26 September 1797. Surviving catalogues for the Dundee Public Library do not reveal whether this refers to Hume’s *Essays Moral and Political* or the *Essays and Treatises*.

⁵⁹ Paul Kaufman, *Borrowings from the Bristol Library 1773-1784: A Unique Record of Reading Vogues* (Charlottesville VA, 1960), 9.

Blackwell's *Memoirs of the Court of Augustus*, Kames' *Sketches* and Alexander's *History of Women*.

A number of little-known sources in provincial Scotland provide evidence for the reading preferences of borrowers from more modest subscription libraries. The most extensive borrowing registers to survive belong to the Selkirk Subscription Library, founded in 1772 and the property of a healthy mix of urban professionals and tenant farmers drawn from a wide hinterland. The registers cover a fifteen period between 1799 and 1814, during which around 12,000 loans were recorded by 68 members.⁶⁰

Borrowers included at least ten landowners, led by the prolific Andrew Henderson Esq. of Midgehope, whose 402 borrowings featured Beattie's *Essay on Truth* and Hume's *Essays*, Blair's *Lectures* and Campbell's *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, and the historiography of Hume, Robertson and Henry. Also featured heavily were eight ministers from the local Presbytery of the Church of Scotland, including Robert Douglas (1747-1820), 'Father of Galashiels',⁶¹ whose 191 borrowings included Mackenzie's novels; George Thomson (1758-1835) of Melrose, who borrowed four numbers of the second *Edinburgh Review* amongst 187 loans overall; and Robert Russell (1768-1847) of Yarrow, who borrowed Smith's *The Wealth of Nations*, Stewart's lives of Robertson and Reid, and MacQueen's *Letters on Hume's History* amongst 93 other items. Most prolific of all, however, was George Lawson, minister of the Burgher congregation at Selkirk and Professor of Theology at the Associate Synod's Theological Hall.⁶² Lawson's 1,557 loans represent an appropriate record for a man renowned in his own time as the 'Scottish Socrates', and featured 87 numbers of the *Annual Register*, 12 of the *Edinburgh Review*, 18 loans of the *Statistical Account*, 17 of Hume's *History*, seven loans of the *Lounger*, six of Robertson's *Charles V* and 35 separate loans of Henry's *History*.⁶³

⁶⁰ The following analysis of the Selkirk borrowing registers is based on Selkirk Register and Day Book; *Catalogue of the Selkirk Library, instituted 1777* (Selkirk, 1856).

⁶¹ *Fasti*.

⁶² *Lawson; ODNB*.

⁶³ *Blackwell Dictionary of Evangelical Biography 1730-1860*, 2 volumes (ed. Donald M. Lewis, Oxford, 1995). Chalmers wrote of Lawson, 'no simple-minded more perfect lover of wisdom do I know of in that generation', *Dictionary of Scottish Church History & Theology; Lawson*.

Among other occupations that can be safely identified, a further eighteen were tenant farmers, and these included Robert Laidlaw of Peel (528 loans including four loans each of Beattie's *Minstrel*, Smollett's *Humphrey Clinker* and the *Edinburgh Review*, plus 24 separate loans of Hume's *History*), Henry Scott of Deloraine (352 loans including Smith's *Moral Sentiments*, Hutcheson *Inquiry* and Campbell's *Essays on Miracles*, as well as Thomas Reid's *Inquiry* and *Essays*), James Grieve of Howden (303 loans including three of Hume's *Essays* and four of his *History*) and George Park, brother of the African explorer Mungo (154 loans including Tytler's *Enquiry* and Robertson's *America*, as well as Scott's *Lady of the Lake* and *Waverley*).⁶⁴ A number of others were based more firmly in the town itself, such as Andrew Lang, sheriff clerk of Selkirkshire (112 loans covering an array of subject matter, including Dickson's *Treatise*, Hailes' *Annals*, Beattie's *Elements* and the poetry of Thomas Blacklock), the schoolmaster James Scott (82 loans including Blair's *Lectures* and Duff *On Genius*, as well as Hume's *History*, Ferguson's *Essay* and Ridpath's *Border History*), the surgeons Andrew Thomson (311 loans including Reid's *Inquiry* and *Essays*, as well as Hutcheson's *Essay* and *Inquiry*) and Ebenezer Clark (147 loans, heavy in Scott and Smollett), and the tanner John Anderson (whose 305 loans took in the plays of John Home, the poetry of Burns and Scott, and the novels of Mackenzie and Smollett, besides Montesquieu, Rousseau, Robertson, and Gerard).

Taken together in Table 2.1, the loan records of subscribers at Selkirk do seem to corroborate the reading preferences indicated by the Bristol registers, certainly in the popularity of history. Hume's *History* is the clear leader as far as works associated with the Scottish Enlightenment are concerned, registering 109 loans in the period covered by the surviving registers – second only to the *Annual Register* in circulation, whose various numbers were borrowed on 161 separate occasions at Selkirk and offered readers ready-made opinions on a wide variety of books.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ The Park family were members of Lawson's Burgher congregation; *Lawson*, 67-9.

⁶⁵ Hume's *History* registered 180 loans at Bristol between 1773 and 1784 (the fourth highest score in Kaufman's analysis). On the critical press, see Donoghue, *FM* and Engell, *CM*.

Title	No. of times borrowed	No. of borrowers
<i>Annual Register</i>	161	28
Hume, <i>History</i>	109	30
Burns, <i>Poems</i>	80	37
Henry, <i>History of Great Britain</i>	68	13
<i>Arabian Nights</i>	60	29
Johnson, <i>Works</i>	58	25
<i>Canterbury Tales</i>	56	30
Shakespeare	56	21
Park, <i>Travels</i>	54	29
<i>Edward</i>	50	28
Gibbon, <i>Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire</i>	49	19
Sinclair, <i>Statistical Account</i>	47	13
Scott, <i>Border Minstrelsy</i>	44	27
Goldsmith, <i>History of England</i>	44	21
<i>Edinburgh Review</i>	43	17
<i>Embassy to Asia</i>	42	28
Goldsmith, <i>Works</i>	42	21
<i>Beggar Girl</i>	40	25
Rollin, <i>Ancient History</i>	40	17
Edgeworth, <i>Modern Philosophers</i>	39	25
Burney, <i>Evelina</i>	38	23
Mackenzie, <i>Julia de Roubigné</i>	37	25
<i>Don Quixote</i>	37	16
<i>Camilla</i>	36	22
Robertson, <i>History of Scotland</i>	34	22
Fielding, <i>Works</i>	34	18
Smollett, <i>Roderick Random</i>	31	19
Mackenzie, <i>Man of Feeling</i>	30	22
<i>Lounger</i>	30	19
Laing, <i>History of Scotland</i>	30	17

Table 2.1: Books Borrowed from the Selkirk Subscription Library, 1799-1814 (Works borrowed 30 times or more)

Even so, Hume's *History* was actually withdrawn by more readers than the *Annual Register*, and its thirty borrowers included a wide cross section of Selkirk subscribers – nine farmers, four ministers, four writers and the Library's three surgeons, as well as the landowner and industrialist Walter Dunlop of Whitmuirhall, the Selkirk magistrate Bailie James Robson, Colonel William Russell and the schoolmaster Scott. Of Scottish historiography, only Henry's *History* came close to matching the frequency with which Hume was withdrawn from the Library, being taken out 68 occasions by thirteen different

borrowers – who included four farmers, two esquires, two ministers, two writers and a surgeon. Here we immediately see the value of looking not only at the overall figure for borrowings of each title, but also at the number of individuals who withdrew a title – a seemingly simple refinement of the borrowing statistics, but one with great significance when we consider that books like Hume’s *History* and Henry’s *History* came in many volumes.⁶⁶

With this in mind, Robertson’s historiography looks a great deal more popular with readers at Selkirk. Robertson’s *History of Scotland* was actually the most frequently borrowed of his historiography – in stark contrast to Bristol, where both the *History of the Reign of Charles V* and the *History of America* far outperformed it.⁶⁷ This significant contrast appears to offer yet more proof that Scottish readers displayed a pronounced preference for explicitly Scottish material. Again, the social distribution of Robertson’s borrowers took in the full array of groupings at the Selkirk Library: borrowers of the *History of Scotland*, for example, included six farmers, three ministers, two landowners, two surgeons, two writers, a banker and a tanner, while five readers borrowed the three major histories – two farmers, two ministers and the surgeon Thomas Scott. Only the exceptional Reverend Lawson borrowed all four of Robertson’s histories.

Such enthusiasm for Scottish themes was not restricted to Robertson. Malcolm Laing’s *History of Scotland*, marketed as a continuation of Robertson, was borrowed thirty times by seventeen different readers, who included Colonel Russell, the tanner Anderson, sheriff clerk Lang and his son, and the writer John Lang, as well as six farmers, four ministers and two lairds. Eight more readers borrowed Gilbert Stuart’s *History of Scotland* (four ministers, three farmers and a writer), while six borrowed John Pinkerton’s controversial account of the distant Scottish past (at least two of whom were farmers).

⁶⁶ Kaufman highlighted this point; Paul Kaufman, *Reading Vogues at English Cathedral Libraries of the Eighteenth Century* (New York, 1963-1964); idem., *Bristol Library*, 127; and idem., ‘A Unique Record of a People’s Reading’, *Libri*, 14 (1964-5), 234.

⁶⁷ See Kaufman, *Bristol Library*, 123: *Charles V* had 131 loans, *History of America* 111 and *History of Scotland* 59. Robertson was distinguished in the Bristol analysis for being the only author to have three works borrowed more than fifty times each.

The great legends of the Scottish past also continued to fascinate Selkirk readers – not least Mary Queen of Scots, seemingly neutralised as a figure of political discord by Robertson, Hume *et al.* That did not stop eleven Selkirk subscribers (all laymen) from borrowing Tytler’s ‘Vindication’ (their shorthand in the borrowing register for Tytler’s *Inquiry* was revealing in itself), including six who had also borrowed Robertson.⁶⁸ Moreover, some Selkirk readers were also enthused by Scottish regional historiography, certainly in the form of Arnot’s *Edinburgh* (borrowed by nine individuals, including four farmers, two ministers, a surgeon and a writer) and Nimmo’s *Stirlingshire* (five loanees, three farmers, plus Reverend Lawson and the surgeon Scott) – though they could not be accused of being narrowly parochial, with only two borrowing Ridpath’s *Border History*.

However, Selkirk readers seem to have been relatively uninterested in conjectural history. *The Wealth of Nations* was borrowed by seven individuals (though no one borrowed it more than once, despite its multi-volume format),⁶⁹ while Ferguson’s *Essay* and Kames’ *Sketches* each had six borrowers – putting them on a par with Robertson’s relatively obscure *India*. Millar’s more technical *Distinction of Ranks* created even less of a stir, borrowed by just three individuals in fifteen years, as was Montesquieu’s *Spirit of the Laws*, the prime inspiration for Scottish conjectural history. Indeed, the only sign that this brand of social history defined by its wide historical sweep and philosophical emphasis had any kind of wide-ranging appeal in this corner of provincial Scotland is the frequency with which William Alexander’s pioneering *History of Women* was borrowed, 21 times by sixteen individuals – who included five farmers, three country squires and two writers, as well as Colonel Russell, the surgeon Anderson and, of course, the distinguished Reverend Lawson.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ L. L. Bongie, ‘The Eighteenth-Century Marian Controversy and an Unpublished Letter by David Hume’, *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 1 (1963-1964); K. O’Brien, *Narratives of Enlightenment: Cosmopolitan History from Voltaire to Gibbon* (Cambridge, 1997); M. Fearnley-Sander, ‘Philosophical history and the Scottish Reformation: William Robertson and the Knoxian tradition’, *The Historical Journal*, 33:2 (1990).

⁶⁹ This perhaps reflects contemporary comments about the technical difficulty of *The Wealth of Nations*; see I. S. Ross (ed.), *On the Wealth of Nations: Contemporary Responses to Adam Smith* (Bristol, 1998).

⁷⁰ Alexander’s *History of Women* had been borrowed sixteen times in the first three years it was available at Bristol; Kaufman, *Bristol Library*.

In spite of their apparent lack of interest in the distinctive theoretical historiography of the Scottish Enlightenment, Selkirk readers did follow its key philosophical debates. As at Bristol, Scottish aesthetics was particularly popular: the twelve borrowers of Blair's *Lectures* included four farmers, two ministers, a surgeon, a writer and a schoolmaster, while Campbell's *Philosophy of Rhetoric* and Alison's *Essays on Taste* were each borrowed by nine Selkirk subscribers. Reverend Lawson, of course, borrowed all three, as well as Kames' *Elements* and Gerard *On Genius*.⁷¹ Hutcheson's *Inquiry*, an important precursor of Blair, Campbell *et al*, attracted ten borrowers (including a schoolmaster and four farmers), four of whom also borrowed his closely related *Essay*.

Moreover, moral philosophy itself made some impression beyond the satirical sideswipe at the excesses of modern metaphysics that was Lady Hamilton's *Memoirs of the Modern Philosophers* – borrowed 39 times by 25 individuals. Smith's *Moral Sentiments* was withdrawn from the library room by nine individuals, including four farmers, a writer, a surgeon, the Reverend Lawson and Mark Pringle Esq. – who also borrowed Smith's *Philosophical Essays*. Beattie's *Essay on Truth* was borrowed eighteen times by fifteen individuals and was thus considerably more popular than Reid's cerebral *Inquiry* (borrowed six times) and *Essays* (11) – in keeping with the more bombastic and avowedly populist style in which Beattie got to grips with Hume's notorious scepticism.

As for the Great Infidel himself, Hume's *Essays and Treatises* were withdrawn fourteen times by ten different readers.⁷² The farmers James Grieve and John Murray borrowed the *Essays* three and two times respectively, while other borrowers included the schoolmaster Scott, the writer Rodger and the Reverend Lawson – noticeably the sole minister to show any interest in Hume's philosophy. Though we cannot know what these men made of Hume's more controversial positions, this does at least suggest that the rate of circulation implied by catalogues for the *Essays and Treatises* may indeed be a reliable

⁷¹ Blair's *Lectures* was borrowed 25 times in the first period it was available at the Bristol Library (1782-4), though Kames' *Elements of Criticism* recorded slightly more loans overall (30 between 1773 and 1784). Gerard's *Essay on Taste* was borrowed 12 times and his *Essay on Genius* ten times; Kaufman, *Bristol Library*.

⁷² The earliest surviving catalogue for the Selkirk collection confirms that this was the *Essays and Treatises*; *Selkirk Catalogue*. 'When American writers attacked Hume's philosophy, they did so because Hume's philosophy was being read'; Spencer, *HR*, II, 83.

indication of the extent to which he was being read in provincial Scotland. However, no subscriber dared to propose Hume's *Treatise* at any time in its first fifty years, and only two borrowed the posthumous *Dialogues of Natural Religion* – one of whom was Reverend Lawson.

Finally, and in a distinct break with the trend at Bristol, the Selkirk borrowing records confirm what our analyses of catalogues have already suggested about the widespread availability of Scottish imaginative literature. Alongside perennial eighteenth-century classics – the *Arabian Nights*, *Don Quixote*, Moore's *Zeluco*, as well as the works of Richardson, Fielding, More, Defoe and Edgeworth – Mackenzie was particularly prominent. *The Man of Feeling* and *Julia de Roubigné* were each borrowed by more than twenty readers, while *The Man of the World* had fifteen borrowers, and the *Lounger* and *Mirror* magazines were borrowed by nineteen and fifteen individuals respectively. Only three Selkirk subscribers had borrowed Scott's *Waverley* before the librarian ran out of room in the latest surviving Day Book – but this was in 1814, the very year *Waverley* was first released.

Scottish poetry was noticeable for its relative absence from the Bristol borrowing registers, and this prompted Kaufman to speculate that a fair proportion of its members may already have owned copies of Burns, Ossian and Thomson.⁷³ But at Selkirk, poetry joined novels and plays in making imaginative literature far and away the most popular type of literature – accounting for around a third of all loans in the period for which records survive. Scott naturally made an immediate impact, particularly so in a community where the author was personally well known and (for those who were not in on the secret) where the *Border Minstrelsy* had especially strong local appeal. The very different poetic qualities of Beattie and 'Ossian' Macpherson also had a solid following – taken out 12 and 13 times respectively. Indeed, it is probable that such individuals were inspired to read Ossian and *The Minstrel* by the earnest recommendations of the Scottish

⁷³ In highlighting the apparent lack of Bristolian interest in Thomson's *Seasons* (4 borrowers overall), Kaufman suggested that this 'could be explained by their presence in private libraries'; *Bristol Library*, 126. The Kilmarnock edition of Burns' *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* was originally priced at 3s.; Macpherson's *Fragments of Ancient Poetry* was sold for 1s.; *EB*, 630-1, 668-9.

rhetoricians: the farmer James Laidlaw had already borrowed Kames' *Elements*, Blair's *Lectures* and Campbell's *Philosophy of Rhetoric* before he turned to Ossian, while Andrew Henderson Esq. borrowed Ossian, Beattie and Burns only after returning Gerard, Campbell and Blair.

The profile of Burns' *Poems* was even more impressive, borrowed by 37 individuals who more often than not returned to borrow Burns a second or third time. The writer George Rodger and Reverend Lawson borrowed Burns seven times each, while the farmers Robert and James Laidlaw, who could no doubt most easily identify with the world view so eloquently illuminated by the renowned Kilmarnock farmer, were each marked down for Burns four times. Overall, twelve farmers, four ministers, four writers, three surgeons, a tanner and a schoolmaster borrowed Burns, as well as the solitary female subscriber to appear in the borrowing register. We may surmise that the private cajoling of other members' wives and daughters accounted for the regularity with which their menfolk returned to the library for copies of Burns.

V

One problem with the Selkirk registers is that they relate to a period when the library was already well established, and where some subscribers discussed here may well have been borrowing books for ten, twenty or even thirty years. The Selkirk Subscription Library itself had been founded in 1770, so borrowing statistics may be skewed by the fact that the library pre-dated many works that were being most frequently borrowed between 1799 and 1814 – including *The Wealth of Nations*, Robertson's *History of America*, Blair's *Lectures* and Burns' *Poems*.

Such problems do not complicate our impression of borrowings from the Wigtown Subscription Library, founded in the south-western corner of Scotland in September 1795. Initially, loans were recorded informally on random pages in the middle of the association's first Minute Book until an enterprising librarian (the schoolmaster, James Martin) drew up a formal ledger specifically to keep a closer eye on the books in his

care.⁷⁴ Martin's immaculate book keeping expired sometime in late 1799 (he was replaced by another schoolmaster, Mr Cook, in January 1801), but this at least means that we have borrowing records for the best part of the Wigtown Library's first five years.

Of 701 loans in total, the profile of periodical works like the *Annual Register*, the *Critical Review* and especially the *Monthly Review* is particularly impressive, as is Bell's collected edition of the best of *British Theatre* and Johnson's *Lives* – all offering critical guidance on choosing books (Table 2.2).⁷⁵ Novels were popular, especially Fielding's *Works* and Moore's *Zeluco*, as was travel literature of the kind pedalled by innumerable British adventurers overseas – in this instance, Cook, Coxe and Bruce were most in demand.⁷⁶ And of course, historiography was held in particularly high esteem at Wigtown as at libraries elsewhere in the British Isles – especially historiography that combined a taste for the exotic with a compelling model for amateur scholarship, like Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, Raynall's *West Indies*, Savary's *Egypt* and Gillies' *Greece*. Noticeably, though, there was no sign of religion in the preferences of subscribers to the Wigtown Library in these early years – giving the lie to the notion, too often aired, that traditional religious and devotional reading matter continued to hold sway over most ordinary readers in provincial Scotland.⁷⁷

Title	No. of times borrowed	No. of borrowers
Gibbon, <i>Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire</i>	69	16
Bell, <i>British Theatre</i>	67	23
Henry, <i>History of Great Britain</i>	44	15
Cook, <i>Voyages</i>	42	11
Fielding, <i>Works</i>	34	12
Gillies, <i>History of Ancient Greece</i>	31	11
Hume, <i>History</i>	28	7
Smollett, <i>History of England</i>	23	10
<i>Monthly Review</i>	20	14

⁷⁴ Both the formal loans register and the original minute book survive, as does a somewhat sparse loans register dating to the 1840s. Hornell Library, MSS 5/27, 11/28 and 11/31.

⁷⁵ Donoghue, *FM*; Engell, *CM*.

⁷⁶ N. Leask, *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing, 1770-1840: 'From an Antique Land'* (Oxford, 2002); K. Turner, *British Travel Writers in Europe, 1750-1800: Authorship, Gender and National Identity* (Aldershot, 2001).

⁷⁷ R. A. Houston, *Scottish Literacy and the Scottish Identity: Illiteracy and Society in Scotland and Northern England 1600-1800* (Cambridge, 1985), 176-8.

Moore, <i>Zeluco</i>	20	12
Cox, <i>Travels</i>	20	10
<i>Annual Register</i>	20	10
Johnson, <i>Lives of the British Poets</i>	16	8
<i>Fool of Quality</i>	16	6
Robertson, <i>Charles V</i>	14	6
Savary, <i>Egypt</i>	13	12
Watson, <i>Philip II</i>	13	6
Arnot, <i>History of Edinburgh</i>	12	11
Rousseau, <i>Eloisa</i>	12	7
<i>Critical Review</i>	11	8
Raynall, <i>West Indies</i>	11	6
Lytleton, <i>Henry the Second</i>	11	5
Volney, <i>Travels</i>	10	8
Knox, <i>Essays</i>	10	8
Moore, <i>View of Society</i>	10	7

Table 2.2: Books Borrowed from the Wigtown Subscription Library, 1796-99 (works borrowed ten times or more)

Wigtown subscribers did, of course, include some pretty extraordinary local figures, but as we have already seen – and typically for subscription libraries across the country – these individuals rarely involved themselves in day-to-day library affairs. The eighth Earl of Galloway may have signed up as a founding subscriber but he does not appear in any of the surviving borrowing records. Nor does the army captain and laird of Castlewigg, John Hathorn, who despite his initial patronage, actually defaulted on subscription payments and was duly struck off as a member. Meanwhile, Sir William Maxwell baronet of Monreith and Lady Maxwell registered just three loans between them and another major local landholder, William McConnell, who donated a substantial proportion of his own collection to the library soon after its foundation, recorded just ten loans in total.⁷⁸

The eight Church of Scotland ministers involved in the Library's foundation were much more prolific borrowers, especially John Graham of Kirkiner (a contributor to the *Statistical Account* whose 29 loans included Smellie's *Philosophy of Natural History* and

⁷⁸ The extent and quality of McConnell's donation is not made clear in the library's minutes, though expressions of thanks are voted for him on more than one occasion.

six volumes of Henry's *History*). Seven writers were also amongst the most frequent borrowers, such as John Hawthorn (the society's first treasurer, marked down for 31 loans) and John Dalzeil (a founding member who borrowed seven books, including *Fingal*), as well as five medical men, led by Robert Moodie (whose 30 loans featured Arnot's *Edinburgh* and Stewart's *Elements*). Three merchants were keen borrowers, notably Ebenezer Drew (50 borrowings, including Mackenzie's *Lounger* and *Mirror*, and the historiography of Hume, Henry, Robertson and Watson), plus three factors, especially William Mure (who borrowed Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws*, as well as nine other items), factor for the estate of Lord Selkirk. Finally, there were two accountants, the banker Matthew Campbell (whose thirty borrowings surveyed the historiography of Henry, Robertson, Hume, Gibbon, Raynall, and Savary), the exciseman James Tweedale (who borrowed two numbers of the *Mirror* as well as Smellie's *Philosophy of Natural History*), and the vintner Alexander Murray (whose premises provided a fittingly convivial stage for the society's meetings, and who registered thirty loans including Robertson's *History of Scotland*, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, *The Fool of Quality*, *Gil Blas* and Smollett's *Roderick Random*).

As will already be clear, the same kind of Scottish Enlightenment texts that performed well at Selkirk also had widespread appeal at Wigtown. Henry's *History* was the clear favourite this time, borrowed by fifteen individuals who included six ministers, two accountants, two bankers and two surgeons. Owing to the enhanced legibility of the formal Wigtown borrowing register – the most meticulously-maintained register to survive by some margin – it is also possible to pinpoint the specific volumes they borrowed. Andrew Douglas, an accountant, borrowed the first two volumes of Henry's *History*, which ran from the Romans up to the Norman Conquest, but was insufficiently impressed to take out its subsequent volumes. Similarly, the banker Campbell restricted his reading of Henry to the second and third volumes, evidently focusing on events leading up to the Magna Carta – still considered a crucial plank of Whiggish politics. On the other hand, Reverend John Dickson (1748-1799), minister of Kirkcowan, followed up his initial interest in the first volume of Henry's *History* by borrowing the next four volumes in two subsequent visits, while Ebenezer Drew and the surgeon Samuel

Shortridge borrowed all six volumes, reflecting Henry's long-term popularity amongst some readers.

Robertson's historiography was considerably less popular with borrowers at Wigtown, though the *History of America* was still proposed by subscribers in October 1799 – an indication that at least some of those subscribers who read the *History of Scotland* and *Charles V* liked what they read. Six subscribers borrowed the *History of Scotland*, including the accountant John Murdoch and the lawyer Dalzeil, while two of those went on to borrow *Charles V* as well, including Reverend John Steven (1752-1828), minister of Mochrum and contributor to the *Statistical Account*. Overall, six borrowers took out *Charles V*, though they accounted for 14 loans overall – suggesting that readers tended to return more often to *Charles V*, perhaps because they found it more challenging (not inconceivable, given its extended theoretical introduction on the development of feudal society in Europe before the sixteenth century).

While Robertson had a small but dedicated following at Wigtown, the picture was more complicated for Hume's *History*. Naturally enough for such a small library, borrowings of Hume's *History* overall were markedly down on comparable figures at Selkirk, with only seven borrowers accounting for a total of 28 loans. Some of these, especially Mrs McCulloch, the writer Robert McKeand and the surgeon Andrew Simson, proved dedicated readers of Hume's *History* by borrowing each volume of the original eight-volume set. Others, however, seem only to have been interested in the later Stuart volumes, including the two Drew brothers, both merchants. Some Wigtown readers therefore approached Hume's *History* with a highly selective eye, choosing those volumes which were considered (and which were treated as such by one reader discussed at length in Chapter 6, below) to be most relevant for Georgian politics, dealing as they did with a critical period in seventeenth-century history when English politics first came to be divided along Whig-Tory lines.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ David Hume, *The History of England, from the Invasion of Julius Caesar to the Revolution of 1688* (London, 1762). Originally issued in 6 volumes, 8 volume editions were released in 1763 and 1769, and it was probably one of these editions that the Wigtown Library acquired.

Even so, ten further Wigtown subscribers were slated down exclusively for Smollett's *Continuation of Mr. Hume's History* without first borrowing Hume, including the banker Campbell, the merchant William McKeand, the exciseman Tweedale and the surgeon Samuel Shortridge.⁸⁰ Such readers probably opted for Smollett because of the more recent history on offer in the *Continuation*, or, more disconcertingly, because they hoped to avoid Hume's notorious irreligion and alleged Toryism (see Chapter 6 below). Moreover, only one clergyman associated himself with Hume's obstinately secular *History*, James Black (1754-1826) of Penninghame, who borrowed a single unspecified volume in 1798 – an intriguing detail in the reading preferences of Church of Scotland ministers, who were otherwise such enthusiastic consumers (and producers) of polite historiography.

Looking beyond historiography, the Wigtown records give the impression that texts associated with the Enlightenment received something of a lukewarm reception. Smellie's *Philosophy of Natural History* made some headway, borrowed by six individuals (including the surgeons Moodie and Shortridge, Ebenezer Drew, and Reverend Graham of Kirkiner), while the *Mirror* and *Lounger* magazines attracted five and six borrowers respectively – in another reflection, perhaps, of the popularity of Mackenzie's moral programme in provincial Scotland. However, moral philosophy itself was restricted to a handful of loans of Stewart's *Elements* and Smith's posthumous *Essays. The Wealth of Nations*, meanwhile, attracted just one reader, the farmer Alexander Vance, who borrowed all three volumes between 12th July and 6th September 1799.

That said, we must not forget that the Wigtown Library was in its infancy when these works were being borrowed, with the collection still quite limited. The seemingly poor reception afforded to *The Wealth of Nations* in the years covered by the borrowing registers may simply be explained by its late acquisition – its only borrower, after all, was himself a latecomer (Vance first subscribed in October 1797). Moreover, subscribers

⁸⁰ Tobias Smollett, *Continuation of the Complete History of England*, 5 vols. (London, 1760-5). It was 'marketed, through a sleight of hand, as a "continuation" of Hume'; *EB*, 169.

continued to acquire texts through the 1800s and early 1810s that were considered required reading at other libraries, including Robertson's *America*, Ferguson's *Essay*, Campbell's *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, Buffon's *Natural History* and the Kilmarnock edition of Burns.

VI

All this begs the question why particular books ended up in these collections, and how purchases came to be selected. Of course, there is a strong element of literary fashionability here, with most libraries explicitly attempting to build up a canonical collection of titles approved by the critics.⁸¹ When a library was first established, it was common for founding members to send off a list of titles to booksellers in Edinburgh, Glasgow and even London in an attempt to acquire a canon of books that were considered 'essential reading' at the best possible price. Several such 'approved catalogues' were drawn up by members of the Duns Library in the earliest months of its existence, for instance, and these lists included such works as Hume's *History*, Robertson's *History of Scotland*, Ferguson's *Essay* and the *Scots Magazine*, while a block purchase of books by the Dundee Public Library at its inception in 1796 reads like a who's who of the Scottish Enlightenment.⁸² This desire to establish a canonical collection of standard works was actually enshrined in the constitutions of various libraries, including the regulations of the Bridgeton Public Library founded on the outskirts of Glasgow in 1825 which stipulated that the collection should 'consist of approved standard works, scientific and literary, with a selection from the new works of merit, and a few of the best periodical publications'.⁸³

Books on taste (particularly those by Kames, Campbell and Blair) were often amongst the earliest acquisitions, and could help library managers decide which books to buy. Additionally, they were not above emulating other collections – so that members of the

⁸¹ On canon formation, see J. Raven, 'From Promotion to Proscription: Arrangements for Reading and Eighteenth-Century Libraries', in *PRR*, 191-2; *Making British Culture*, Ch2.

⁸² Duns Proceedings, 5 October 1768 and 7 December 1768; Dundee Public Library Minutes, 4 October 1796.

⁸³ *Regulations and Catalogue of the Bridgeton Public Library* (Glasgow, 1824).

Greenock Subscription Library and Paisley Library Society looked at least in part to catalogues of Stirling's Library in nearby Glasgow to help inform the development of their own collections.⁸⁴

Even more dramatically, periodicals like the *Annual Register*, the *Monthly Review*, the *Critical Review*, the *Scots Magazine* and the second *Edinburgh Review* carried reviews of important works, listed recently released titles, and often excerpted passages from popular authors – all vital services in an era, lest we forget, where readers could not browse the shelves of a well-stocked local bookshop over a leisurely coffee break.⁸⁵ The *Annual Register* was borrowed so frequently at both Selkirk and Wigtown because it was an easy way – perhaps the only way – for provincial readers to keep themselves updated on the literary trends and events of the day.⁸⁶ Borrowers of the 1793 volumes of the *Monthly Review* at Wigtown (including the farmer John McGill) could accordingly read a series of enthusiastic reviews of Stewart's *Elements*, which offered excerpts and potted summaries of each section, besides extended commentary – eventually concluding by 'sincerely thanking the learned Professor, in the name of the public, for this worthy and noble use of his faculties'.⁸⁷ It was surely no coincidence that the library acquired a copy soon after – which McGill himself borrowed on 27th January 1798.

All these influences, then, help explain why certain books turn up so frequently in subscription library catalogues – and confirm that associational readers in provincial Scotland increasingly saw themselves as part of a much wider 'reading nation',⁸⁸ so far from obstinately ignoring literary triumphs on their doorstep that they actually relied on

⁸⁴ *Catalogue and Regulations of the Greenock Subscription Library* (Greenock, 1808); *Catalogue of Books and Regulations in the Paisley Library Society* (Paisley, 1822); *Catalogue of Books in Stirling's Public Library* (Glasgow, 1795). There are many more examples of direct emulation in English subscription libraries; *Nation of Readers*, Ch4.

⁸⁵ Antonia Forster, 'Review Journals and the Reading Public', I. Rivers (ed.), *Books and their Readers in Eighteenth-Century England: New Essays* (Leicester University Press, London, 2001); J. Feather, 'The Book Trade and Libraries', in *CHLB2*; D. Roper, *Reviewing before the Edinburgh: 1788-1802* (London, 1978), especially 24; Donoghue, *FM*; Engell, *CM*.

⁸⁶ In 1816, committee members at Wigtown minuted their desire to complete their run of the *Annual Register* from its foundation in 1768, a reminder that old editions of periodicals could still be a valuable aid to library development in later foundations.

⁸⁷ *The Monthly Review, or Literary Journal Enlarged*, vol. 10 (January-April, 1793), 59-64, 203-10 and 366-73; 373.

⁸⁸ St Clair.

the literary strictures coming out of Glasgow, Edinburgh and especially London to shape their intellectual horizons. But there is also evidence to suggest that the desire for canonicity was not the only factor at work, and some institutions developed strategies that encouraged members to become critics in their own right. The members of the Paisley Library Society, founded in 1802, developed a particularly sophisticated set of measures to encourage independent criticism in book selection. Besides naming the titles and authors of the books they requested, members were required ‘to add the size and number of volumes, the retail price, [and] the character of the work’. Regulations then aimed to stimulate discussion of the competing virtues of the books proposed in this way by instructing the committee to prepare a longer short list than was necessary. The whole society finally voted on the ‘proper choice of Books’ at its AGM, presumably after some negotiation in whittling down the short list compiled from their recommendations.⁸⁹ Members of the Paisley Library Society were thereby encouraged to become critical consumers of literature (a thoroughly Enlightened pastime) as a matter of course, as were subscribers to the Dalkeith Library Society – where it was required that proposals for books were to be submitted ‘with reasons annexed, evidencing that he is acquainted with them’.⁹⁰

Though no record of the discussion of books anywhere has come down to us, evidence relating to the wider intellectual values promoted by such institutions suggests that they not only encouraged critical consumption of the Scottish Enlightenment, but that they also allowed provincial Scots to believe they were participating in some of its major concerns.⁹¹ For instance, ‘useful’ and ‘utility’ are two key terms that turn up repeatedly in contemporary representations of subscription libraries, and it was widely thought that the useful knowledge they were designed to offer would contribute to the wider improvement of society. This was precisely the point made by subscribers to the Fenwick Library

⁸⁹ *Paisley Library Society Catalogue* (Paisley, 1822). This was all common practice in English libraries, and usually entailed citation of a published review of a work, as Allan will reveal in *Nation of Readers*.

⁹⁰ BL 900.f.7.(6), *Rules for the Regulation of the Dalkeith Subscription Library* (Edinburgh, 1798).

⁹¹ Varma reminds us that libraries could be ‘real venues of intellect and culture, where groups of scholars assembled for discussion and welcome exchange of views’, *ET*, 100. David Allan finds only ‘hints at the nature of a debate’ in the minute book of the Lancaster Amicable Society, ‘The Scottish Enlightenment and the Readers of Late Georgian Lancaster: “Light in the North”’, *Northern History* (2000), 277.

(Ayrshire) in an extended essay on the merits of subscription libraries composed to preface their 1825 catalogue:

Nothing can be better calculated than a Library adapted to the habits and various pursuits of the community where it is established. The utility of such institutions has happily been long acknowledged in Scotland; and to the diffusion of knowledge, of which they have been not the least considerable instruments, we are indebted, under God, for great part of that light and liberty which we enjoy.⁹²

Associational readers at Renton (Dunbartonshire) also expressed ‘their earnest, [and] unanimous desire’ that their Library might ‘be a powerful means of gradually improving the neighbourhood in knowledge, in piety and in virtue.’⁹³ In both of these instances, notably, the rhetoric was not that of the clergymen, lawyers or medical professionals who were most often at the forefront of associational library activity in this period, but that of weavers, smiths, bleachers and calico printers who had no traceable educational or cultural links with the metropolitan Enlightenment.

This was a theme reinforced by a host of contributors to the *Statistical Account*, who as clergymen were all products of an enlightened university education. John Smith, an impeccably Enlightening influence in rural Argyllshire and author of *Gaelic Antiquities* (1780), declaimed that the newly founded subscription library in Cambeltown ‘promises much utility, by diffusing general knowledge and a taste for reading’.⁹⁴ Alexander Mollison was equally convinced that the library founded in Montrose in 1785 promised ‘to increase knowledge and to diffuse a taste for learning, and ought as much as possible to be encouraged’.⁹⁵ And Robert Muter lauded the impact of the Kirkcudbright Subscription Library ‘of the best modern books’, which gave his parishioners ‘access to all the improvements in literature and politics’.⁹⁶

⁹² *Regulations and Catalogue of the Fenwick Library* (Kilmarnock, 1827). As Raven points out, ‘the prefaces of the proprietary library catalogues ... from Leeds to Spalding, from Bristol to Bungay, declared civilising, socialising ambition’; ‘Libraries’, 248.

⁹³ *Catalogue of the Renton Library* (Glasgow, 1819).

⁹⁴ *OSA*, VIII, 65; *ODNB*.

⁹⁵ *OSA*, XIII, 547. *Fasti*.

⁹⁶ *OSA*, XI, 23.

Robert Small's contribution to the *Statistical Account*, by contrast, bemoaned the poverty of Dundee's intellectual culture in 1792, particularly highlighting the want of 'any tolerable public library'.⁹⁷ Within four years, the city's maritime, mercantile and trading communities had plugged this gap and founded two libraries on the subscription model, the Dundee Library (founded 1792) and the Dundee Public Library (1796). In Edinburgh too, even though the city was already very well-equipped with alternative sources for books, the ten individuals who met in 1800 to discuss the foundation of a subscription library, who included a tin smith and an umbrella maker, spoke of the 'importance of useful knowledge' in improving society.⁹⁸

Ultimately, a subscription library could be the spring-board to wider improvements, as was suggested by a prominent patron of the Duns Subscription Library, Alexander Hay of Drummelzier, who was once a student of the minor Scottish Enlightenment philosopher Andrew Baxter. 'It must give me pleasure to think that Dunse is in a way of becoming a seat of literature, arts and sciences; tho' I must own I should have still more was there a probability of its becoming a settlement for industry, trade and manufactures.'⁹⁹ Hay hoped that the establishment of a subscription library in Duns would not only improve the intellectual culture of the area, but that this would ultimately have a knock-on effect on local industry.

But there was also a much more personal kind of improvement at stake in the sociability fostered by associational libraries, the notion that moral insight and understanding on an individual basis would flow from polite sociability. Nicholas Phillipson claims that polite clubbability was the 'dominant cultural style' of the Scottish Enlightenment: derived from Addison and Steele's ubiquitous *Spectator* magazine, politeness represented a revolution in manners, consigning partisan controversies to the past and expounding the

⁹⁷ OSA, XIII, 192. ODNB.

⁹⁸ *Sketch of the Origin and Progress of the Library* ([Edinburgh?], 1834), 1.

⁹⁹ Duns Proceedings, 7 December 1768; ODNB.

refined virtues of intelligent dialogue and structured, sociable interaction.¹⁰⁰ As Hume himself had written of the refinement of the arts in polite society (a famous passage that associational readers would no doubt have read, including, perhaps, some of the ten borrowers of Hume's *Essays* at Selkirk), 'Particular clubs and societies are everywhere formed: both sexes meet in an easy and sociable manner: and the tempers of men, as well as their behaviour, refine apace'.¹⁰¹

Subscription libraries offered members ample opportunity to debate the relative quality of books, and in addressing the 'worthiness' of certain types of books, they also engaged with much broader questions relating to the place of knowledge in society. Moreover, it is hardly likely that such close-knit communities of readers would not have discussed important or challenging authors directly, perhaps working through the problems posed by *The Wealth of Nations* or Beattie's *Essay on Truth* – like Ridpath, who discussed Hume with other associational readers in Kelso.¹⁰² And, of course, processes of associational organisation at subscription libraries, including minute taking, elections to office and ballots on major decisions like book selection and subscription-rate increases, were perfectly designed to allow the kind of social interaction that tended directly towards the refinement which Hume alluded to.¹⁰³ But such processes also tied associational readers in Scotland to important cultural trends across Britain, as John Brewer, Peter Borsay and Peter Clark have made abundantly clear.¹⁰⁴ Indeed, far from being exclusive to the societies and associational libraries of Enlightenment Scotland,

¹⁰⁰ Phillipson, 'Definition', 126; see also, Phillipson, 'Culture'; R. L. Emerson, 'The Social Composition of Enlightened Scotland: the Select Society of Edinburgh, 1754-1764', *SV18C*, 114 (1973), K. Holcomb, 'A Dance in the Mind: the Provincial Scottish Philosophical Societies', *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* (1991), and the pioneer in this regard, D. D. McElroy, *Scotland's Age of Improvement: A Survey of Eighteenth-Century Literary Clubs and Societies* (Washington, 1969).

¹⁰¹ Hume, *Essays*, 271.

¹⁰² *Ridpath*, 6, 130.

¹⁰³ The minute books of Scotland's subscription libraries cited throughout this paper bear testimony to this, an especially full example being the Kirkcudbright Minutes. For a detailed case study of organized sociability at the Perth Library, see Allan, 'Provincial Readers'. Subscription libraries also encouraged conviviality: after a meeting of the Inshewan Reading Society in 1825, 'The country beverage, whisky toddy, was ordered and the members continued together till a late hour. Many appropriate toasts were drunk in course of the evening and the members, inspired by the enlivening spirit of genuine Glenlivet, sang many national airs with real Scotch glee'; quoted by Kaufman, 257.

¹⁰⁴ Brewer, *Pleasures*; Borsay, *English Urban Renaissance*; Clark, *British Clubs and Societies*.

Hume himself considered polite sociability an inevitable feature of refined civilisation everywhere.

The agenda of polite sociability explains why subscription libraries in Scotland (as elsewhere) were able to attract as members individuals who had absolutely no need for the functional service they provided, and patronised them for the sociable opportunities they offered rather than for their books.¹⁰⁵ The Kelso Library listed as members three individuals whose extensive private libraries contributed to the large-scale statistical analysis conducted in Chapter 1, including Sir Alexander Don of Newton, Sir John Buchanan Riddell of Riddell and the Duke of Roxburgh, while it is likely that many more owned books in their own right.¹⁰⁶ Similarly, Hugh Crawford was a leading light of the Greenock Subscription Library, even though he presumably had access to the ample family library at Cartsburn, an important substitute for public library provision in the area before 1783 as we have seen.¹⁰⁷ Even the redoubtable George Lawson is known to have had a sizeable library of his own, which he made readily accessible to friends, students and members of his congregation.¹⁰⁸

VII

Roger Emerson has warned that ‘to define *the Enlightenment* as a complex of beliefs is to fail to understand that it possessed an immanent teleology of its own shaped by its mood, methods and its general interest in practical problem solving and improvements’.¹⁰⁹ Subscription libraries are important in any attempt to assess how provincial Scots experienced and embraced the Scottish Enlightenment due to the simple fact that they

¹⁰⁵ R. A. Houston, *Literacy in Early Modern Europe: Culture and Education, 1500-1800* (London, 1988), 218.

¹⁰⁶ *Catalogue of the Books of the Kelso Library; Sale Catalogue of the Library at Newton-Don* (Kelso, 1826); *Catalogue of the Library of the late Sir J. Buchanan Riddell, Bt. ...* (Edinburgh, 1820); *A Catalogue of the Library of the Late John Duke of Roxburghe* (London, 1812).

¹⁰⁷ He was, for example, listed amongst the 65 subscribers who voted for a raise in the annual subscription fee on 15 March 1805, Greenock Minutes.

¹⁰⁸ *Lawson*, 216-221.

¹⁰⁹ R. L. Emerson, ‘The Enlightenment and Social Structures’, in Fritz and D. Williams (eds.), *City and Society in the Eighteenth Century* (Toronto, 1973), 99 n., citing E. Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment* (Princeton, 1951).

made the books in which its ideas were transmitted more widely available. Associational readers across a broad cross section of provincial society were able to engage in leading debates in moral philosophy and science as well as in the more predictable genres of history and imaginative literature. Moreover, their pursuit of canonicity suggest that proprietors of subscription libraries envisaged themselves as part of a much wider cultural community, eager to join the ‘reading nation’ as it had been configured in Edinburgh, Glasgow and London. Far more than that, though, subscription libraries represented a primary venue for polite sociability in towns and villages throughout provincial Scotland, offering subscribers, some of whom clearly had no need for the functional services on offer, the chance to engage in the cultural imperative of the age, the practical improvement of Scottish society through association, intellectual interaction, and the pursuit of polite learning. If the Scottish Enlightenment was indeed, to quote John Dwyer, ‘much more than a corpus of knowledge or a series of events, it was a complex network of symbols and mental approaches’,¹¹⁰ then subscription libraries represented a crucial staging post in its diffusion through Scottish society.

However, it is by no means clear that the ‘mental approaches’ that associational library activity involved were in any way distinctively Scottish. Even the names of Scottish subscription libraries may have mimicked the names of older institutions in England (the Cumnock Athenaeum, for instance, might have taken its name from the Liverpool Athenaeum, founded thirty years earlier), and associational organisation and book selection processes were similar on either side of the border. More importantly, and despite the ‘cultural’ definition of the Scottish Enlightenment that has enjoyed increasing currency in the last two decades, every feature of associational reading which appears to derive from the polite sociability of the Edinburgh *literati* reflected cultural trends in the British Isles more broadly. The polite sociability and improving associationalism so regularly invoked by members of Scottish subscription libraries may well identify them as being amongst the most important and pervasive manifestations of the Enlightenment in Scotland, therefore, but they were not particularly Scottish – a consideration that will prove increasingly important as the current study proceeds.

¹¹⁰ Dwyer, *VD*, 3.

CHAPTER THREE

‘Vice and Obscenity Dreadfully Propagated’

Circulating Libraries

In exploring readers’ encounters with the Scottish Enlightenment in provincial Scotland, we have seen that it is not enough simply to take account of the collecting habits and purchasing power of the reading public. Then as now, books were regularly passed informally between friends, acquaintances and neighbours, and particularly in more isolated areas, the larger private collections often became magnets for inquisitive or specialist readers across a wide cross section of provincial society. A voluntary movement emerged in the age of Enlightenment that formalised such arrangements, with like-minded individuals in provincial communities clubbing together to fund the acquisition of books collectively which many of them could not afford separately. Such associational readers drew on the potent ideologies of politeness and improvement in a movement that became a defining feature not simply of Scottish culture but of provincial culture throughout the British Isles – as well as a vehicle for transmitting enlightened ideas and values to a much wider audience.

The provision of books, however, was not always conducted according to such associational principles. Scots also had a share in the origins and development of commercial circulating libraries – ostensibly run for profit rather than improvement. Though the traditional claim that Allan Ramsay founded the first circulating library in the British Isles in Edinburgh in the 1720s may be the stuff of legend,¹ ever-speculative Scottish booksellers took to this new way of making cash – invented in Restoration London – with such enthusiasm that they restricted the spread of associational reading in towns like Inverness and Elgin until well into the nineteenth century.² The extent to which circulating librarians like Isaac Forsyth of Elgin and Alexander Davidson of

¹ Most recently advanced in G. Mandelbrote and K. A. Manley, ‘Introduction: the changing world of libraries – from cloister to hearth’, in *CHLB2*, 1; Burns Martin, *Allan Ramsay: A Study of his Life and Works* (Cambridge MA, 1931), 146.

² For examples, see Alston.

Inverness themselves facilitated the diffusion of enlightened ideas and values is far more contested ground, with the invective of vociferous guardians of British morality at the time apparently contradicted by contemporary adverts and the few surviving catalogues.³ Moreover, the solitary surviving loans register from an up-market Edinburgh venture for 1828 does little to resolve the confusion in the absence of any earlier borrowing records. But before we can enter this strongly contested territory, we must first explore how circulating libraries on the commercial model emerged in Scotland – especially in the second half of the eighteenth century.

I

Commercial book lending was a natural extension of the services offered by booksellers. As long as they remained such expensive commodities it was always likely that there would be a sizeable demand for books available for loan, the result being that commercial circulating libraries ‘grew like cuckoos in the nests of booksellers’ shops’ across Britain.⁴ Moreover, as one enterprising Scottish speculator pointed out, rental shelves contributed to the growth of the more profitable retail part of a bookseller’s business. George Millar, a successful printer and bookseller who ran circulating libraries in Dunbar and Haddington, complained that they were ‘an unprofitable and troublesome business’, but acknowledged their value to the fledgling bookselling business, ‘of essential use in

³ Very little attention has been paid to circulating libraries in Scotland; see J. and M. Lough, ‘Aberdeen Circulating Libraries in the Eighteenth Century’, *Aberdeen University Review*, 31 (1945); and W. R. McDonald, ‘Circulating Libraries in the North-East of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century’, *Bibliothek*, 5 (1968). Compare Kaufman; St Clair; Varma, *ET*; C. A. Stewart-Murphy, *A History of British Circulating Libraries* (Newtown PA, 1992); T. Kelly, *Early Public Libraries: A History of Public Libraries in Great Britain before 1850* (London, 1966), 143-9; Raven, ‘Libraries’; C. Skelton-Foord, ‘Economics, Expertise, Enterprise and the Literary Scene: The Commercial Management Ethos in British Circulating Libraries’, in E. J. Clery, C. Franklin and P. Garside (eds.), *Authorship, Commerce and the Public: Scene of Writing, 1750-1850* (Houndmills, 2002); idem., ‘Surveying the Circulating-Library Scene: Popular Fiction, 1770-1830’, in P. Vodosek and G. Jefcoate (eds.), *Bibliotheken in der Literarischen Darstellung* (Wiesbaden, 1999); idem., ‘To Buy or to Borrow? Circulating Libraries and Novel Reading in Britain, 1778-1828’, *Library Review*, 47 (1998), 348-54; E. Jacobs, ‘Eighteenth-century British circulating libraries and cultural book history’, *Book History*, 6 (2003), 1-22; K. A. Manley, ‘Booksellers, Peruke-makers and Rabbit-merchants: the Growth of Circulating Libraries in the Eighteenth Century’, in R. Myers, M. Harris and G. Mandelbrote (eds.), *Libraries and the Book Trade* (New Castle, DE, 2000), 29-47; idem., ‘Lounging Places and Frivolous Literature: Subscription and Circulating Libraries in the West Country to 1825’, in J. Hinks and C. Armstrong (eds.), *Printing Places* (New Castle, DE, 2005), 107-20

⁴ Varma, *ET*, 3.

bringing customers to the shop and enabling me to seek out and establish a business for myself'.⁵

Though Kaufman could only identify 25 by name before the turn of the nineteenth century, it is now known that at least seventy circulating libraries flourished in Scotland at some point before 1800.⁶ They were most densely concentrated in the big cities, naturally enough, with 29 in Edinburgh, 16 in Glasgow and just five in Aberdeen – though these statistics tend to inflate the real picture, with the same institutions being listed more than once. James Sibbald's Library in Edinburgh, for instance, may well have sprung from Ramsay himself. Ramsay's original collection seems to have been managed from 1746 by John Yair, who joined forces briefly with Robert Fleming in 1756 before the operation passed to Margaret Yair in 1758. Mrs Yair's stock was bought in 1779 or 1780 by James Sibbald, so a library listed at least five times by Alston may in fact have been a single institution.⁷

Circulating libraries were far less prolific in smaller Scottish communities, though they would still appear to have been well distributed through the country – in spite of the growing ubiquity of associational models of library provision explored in the previous chapter. There were three in both Inverness (one of which was extremely short lived) and Perth (of which two were associated with the Morison family of printers and publishers),⁸ and two each in Dumfries, Kilmarnock, Leith and Paisley. Ayr, Banff, Dalkeith, Dunbar, Elgin, Haddington, Irvine, Beith, Peebles and Peterhead all hosted solitary institutions, meaning overall that circulating libraries were particularly well distributed in the south west, in the central belt, in the north east and in East Lothian – in other words, in the most urbanised and literate areas of the country, and in those areas we have already pointed to

⁵ Quoted by W. J. Couper, *The Millers of Haddington, Dunbar and Dunfermline: A Record of Scottish Bookselling* (London, 1914), 59.

⁶ Kaufman; Alston.

⁷ Kaufman, 239; Martin, *Allan Ramsay*, 146-7.

⁸ On the Morisons' contribution to printing and publishing in provincial Scotland, see R. H. Carnie, *Publishing in Perth Before 1807* (Dundee, 1960); M. E. Craig, *The Scottish Periodical Press 1750-1789* (Edinburgh, 1931), 66-9.

as the heartlands of Enlightenment in Scotland.⁹ Only the largest communities (notably Perth, Inverness and Dumfries) could sustain more than one library at any one time, whether they were run on the circulating or subscription model. Where associational spirit was lacking, commercial enterprise usually stepped in, but in towns like Dunbar, Elgin and Peebles, successful booksellers could satisfy demand for long periods without locals seeing the need to found associational libraries of their own, regardless of the higher moral qualities usually claimed on behalf of such institutions.

With widening literacy and a growth in real incomes in Scottish towns, circulating libraries became much more common in the first decades of the nineteenth century. At least a further 200 commercial circulating libraries flourished in the first three decades of the nineteenth century, including 53 in Edinburgh, 37 in Glasgow, twelve in Aberdeen and six in Dundee. In the south west, Dumfries naturally led the way with seven, though Ayr, Kilmarnock, Kirkcudbright and Largs (each with two), as well as Annan, Castle Douglas, Lockerbie, Newton Stewart and Stranraer also had circulating libraries. In the Borders too, circulating libraries seem to have been particularly successful, with Hawick (three), Kelso (two), Duns, Galashiels and Jedburgh each having such establishments. In the North East, meanwhile, no less than five circulating libraries were founded in Inverness and Peterhead, two in Stonehaven, and one each in smaller communities like Huntly and Turriff. Such was the viability of the commercial mode of library provision, indeed, that some very small or remote communities sustained them for a time – Mrs Wilson’s Circulating Library in Bridge of Earn in rural Perthshire, for instance, Patterson’s Circulating Library at Eyemouth, Berwickshire, or William Cockburn’s Circulating Library in Anstruther, Fife.

However, Scotland would appear to have been considerably less susceptible to the circulating model of library provision than England, with important towns like Inverness, Ayr, Kilmarnock and Perth sustaining far fewer commercial libraries than English towns

⁹ T. Devine, ‘Urbanisation’, in *PS*, 27-52; R. A. Houston, *Scottish Literacy and the Scottish Identity: Illiteracy and Society in Scotland and Northern England 1600-1800* (Cambridge, 1985); on the spread of circulating libraries to most sizeable towns in Britain, see J. Feather, ‘The book trade and libraries’, in *CHLB2*, 306.

of comparable size and status. Inverness, as we have seen, hosted five circulating libraries before 1830, but this lagged far behind English towns with a similar population (around 8000 at the turn of the century) such as Southampton (which had 21), Salisbury (19), Maidstone (14) and Gloucester (13). With its own rapidly-expanding population of 6000 at the time of the *Statistical Account*, Kilmarnock (two circulating libraries) compared very poorly to towns like Taunton (10), Warwick, Doncaster (both 7) and Bradford (6). And the contrast was even more dramatic between respectably polite county towns of much smaller size, with Bedford (10 circulating libraries), Weymouth (13) and Lewes (12) all far-outstripping the two circulating libraries that flourished in Kelso and Ayr in our period.¹⁰

Nevertheless, it remains unlikely that we will ever know precisely how many such enterprises there were. Firm evidence does survive for short-lived ventures like Donald McDonald's Circulating Library founded in Inverness in 1797 or William Farquhar's failed attempt in Peterhead around 1794 ('he did not find employment and therefore left the place'),¹¹ but as Kaufman admits, 'how many were the timid starts and discontinuances of rental shelves by Scottish booksellers we cannot know'.¹² It may well be the case that many more entrepreneurs maintained rental facilities, even for long periods, without a scrap of evidence coming down to us. It is hardly conceivable that booksellers in a town with such a strongly literate community as St Andrews would not have loaned books before George Scott started doing so in around 1824 – especially as we know of no associational library in the town before the mid-nineteenth century.¹³

¹⁰ Population sizes derived from *OSA; Census Reports 1801: Abstract of the Answers and Returns Enumeration* (1801; London, 1968); C. W. Chalkin, *The Provincial Towns of Georgian England: A Study of the Building Process 1740-1820* (London, 1974); E. A. Wrigley, *People, Cities and Wealth: The Transformation of Traditional Society* (Oxford, 1987); P. Clark (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain Vol. II 1540-1840* (Cambridge, 2000). Library numbers from Alston.

¹¹ *SBTI*.

¹² Kaufman, 276. This is not to mention the many inns and coffee houses who may have offered books on site to customers, including the coffee shop Henry Mackenzie had in mind in writing about the reception of the first number of the *Mirror* magazine in 1779 'where it is actually taken in for the use of the customers; a set of old gentlemen, at one table, throwing it aside to talk over a bargain; and a company of young ones, at another, breaking off in the middle to decide a match at billiards'; *The Works of Henry Mackenzie* (1808; London, 1996), Volume IV, 6-7.

¹³ According to the *SBTI*, booksellers in St Andrews included M. Grieg (fl. 1747), Alexander M'Culloch (fl. 1736), T. Peat (fl. 1812-14) and Patrick Bower (1746-1807). Scott's Circulating Library, No. 36 South Street, St Andrews is not recorded by Alston, but we know of its existence thanks to a surviving bookplate

Similarly, we know of just one circulating library in Dunfermline for the whole of our period (Miller and Sons, founded 1805), but at least ten more booksellers were active in the town before the turn of the century who might have loaned books without leaving any trace of the fact.¹⁴

Some booksellers loaned stock to trusted customers on a much less formal basis,¹⁵ while others advertised their rental and retail stock in the same circulars, updating regular clients on changes to both at the same time.¹⁶ William White explicitly offered a ‘sale and circulating catalogue of books’ at the small chain of bookshops he managed in rural Ayrshire, with a retail price quoted for each item in addition to the standard scheme of rental subscriptions by the week, the month or year. Perhaps his hope, quite reasonably, was that customers would be more inclined to fork out cash to buy books outright if they first had the chance to sample them for a short time.

II

In reality, there may have been many more bookshops in Georgian Scotland where there was no formal division between books that were offered for loan or for sale. In purely physical terms, however, it is clear enough that commercial circulating libraries must have enabled literate men and women in towns across Scotland to become consumers of literature during our period, even though we will never be certain just how significant a factor they were in providing reading matter. A much more urgent task for us, however, is to isolate what type of literature they promoted – and who their most reliable customers

in a copy of Thomas Skinner Surr’s *Barnwell. A Novel* (London, 1807), held at SAUL s.PR5499.S36B2. Alston speculates that the St Andrews Library and Reading Room (1845) ‘absorbed earlier subscription libraries’. Lending at the University Library was restricted to staff and to students who had written permission; M. Simpson, ‘*You have not such a one in England: St Andrews University Library as an Eighteenth-century Mission Statement*’, *LH* (15, 2001); M. Simpson, ‘St Andrews University Library in the Eighteenth Century: Scottish education and print-culture’ (unpublished PhD thesis, University of St Andrews, 1999); P. Freshwater, ‘Books and Universities’, in *CHLB2*, 358.

¹⁴ *SBTI*. Dunfermline has a strong tradition in library provision; see Andrew S. Robertson, *History of Dunfermline Tradesmen’s and Mechanic’s Library: The Origin of the Carnegie Free Libraries* (Dunfermline, 1914).

¹⁵ Giles Mandelbrote, ‘Personal Owners of Books’, in *CHLB2*, 181; L. Rostenberg, *The Library of Robert Hooke* (Santa Monica CA, 1989).

¹⁶ See for instance NAS GD248/451/17, Estate Correspondence 1808-1814 (includes Isaac Forsyth to James Grant of Heathfield).

were. As Brewer admits, ‘the received wisdom about circulating libraries was that they were repositories of fictional pap, served up to women who had little to do but surfeit themselves with romantic nonsense’, and the vast weight of contemporary commentary rules out a positive role for circulating libraries in sustaining intellectual culture.¹⁷ The very source that has sustained Ramsay’s reputation over the centuries as the founding father of commercial book lending was actually a splenetic attack on him by the Presbyterian historian Robert Wodrow, whose nightmarish vision of circulating library provision still informs much modern conjecture on their role:

Besides this, profaneness is come to a great hight, all the villainous, profane and obscene bookes and playes printed at London by Curle and others, are gote doune by Allan Ramsey, and lent out, for an easy price, to young boyes, servant weemen of the better sort, and gentlemen, and vice and obscenity dreadfully propagated. Ramsay has a book in his shope wherein all the names of those that borrou his playes and books, for two pence a night, or some such rate, are sett down; and by these, wickednes of all kinds are dreadfully propagate among the youth of all sort.¹⁸

Those who took it upon themselves to act as moral guardians of the British nation as the century progressed may have written with more polite restraint than this dour voice of Scotland’s bigoted Presbyterian past, but their message was effectively the same – that by their incessant promotion of novels and romances, circulating libraries were propagating ‘vice and obscenity’. As we have already seen, James Beattie remembered with barely-concealed disdain his own visit to a circulating library in Dundee, and this was presumably the kind of experience that prompted public-spirited Dundonians to found two subscription libraries expressly for the improvement of the town in the 1790s. Associational readers in Greenock apparently shared their concerns in a blaze of self-

¹⁷ Brewer, *Pleasures*, 179.

¹⁸ Robert Wodrow, *Analecta or Materials for a History of Remarkable Providence*; quoted by Martin, *Allan Ramsay*, 33-4; see also A. Broadie, *Scottish Enlightenment: the Historical Age of the Historical Nation* (Edinburgh, 2001), 152. On Wodrow’s Presbyterian credentials, see *ODNB*.

justificatory glory, setting up a subscription library explicitly to ‘avert the fatal effects which are sometimes occasioned by circulating libraries’.¹⁹

The authors of the *Lounger*, meanwhile, explicitly condemned ‘that common herd of Novels (the wretched offspring of circulating libraries) which are despised for their insignificance or proscribed for their immorality’,²⁰ while the English radical William Hone blamed the deleterious effect of a local circulating library for his own youthful slumber – ‘an extensive circulating library supplied me with romances and novels which I read rapidly and incessantly ... My mind had thus become enfeebled’.²¹ And though an industry insider writing in the *Monthly Magazine* tolerated them ‘as useful establishments ... as far as they exhibit the passions and foibles of mankind, amend the heart, and extend the influence of sentiment and sensibility’, the models they provided for such moral instruction were universally bad ones, for ‘they supply novels and high-seasoned productions for sickly or perverted appetites’.²² Even in the 1840s, those discussing the projected Public Libraries Bill acknowledged that ‘they do not at all supply the place of those public libraries we wish for’, promoting ‘very much novels and other ephemera’, ‘the common popular cheap novel’.²³ The contrast with Parliamentary admiration for associational libraries in Ayrshire (cited above) could not have been sharper.

There was, of course, an underlying moral agenda to the perception that circulating libraries were associated above all with giddy young women and their inappropriate responses to novels and romances. According to the pre-eminent authority on women’s reading in eighteenth-century Britain, circulating libraries ‘constituted a vigorously contested space’ where sexual and social boundaries were frequently transgressed, and where women’s passions were supposedly allowed to rage unchecked. Hence in the literature of the time, ‘they were imagined as an “evergreen tree of diabolical knowledge”, “filthy streams of spiritual and moral pollution”, “the gin-shop of [female]

¹⁹ *OSA*, VII, 717. Members of the Lewes Literary Society were equally ‘disgusted at the usual trash of the circulating libraries’ in 1786; quoted by St Clair, 249.

²⁰ *Lounger*, No. 20 (1794).

²¹ Quoted by St Clair, 666; *ODNB*.

²² *Monthly Magazine* (June 1821), quoted by St Clair, 667.

²³ Quoted by Aitken, 22.

minds”, a “great evil”, simultaneously conveying “food and poison” to the young reader’.²⁴ Such discourse had wide-reaching implications for British society, according to contemporary ideas about the role of women. Scottish Enlightenment authors – especially Henry Mackenzie and his fellow contributors to the *Mirror* and *Lounger* magazines – argued that women had an essential role in safeguarding the moral rectitude of polite families across Britain. The softer feminine passions could be deployed in the domestic sphere to moderate husbands’ and sons’ behaviour, ‘a vaccination against or antidote to the corruption of modern fashionable life’.²⁵ Circulating libraries not only encouraged women to lay claim to a public space (thus transgressing the firm belief that women had to be ‘domestic angels’ to rule the passions of men), they also allowed women to indulge their passions in pursuit of fashionable vanity and luxurious sentimentality by exposing them indiscriminately to the wrong kind of literature – irrevocably corrupting their own innate moral purity.

Nevertheless, moralistic parodies of the dangers posed by commercial libraries have had a marked effect on modern scholarship, with those working on the history of libraries in the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries usually agreeing with Dedendra Varma that circulating libraries served a ‘demand for light literature’.²⁶ Obviously, modern scholars are a great deal more sympathetic to the novel as a genre, but they continue to work within the confines of contemporary – usually hostile – representations of commercial library provision, failing adequately to grasp the polemic inherent in Wodrow’s *Analecta* or Mackenzie’s *Lounger*. Varma studies circulating libraries almost exclusively as purveyors of fiction (explicitly setting out to investigate ‘what sort of novels were read’), seemingly reluctant to acknowledge the surviving catalogues and adverts that promised a much wider range of reading matter to readers.²⁷ St Clair agrees, arguing that ‘circulating libraries were predominantly feminine in the nature of the texts they provided ... The business of most English circulating libraries was not to provide a comprehensive book-

²⁴ J. Pearson, *Women’s Reading in Britain, 1750-1835: A Dangerous Recreation* (Cambridge, 1999), 168; 163-4. See also Kaufman, 22-5, 58-62; Skelton-Foord, ‘Surveying’, 89-114; idem., ‘To Buy or to Borrow?’, 348-54; J. Innes, ‘Libraries in Context: Social, Cultural and Intellectual Background’, in *CHLB2*, 298.

²⁵ Dwyer, *VD*, 129.

²⁶ Varma, *ET*, 31-2.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 31-2; 65; 66.

lending facility for the local community, but to rent out the latest novels and romances when they first appeared, and to replace them frequently'.²⁸ Such views, if right, would cast considerable doubt on the ability of circulating libraries to allow consumers to encounter important works of non-fiction, including the major books of the Scottish Enlightenment whose reception is investigated here.

III

Jacqueline Pearson suggests, however, that 'despite the usefulness to hostile propagandists of an image of libraries dominated by women reading pulp fiction, this was not historically true'.²⁹ William Borthwick Johnstone's famous portrait of Burns and Scott in Sibbald's Bookshop represents a dramatic contrast to Wodrow's thunderous assault on Sibbald's illustrious predecessor. Johnstone placed some of the leading figures in Scottish Enlightenment culture in the most prestigious circulating library of the age, including Ferguson, Lord Monboddo, Blair and Mackenzie. He thereby associated Sibbald's Library with the informal transferral of ideas, the inquisitive sampling of new kinds of literature (in his suggestive portrayal of Ferguson and a youthful Walter Scott both browsing books on site) and even, perhaps, the cultivation of sociability and politeness – all key components of associational reading, as we have seen.³⁰ This notion that circulating libraries played a wider role in Scotland's intellectual culture was apparently ratified by a passing contemporary description of Alexander Brown's Circulating Library in Aberdeen as a place 'to which all the literati resort'.³¹ These two momentary snapshots of commercial borrowing in turn illustrate perfectly Brewer's hunch that they 'offered comfortable, spacious surroundings in which the customers could gossip, flirt, browse, examine newspapers and reviews'.³²

²⁸ St Clair, 244.

²⁹ Pearson, *Women's Reading*, 169.

³⁰ The portrait is reproduced by Kaufman, Plate 1, 236-7; it also adorns the front cover of Sher's *EB*.

³¹ Quoted by Crawford, 'Origins', 85.

³² Brewer, *Pleasures*, 176. Hall's circulating library in Margate 'had a spacious reading room where he provided his subscribers with tables and chairs', Varma, *ET*, 53.

More broadly, and though their subscribers are extremely hard to identify in the historical record, surviving material suggests that commercial circulating libraries were patronised by the very same social groupings who sustained associational library culture. St Clair believes that in England they had around 70 patrons each, and that ‘membership never widened beyond the aristocratic, professional and business classes’,³³ though forthcoming research will draw attention to the likely untypicality of circulating library clientele in the fashionable resorts of Brighton, Bath and Cheltenham which boast the sole surviving records – and thus to the wrong-headedness of such unsubstantiated generalisations.³⁴ No such estimate is remotely sustainable for Scotland, but a professional and mercantile customer base is at least implied by the urban location of most circulating libraries, as well as their particular prominence in Scottish spa towns and tourist resorts – part of the paraphernalia that accompanied the leisured classes at play in places like Elgin, Peebles or the Bridge of Earn.

Allusions to a much broader customer base are embedded in contemporary catalogues, however, with a dazzling range of professional, vocational and practical self-help books suggesting that patrons commonly ranged from medical practitioners, lawyers and clergymen to merchants, seamen, accountants and weavers. Of course, their wives, mothers and sisters would have found *The Complete House-wife, or Accomplish'd Gentle-woman's Companion* and *The Experienced English House Wife, for the use and ease of Ladies, House-keepers, Cooks Etc.* especially useful, but such works are generally overwhelmed in the catalogues by masculine titles like *The Fencer's Guide*, *The Weaver's Index*, *The Seaman's Daily Assistant*, *The Office of a Notary*, *The Art of Shorthand Writing*, *The Rudiments of Architecture*, *The Practising Attorney, or Lawyers Office*, *Shaw's Practical Justice of Peace*, and *The Parent's and Guardian's Directory, and the Youth's Guide, in the choice of a trade.*³⁵ Moreover, many booksellers explicitly

³³ St Clair, 237, 241; Varma, *ET*, 48.

³⁴ *Nation of Readers*, Ch4, 23-7; Allan bemoans the fact that ‘the surviving records of library membership come almost entirely from examples that belong to those rarefied social environments, the spas and the resort towns’, 27.

³⁵ Based on a survey of six surviving provincial catalogues: *A Catalogue of Books Consisting of some thousand volumes ... Which are Lent ... By A. Davidson ...* ([Inverness?], 1782), copy at Inverness Public Library; *Catalogue of the Elgin Circulating Library ...* ([Elgin?], 1789), copy at NLS RB.s.1488; *Sale and Circulating Catalogue of Books ... to be had of William White at his Shops in Irvine and Beith* (n.p., 1780),

combined their rental shelves with other useful and professional services – including Isaac Davidson of Inverness, who offered ‘All sorts of Account Books for Merchants, Country Gentlemen, or Tradesmen, in various Bindings’.³⁶

More specifically, we have the concrete example of Robert Chambers’ enterprise that served the literary tastes of wealthy New Town gentlemen and professionals. A surviving ledger lists as borrowers a Member of Parliament, George Grant, two Professors of the University of Edinburgh, five Church of Scotland ministers, four medical men, three bankers, three writers and two advocates.³⁷ As George Millar testified, military officers on temporary secondment in a given locality could also be an important demographic for commercial libraries – and accordingly, thirteen borrowed books from Chambers in 1828, including Captains Fathwell and Paisley, both temporarily residing at 32 Queen Street, Staff Sergeant Monro, lodging at 58 Hanover Street, Mr Campbell of the 42nd Regiment and Mr Granville of the 12th Lancers, stationed at Piershill Barracks.³⁸ And in sharp contrast to the stereotypical circulating library, supposedly responsible for poisoning the imagination and morals of impressionable young ladies, less than a quarter of all Chambers’ subscribers were women – a proportion broadly comparable with female participation in many Scottish associational libraries.³⁹

Though quite clearly an urban phenomenon, for obvious reasons, circulating libraries – like the larger subscription and endowed libraries – were also capable of supplying books to substantial rural hinterlands. Millar rebranded his own rental operation ‘The Dunbar and County Circulating Library’ in 1809, though it had failed within a decade, while

copy at Ardrossan Public Library; *A Catalogue of the Paisley Circulating Library ...* (Paisley, 1789), copy at Paisley Public Library; *A Catalogue of Instructive and Entertaining Books, Which are lent out to read... by William Phorson,... at his Circulating Library, Bridge-Street, Berwick...* (Berwick, 1790), copy at BL s.c.1396; *A Catalogue of the New Circulating Library ...* (Dundee, 1782), copy at Dundee Central Library.

³⁶ Davidson; Varma points out that ‘bookbinders, engravers, picture-framers, grocers and tobacconists advertised themselves as libraries’, many offered medical remedies and at least one was also an undertaker, the Bristol circulating librarian, Isaac James; *ET*, 61; see also P. Isaac, ‘Charles Elliot and Spilsbury’s Antiscorbutic Drops’, in his and B. McKay (eds.), *The Reach of Print: Making, Selling and Using Books* (Winchester, 1998).

³⁷ NLS MS Dep341/413, Library Ledger, Chambers Circulating Library, 1828.

³⁸ *Ibid.*; Couper, *Millers*, 63; Raven, ‘Libraries’, 256; military men were also amongst the most noteworthy customers of George Williams’ Library in Cheltenham, see *Nation of Readers*, ch4, 26.

³⁹ *Ibid.*; on female use of commercial libraries, see Jacobs, ‘Circulating Libraries’; Pearson, *Women’s Reading*, 162-70; and Vickery, 9, 288.

many more outlined arrangements for a separate category of country borrowers. Davidson's usual rule was that 'one book must be returned, and paid for, before another can be demanded', but conceded that 'Readers in the country who are subscribers, will be allowed two books, or two volumes of a book at a time'.⁴⁰ William White was even more sympathetic to 'readers in the country, who have occasion to get books but once a week, [and] shall be indulged with four at once'.⁴¹ Isaac Forsyth, meanwhile, actively solicited custom across a broad swathe of north-eastern Scotland, assuring customers

No place in the North of Scotland possesses such a facility and regularity of carriage as Elgin does, to the east and west. Carriers in both directions go and return every week. Ladies and Gentlemen wishing to become subscribers in Inverness, Fort George, Nairn, Forres, Fochabers, Keith, Huntly and Cullen, or their respective neighbourhoods will be punctually supplied with Books *at the very lowest rate of carriage possible*, and their parcels received and delivered regularly by an agent at each of these places, without having anything whatever to do with the carriers.⁴²

Surviving correspondence sent to customers by Forsyth illustrates the kind of country readers he had in mind. Circulars were sent to the factor of Strathspey, James Grant Esq. of Heathfield,⁴³ to the minister of Knockando, John Grant,⁴⁴ and to the laird of Grant, Sir James Grant, and his wife Lady Jane (all kinsmen of Forsyth on his mother's side).⁴⁵ Chambers sent books to patrons within at least a fifty-mile radius of Edinburgh, including Patrick Hay Esq. of Mugdrum, Newburgh, General Andrew Drummond of Culdees Castle,⁴⁶ Mrs Baillie at Mellerstain House, Kelso, and Miss Blair at Avontown near Linlithgow.⁴⁷ Finally, surviving catalogues of circulating libraries run in Aberdeen by Alexander Brown and John Burnett both bear the bookplate of 'Sir Archibald Grant of

⁴⁰ Davidson, Condition IV.

⁴¹ White, Condition III.

⁴² NAS GD248/451/17; printed circular addressed to James Grant Esq., of Heathfield.

⁴³ James Grant of Heathfield (1733-1821), identified in I. H. Adams (ed.), *Papers on Peter May Land Surveyor 1749-1793* (Edinburgh, 1979), 275.

⁴⁴ *Fasti*.

⁴⁵ NAS GD248/656/3; GD248/708/1; GD248/520/8. Sir James Grant of Grant (8th bt, 1738-1811), agricultural improver and politician, *ODNB*.

⁴⁶ General Drummond apparently had his own large library at Culdees Castle, near Crieff; Alston.

⁴⁷ Chambers Library Ledger.

Monymoske Bart.’⁴⁸ Such evidence would therefore suggest that besides the inevitable church ministers, commercial librarians usually had the traditional landholding elites in mind when they made special arrangements for country borrowers.

Returning to another crucial aspect of the stereotype, the notion that commercial circulating libraries were run for profit rather than for any wider ideological intent, there is also some evidence to suggest that booksellers were mindful of the kind of ideas that moved associational readers in the previous chapter – especially the notion of improvement itself. George Moir, a hosier in the Gallowgate, Aberdeen, worked hard to overcome the usual accusations levied against commercial libraries in advertising the Select Circulating Library he established in 1800. Emphasising the value of useful knowledge at the Library’s launch, Moir made the familiar complaint that ‘from the high price of books, the scantiness of their own funds, or want of access to a well-chosen collection, they [the citizens of Aberdeen] are prevented from devoting their leisure time to the improvement of their minds’. His stated ‘desire of obviating these difficulties’ thus placed the library in the same territory as subscription libraries and book clubs in fulfilling an improving role in society explicitly by facilitating the wider consumption of literature and ideas.

Moir’s intentions were evident especially in the kind of restrictions he imposed upon the ‘Select’ stock offered for loan. He placed a special emphasis on ‘bringing the means (especially) of religious improvement within the reach of all who may be disposed to embrace the opportunity’, and more broadly stocked books ‘on subjects of general utility, or innocent amusement; as History, Voyages, Travels, &c.’. However, like most associational libraries, he banned works ‘on Politics, or Controversy civil or religious, if written in a bad spirit’, and plays, romances and novels outright, justifying these last exclusions by referring his younger clients to James Hay Beattie: ‘Having read, by advice, one of the most admired productions of this kind, he said “The time spent in reading it was lost and there was more danger from the indelicacy of particular passages, than hope of its doing good by the satire – the moral sentiments – or the distributive

⁴⁸ McDonald, ‘Circulating Libraries’, 137. Sir Archibald Grant of Monymusk (2nd bt, 1696-1778), *ODNB*.

justice, dispensed in winding up the catastrophe.”” Though we may be naturally sceptical about Moir’s true intentions here, he headed off any undue cynicism by pledging not only ‘to lend a book occasionally *gratis* to young people, or others who cannot afford to subscribe’, but also ‘to lay out the whole subscription-money, at least for some years, in increasing the library’.⁴⁹

For Isaac Forsyth, the success of his Elgin Circulating Library was both a gauge of how far intellectual pursuits had advanced in the town since its foundation (1789) and a means of securing further improvement. Forsyth informed regular subscribers in a circular celebrating the Library’s twentieth anniversary of his ‘anxious desire to enlarge and improve his Collection, that it might keep pace with the increasing spirit of investigation which the improved state of society demands,’ and massaged the polite pretensions of local residents in terms familiar to anyone who has glanced through subscription library records of the period, let alone the *Spectator* itself:

At a period like the present, when every Lady and every Gentleman is desirous to maintain a respectable appearance in society, from the extent and accuracy of their information; no institution is more deserving of, or more likely to receive their support and encouragement, than a Library conducted on such liberal principles.⁵⁰

Forsyth even directed subscribers towards publications he considered particularly important in promoting the patriotic task of agricultural improvement in the north east. In one lengthy letter to the above-mentioned factor of Strathspey, he was not content simply to recommend the good work done by the editors of the *Farmer’s Magazine*. He also urged the recipient himself to contribute to this local branch of scientific improvement – significant advice indeed to a man who managed one of the largest estates in the north east of Scotland:

⁴⁹ *Catalogue of the Select Circulating Library ...* (Aberdeen, 1800), Regulation VI, 1; cf. J. Beattie, *Essays and Fragments in Prose and Verse. By James Hay Beattie. To which is prefixed an account of the author’s life and character* (Edinburgh, 1794), 72-3.

⁵⁰ NAS GD248/451/17, letter to James Grant of Heathfield, 10 October 1809; I. Forsyth Macandrew, *Memoir of Isaac Forsyth Bookseller in Elgin 1765-1859* (London, 1889).

I enclose a few bills respecting the Farmers Magazine, which is a work of real merit, & now in so general esteem that upwards of 2000 copies are now printed. In the next issue there will be an account of the embankment of the sea near Forres, to which 50 acres of very valuable corse land has been saved, by Mr John Hoyes there. And also an account of the division of the aughtenpart lands near Elgin. In the following issue a very particular account of Mr William Young's operations at Inchbroom on the Loch of Cotts is to appear. If there is anything doing in Strathspey towards the improvement of the country in agriculture, I should be much obliged by your getting an account of it drawn up by the factor or any of the Gentlemen that may be concerned in the Improvement. The Editor is particularly anxious for articles of this kind. I beg you would put these bills into the hands of your principal Farmers and recommend the magazine to their notice in doing so you do them a favour, for this Publication is now looked to by the first Farmers in Scotland as a source of the best information.⁵¹

Moreover, Forsyth was personally involved in his own right in projects that tended directly towards the physical improvement of the Morayshire infrastructure. He took a leading role, for instance, in organising the construction by subscription of a road between Elgin and Knockando, helped by the local minister, John Grant, who was a regular customer of the Elgin Circulating Library and a keen amateur local historian and antiquary.⁵²

And finally, Forsyth further emphasised both his public-spirited intentions and his customers' aspirations to polite respectability when he solicited subscriptions for a proposed 'Literary and Commercial News-Room in Elgin':

Having frequently occasion to hear the want of an Establishment of this nature in ELGIN, complained of; begs leave to submit to his Fellow Citizens, and the Gentlemen of the Neighbourhood, the PROSPECTUS of a PLAN, which, if supported by them, in the Manner he hopes, would enable him to carry it into immediate Effect.

At no Period of greater public Anxiety could it have been attempted, than the present – when Political Events are not only unexampled in their Magnitude, but rapid beyond all former precedent in their Revolutions, and inexpressibly interesting in their Consequences.

⁵¹ NAS GD248/455/6, Forsyth to James Grant.

⁵² NAS GD248/696/3/3. For a discussion of Grant's reading experiences, see Chapter 5 below.

By the introduction of the most respectable and popular Monthly and Quarterly Publications, Books of Reference, and a Collection of good Maps, he wishes to combine the Advantages of a Literary, with those of a Political and Commercial Establishment. – Thus affording the Man of much, and the Man of little Leisure, a most invaluable Source of Information and Amusement, at all Times accessible to him – and that at an Expence considerably less than he can enjoy even one solitary Newspaper in his own House.⁵³

Such puffs may say as much about Forsyth's ability as a self-publicist as they do about his earnest desire to serve the interests of an emergent Elgin intelligentsia, but they do at least suggest that literary affairs were held in increasingly high regard in this relatively remote corner of northern Scotland. Forsyth hoped to capitalise financially on the cultural aspirations of his customers, and presented associational reading of the kind facilitated by his proposed reading room as the most appropriate venue for their literary patriotism.

IV

Implicit in all this was the conviction that, to be commercially viable, circulating libraries needed to offer far more than the kind of ephemeral pulp fiction that might have satisfied the stereotypical consumer base of giddy and impressionable young ladies. This is clearly reflected by a survey of their advertisements, which given the financial risks involved must have placed special emphasis on types of literature that would be most appealing to general readers.⁵⁴ Novels were included in such adverts as a matter of course, but they were usually accompanied by claims that the library extended to 'the various Branches of Science and Literature'.⁵⁵ Moreover, it is noteworthy that booksellers always placed non-

⁵³ NAS GD248/616/4/26; printed circular from Isaac Forsyth, n.d.

⁵⁴ On the value of circulating library adverts, see Varma, *ET*, 68-73, although he overlooks history, claiming instead that plays, novels, sermons and religious works and pamphlets were the most regularly advertised genres.

⁵⁵ McDonald, 'Circulating Libraries', 127, 131; the view that circulating libraries should consist of at least 70% fictional literature was propagated by the contemporary Bromley bookseller, Thomas Wilson, in *The Uses of Circulating Libraries Considered* (London, 1797), reprinted in full by Varma, *ET*, 195-203. On the involvement of English circulating library proprietors in the publishing of popular Gothic romances, see E. Jacobs, 'Anonymous Signatures: Circulating Libraries, Conventionality, and the Production of Gothic Romances', *English Literary History* 62 (1995), 603-29.

fiction first where the order of genres was not alphabetised, with the prominence of History representing the surest claim to respectability that booksellers could use.

Moir, as we have already suggested, earnestly placed his own emphasis on ‘six hundred volumes of Divinity and History, to which will be added new Publications of merit’, though most booksellers advertised a broader set list of genres that tended to include History, Voyages, Novels, Poetry and Plays (usually in that order).⁵⁶ Farquhar advertised ‘a neat assortment of Books, consisting of History, Voyages, Travels, Lives, Novels, Plays, Poetry and Miscellaneous Literature’, while Caldwell (perhaps wisely, in light of Farquhar’s failure in Peterhead) added ‘Biography..., Religion & Church History’ to the standard list. William White, whose collection only numbered a little over one thousand titles, was least discriminatory of all, hoping to capture as many potential markets as possible in advertising a collection of

The most select Authors on the following subjects:

Antiquities	Gardening	Poetry
Arts	History	Philosophy
Anatomy	Husbandry	Physic
Botany	Lives	Sciences
Commerce	Memoirs	Surgery
Coins	Minerals	Trade
Divinity	Novels	Travels
Geography	Plays	Voyages ⁵⁷

Notices of Alexander Angus’ intention to open a circulating library in Aberdeen in 1764 also included from the outset such suggestive genres as Husbandry, Physick, Surgery, and Trade, though they were revealingly dropped from the title page of a catalogue issued in his second year of business – perhaps because such genres were so rarely in demand

⁵⁶ McDonald, ‘Circulating Libraries’, 130. The priority of history in such adverts may reflect book sizes, with the tendency to list books in order of size from folios downwards. Thus history may be listed first because histories tended to be folios, whereas novels were merely duodecimos.

⁵⁷ *White*.

that Angus considered them superfluous. By 1779, he had added or reinstated Philosophy, Belles Lettres, Natural History, Trade and Commerce and Antiquities as genres that had evidently entered the definitive canon of polite literature in the intervening decade – at least according to this most experienced judge of the reading tastes of contemporary Aberdonians, who chose them specifically to sell his collection to the widest possible range of potential customers.⁵⁸

In fact, analysis of the stocks of Scottish circulating libraries of this period confirms that novels were not always predominant. There were those who did conform to the stereotype, especially in the big towns where serious-minded readers were already well supplied. In Glasgow, David Potter offered an exhaustive collection of novels and romances to complement the vast quantities of non-fiction offered by Stirling's Public Library (an endowed institution) and the Glasgow Public Library. James Chalmers in Dundee also focused almost exclusively on imaginative literature, but both Potter and Chalmers still stocked classics like Hume's *History*, Kames' *Sketches* and Robertson's major histories.⁵⁹ And there must have been others, especially in smaller towns and villages in rural Scotland, that focused almost entirely on imaginative literature, small ventures like John Smith's Public Library in Beith (217 titles in 1834), which stocked the complete novels of Mackenzie, Smollett and Scott in a collection made up almost exclusively of fiction.⁶⁰

Nevertheless, it is clear that many proprietors offered novels only as a small portion of a much broader collection. Angus & Sons, for instance, was one of the most complete libraries of any type in the entire country, supplying borrowers with all the latest

⁵⁸ *A Catalogue of Books for a Circulating Library ... Which are lent to Read ... by Alexander Angus and Son* (Aberdeen, 1775); *A New Catalogue of the Aberdeen Circulating Library... Which are lent... by Alexander Angus and Son* (Aberdeen, 1779; 1787, Appendix; 1790, New Appendix), Aberdeen University Library, King 286/2.

⁵⁹ *Catalogue of The Circulating Library of David Potter & Co. No. 2 Brunswick Place, Glasgow...* (Glasgow, 1811), held at the Mitchell Library, Glasgow; *Catalogue of the French and English Circulating Library of James Chalmers, Bookseller and Stationer, Castle Street, Dundee* (Dundee, 1818), held at Dundee Central Library; compare with the novel-heavy stock of Anthony Soulby's library at Penrith, which held Hume and Robertson amongst many fashionable novels, *Nation of Readers*, Ch4, 17.

⁶⁰ *Catalogue of Books in John Smith's Public Library, Town-Buildings, Beith* (Beith, 1834), NLS RB.s.927; compare with John Rogers' Library at Stafford, which in 1825 held 350 books, all novels; *Nation of Readers*, Ch4, 18.

researches in moral and natural philosophy, and complementing a small selection of the most-esteemed novelists with runs of the pre-eminent poets, playwrights and historians of the age. Of Scottish authors, the collection featured the principal agricultural works of James Anderson and Adam Dickson alongside Kames' more established *Gentleman Farmer*; the poetry of 'Ossian' Macpherson, Wilkie, Burns and Fergusson; the canonical books of Beattie, Blair, Campbell, Ferguson, Hume, Hutcheson, Kames, Mackenzie, Reid, Robertson and Smith; as well as significant works of local writers whose work was far less widely distributed beyond Scotland, including Blackwell, Gerard, William Duff and George Turnbull.⁶¹

Alexander Brown's library, also in Aberdeen, had less than 800 novels out of a total of 4,042 books. 1,102 titles were included under the division 'History, Voyages, and Travel, Law etc.', and 712 fell into a strange category cobbled together from 'Divinity, Natural History, and Philosophy, plus Agriculture, Botany, etc.'⁶² Together these two categories encompassed such important Scottish works as Blackwell's *Memoirs*, Blair's *Sermons* and *Lectures*, Campbell's *Essay and Philosophy of Rhetoric*, Cullen's *Materia Medica*, Dunbar's *Essays on the History of Mankind*, Ferguson's *Essay*, Hume's *Dialogues* and *Natural History of Religion*, Innes' *Critical Essay*, Kames' *Gentleman Farmer*, Monboddo's *Origin of Language*, Sinclair's *Statistical Account*, Smellie's *Philosophy of Natural History* and Stewart's *Elements*.⁶³ Besides catering for their fictional entertainment, Brown's catalogue therefore allowed customers to engage in some of the most important debates of the Scottish Enlightenment, and also seems to have promoted particularly the work of eminent local authors – including Blackwell, Campbell, Reid and Anderson.

Nicoll's stock in Dundee consisted of much less than 20% novels, and though his library was conspicuously short on religious and philosophical works, in general 'the extensive stock of solid, standard works bespeaks a nucleus of earnest readers'. Nicoll offered all of the major polite historians, including Ferguson, Gillies, Guthrie, Henry, Hume, Kames,

⁶¹ *A New Catalogue of the Aberdeen Circulating Library*.

⁶² This material derives from Kaufman, 237.

⁶³ *Enlarged Catalogue of the New Aberdeen Circulating Library, ... by A. Brown* (Aberdeen, 1795)

Robertson, Smollett, Stuart and Watson, as well as celebrated Scottish moralistic and aesthetic texts like Hutcheson's *Inquiry and Essay*, Blair's *Lectures*, Kames' *Elements of Criticism*, Fordyce's *Dialogues concerning Education* and James Gregory's *Philosophical and Literary Essays*. As Kaufman concludes, 'obviously this could have had no connection with the unnamed bookseller whom James Beattie described in 1793' – especially since Beattie's own *Essay on Truth* was one of the few philosophical staples Nicoll supplied.⁶⁴

Sibbald's Library in Edinburgh was perhaps the most liberal of all, and certainly the largest.⁶⁵ Of over 6000 titles, around 20% were novels once more, with a further 19% being poetry, plays and the *belles lettres*. History also accounted for 19% of the collection, confirming once more its pre-eminence in the reading tastes of Georgian Scotland, while 13% was portioned off for works on the arts and sciences (mostly of a technological or manufacturing bent), and decidedly different markets were targeted by Sibbald's French and Italian books (9%) and music (5%).⁶⁶ Sibbald also had the medical market cornered in what was one of Britain's most eminent scientific communities, with over 7% of the collection being taken up by works of anatomy, medicine and physics. Besides the *Edinburgh Medical Essays*, Sibbald was unique amongst British circulating library proprietors in offering the complete medical works of Cullen, Francis Home, Benjamin Bell, the two Andrew Duncans (father and son), Charles Alston, James Lind, Sir William Fordyce, George Cleghorn, Alexander Hamilton, John Hunter, and Robert Whytt, as well as a manuscript copy of Black's lectures on chemistry – perhaps betraying a link with Edinburgh's world famous medical school that must have made absolute commercial sense.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Kaufman, 243; *Catalogue of the New Circulating Library*.

⁶⁵ My analysis of Sibbald's stock derives from Crawford, 'Origins', 87; Kaufman, 239-241; and *A New Catalogue of the Edinburgh Circulating Library containing twenty thousand volumes, English, French and Italian ... which are lent ... By J. Sibbald* (Edinburgh, 1786), NLS H.6.e.20. A previous owner of the NLS copy has marked with a '+' sign many of the medical books in Sibbald's stock, illustrating how his library could be used as a specialist professional reference library.

⁶⁶ On music provision, see H. Lenneberg, 'Early Circulating Libraries and the Dissemination of Music', *Library Quarterly* 52 (1982), 122-30; D. Johnson, *Music and Society in Lowland Scotland in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1972).

⁶⁷ A number of distinct Medical Circulating Libraries are listed on Alston; cf A. Bunch, *Hospitals and Medical Libraries in Scotland* (Glasgow, 1975).

Far from being monopolised by novels, then, Scottish circulating libraries in the major cities offered a range of literature that would appeal to the different constituencies of readers who made use of their facilities. This was even more urgently the case for provincial booksellers like William White and George Miller who presumably had a much smaller consumer base, and who thus had to tailor their collections to the peculiar demands of their regular borrowers – or else soon fail in the manner of Farquhar at Peterhead.⁶⁸ This must explain the predominance in White's collections of works of divinity and ecclesiastical history, a category of conservative learning that is not reflected so strongly in any other commercial library for which records survive. Perhaps this reflects the number of clergymen who frequented White's establishments in the absence of any real alternative in north-western Ayrshire in the last years of the eighteenth century, though it might also relate to the region's traditional piety, long well-known for its attachment to evangelical religion.⁶⁹

More generally, White's collection was exceptionally strong given its relatively small size. Popular writers like Beattie, Blair, Kames, Robertson and 'Ossian' Macpherson were complemented with much rarer Scottish material, including Millar's *Distinction of Ranks* (the only copy available for rent outside Glasgow and Aberdeen), Blackwell's *Life of Homer*, Ferguson's *Institutes*, Fordyce's *Art of Preaching*, Francis Home's *Principles of Agriculture* and *Experiments on Bleaching*, Jamieson's *Essay on Virtue and Harmony*, MacLaurin's *Treatise of Algebra*, Shaw's *History of Moray*, Ure's *History of Rutherglen* and Smellie's *Treatise on Midwifery*.⁷⁰ The last title appears particularly suggestive, though White's catalogue actually listed just sixteen works on medicine overall – besides the inevitable inclusion of Buchan's layman's guide to *Domestic Medicine*. Clearly there

⁶⁸ David Mclellan's *Statistical Account* for Beith listed White as the only bookseller in the town, and it is likely that White's shops in Irvine and Beith were the only source of books within a twelve mile radius (apart from private libraries); *OSA*, VI, 71. White's career could be fruitfully compared with that of Abraham Dent, bookseller and circulating librarian in Kirkby Stephen in Westmoreland; Allan, *Nation of Readers*; T. S. Willan, *An Eighteenth-Century Shopkeeper: Abraham Dent of Kirkby Stephen* (Manchester, 1969).

⁶⁹ The Margate Circulating Library offered an extraordinary 600 Sermons, which led P. Kaufman to speculate 'how much of the religious was window-dressing'; 'The Community Library: A Chapter in English Social History', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, New Series 57: 7 (1967), 17.

⁷⁰ White.

was very little demand for specialist medical literature in an area that only sustained a handful of medical professionals even late on in our period.⁷¹

In contrast to the predominance of serious and devotional literature at White's Library, Caldwell's Library in Paisley showed a marked preference for secular and imaginative literature, with works on 'Religion and Church History' accounting for less than 10% of the whole collection. Those staple constituents of the polite canon, 'History, Biography, Voyages and Travels', made up a little over 20% of the collection, but by far the largest section was devoted to 'Novels and Romances' – 197 titles out of a total of 438 in 1789, or 45% of the entire collection. Together with the 48 titles identified as 'Poetry and Plays', Paisley readers seem to have been remarkably keen recipients of the stereotypical commercial library fare – at least according to the business acumen of George Caldwell, a man who already had fifteen years' experience behind him. Even so, Caldwell still stocked a respectable collection of polite Scottish historiography, including such rare regional histories as Semple's *History of Renfrewshire* (published locally in Paisley) and Gibson's *History of Glasgow*, as well as that general purpose guide to the leading ideas of the Scottish Enlightenment, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. And the rental catalogue still betrayed more than a hint of Caldwell's own interests (the library was originally based on his own personal collection) in the inclusion of many of Hume's principal works, but not those of his popular opponents – notably, Beattie's *Essay on Truth*, Campbell's *Essays on Miracles* and Oswald's *Appeal to Common Sense*.⁷²

The surviving catalogue of Alexander Davidson's Library in Inverness provides further evidence for the relative prominence of imaginative literature, especially in comparing the contents of the original 1782 catalogue with the Appendix of additions to the Library dated 1783. With novels already accounting for around 29% of the collection by 1782, 183 further such titles were added in 1783 – accounting for nearly a third of all acquisitions that year. By contrast, only 25 more works on Divinity and Ecclesiastical History were added to the collection in 1783, a strong indication that the 85 religious

⁷¹ According to the *Statistical Account*, there were three medical practitioners in Beith (two surgeons and one druggist) and six in Irvine (three surgeons, two druggists and one physician), *OSA*, VI, 71, 244.

⁷² *Paisley Circulating Library*.

titles already offered by Davidson before then could not have been a major source of income. Instead, Davidson seems to have concentrated on bringing in more ‘History and Antiquaries’, more ‘Geography, Travels and Voyages’, more ‘Natural History, Husbandry and Agriculture’ and many more ‘Plays’, all core constituents of polite culture, and presumably the more profitable parts of his Library – additions which included besides collected editions of farces and tragedies for the stage, Alexander’s *History of Women*, Smith’s *The Wealth of Nations*, Montesquieu’s *L’Esprit*, Mackenzie’s *Julia de Roubigne*, Johnson’s *Journey to the Western Isles of Scotland*, John Gregory’s *Comparative View* and Macpherson’s *Fragments of Ancient Poetry*. In dramatic contrast to White, Davidson’s Library in Inverness offered nearly forty works on medicine, catering both for the layman through Buchan’s ubiquitous *Domestic Medicine* and for the many specialists who made Inverness their base in the Highlands through rarer and more technical works like Monro’s *Anatomy of the Human Bones* and Smellie’s *Treatise on Midwifery*.⁷³

Unfortunately, evidence illuminating the holdings of Scottish circulating libraries in our period is even harder to come by than material confirming the existence of such establishments. Of the 280 or so institutions we know about for the entire period between 1725 and 1830, only 25 catalogues have so far been uncovered – including at least five for commercial ventures in each of the three main cities, and two more for libraries in Dundee.⁷⁴ Yet despite the small size and potentially unrepresentative distribution of our sample we can be sure from the foregoing survey that circulating libraries were not always the relentless purveyors of fictional pap that they were made out to be. In reality, novels usually occupied a proportion of between a fifth and a third of such collections, and they nevertheless sat alongside large quantities of more serious- and practical-minded forms of literature.⁷⁵ This was equally true of smaller ventures like White’s and Caldwell’s as it was of the larger, more prestigious circulating libraries in Edinburgh,

⁷³ Davidson.

⁷⁴ Varma argues that the survival of catalogues with over 75% of serious, non-fictional stock represents a significant skew in the sample, arguing that it was the catalogues of the larger, more prestigious institutions that tended to survive: ‘the very fact of their having been accepted as serious documents may account for their survival’, *ET*, 66; for a similar point, see D. Knott, ‘Thomas Wilson and *The Use of Circulating Libraries*’, *LH*, 4 (1976-8), 2-10.

⁷⁵ See *Nation of Readers*, Ch4, 16-22; Kaufman, ‘Community Library’, 14.

Glasgow and Aberdeen, in spite of Varma's speculation that 'the smaller had perhaps nothing other than fiction to amuse and entertain the general reader'.⁷⁶ Indeed, even provincial circulating libraries replicated in many fundamental respects the holdings of associational libraries and private libraries, offering the same kind of canonical texts that were most popular throughout Britain – notably Hume's *History* and *Essays*, Robertson's histories, Buchan's *Domestic Medicine*, Blair's *Sermons* and Mackenzie's *Man of Feeling*.

V

Although their catalogues are immensely useful in suggesting the kind of literature circulating libraries offered consumers, they do not represent concrete proof that the books which interest us were read with any frequency – for the very reasons we have discussed at length in previous chapters. In this instance, proprietors of circulating libraries at least had every reason to offer books that would appeal to their core markets, so the choice of what books to stock must reflect to a large degree each proprietor's assessment of their potential profitability. As Kaufman suggests, 'no proprietor continues, year after year, to maintain any appreciable proportion of unread books'.⁷⁷ However, even this realisation gives no help in assessing the relative popularity of specific titles amongst borrowers, and some circulating librarians doubtless made mistakes in staking all on specialist materials – including Sibbald himself, whose incredible diversity may well have contributed to declining profitability and the decision to sell the Library in 1793.⁷⁸

As we discovered in Chapter 2, what we really need in assessing the contribution of libraries to the circulation of literature is their borrowing records. Unfortunately, the sole surviving commercial borrowing register in Scotland raises far more questions than it

⁷⁶ Varma, *ET*, 66.

⁷⁷ Kaufman, 277; see also, Varma, *ET*, 65.

⁷⁸ The deletion of much of Sibbald's philosophical, anatomical, surgical and ecclesiastical stock from the 1800 catalogue suggests that 'the demand had therefore either decreased or had never warranted the supply'; Kaufman, 239.

answers.⁷⁹ For a start, the Chambers Circulating Library was hardly typical of the other libraries we have studied in this chapter. Flourishing in the late 1820s, the library belonged to a later generation than those of White, Davidson and Forsyth, despite the latter's longevity. Moreover, its surviving muniments (the borrowing ledger dates from 1828, a surviving catalogue from 1829) post-date by nearly thirty years surviving catalogues for significant metropolitan libraries run by Angus or Sibbald. Furthermore, the Chambers Library was itself a metropolitan library, with premises in Hanover Street, Edinburgh, and serving a clientele drawn from the most fashionable addresses in the New Town. The Chambers Circulating Library therefore falls far short of the kind of provincial consumption of literature that we are primarily concerned with in this study – even if Chambers had some customers beyond the city's immediate environs, as we have seen.

Nevertheless, the Chambers Library borrowing ledger provides a unique opportunity to glimpse the role of commercial circulating libraries in facilitating reading experiences, with intriguing implications.⁸⁰ Robert Chambers made somewhere in the region of 10,000 loans in the twelve months covered by the ledger. Besides periodicals like *Blackwood's Magazine* and the *New Monthly Magazine*, loans were dominated by novels and other works of fiction in apparent confirmation of the traditional stereotype. Popular titles included classics of modern English literature like John Galt's *Annals of the Parish*, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, James Fenimore Cooper's *Last of the Mohicans* and the works of Jane Austen, as well as works which enjoyed far less long-lasting fame, such as *Pelham, or the Adventures of a Gentleman, Richmond, or Scenes in the Life of a Bow Street Officer*, and *Salathiel, a Story of the Past, Present and Future*. Scottish novelists like Jane Porter, Elizabeth Hamilton, John Gibson Lockhart and even the more dated Tobias Smollett also received a warm reception, but none more so, inevitably, than Walter Scott.⁸¹ *Tales of a Grandfather*, which had only just come out at the end of 1827, was one

⁷⁹ My analysis of borrowings based on the 'Chambers Borrowing Ledger'.

⁸⁰ Compare J. Fergus, 'Eighteenth-Century Readers in Provincial England: The Customers of Samuel Clay's Circulating Library and Bookshop in Warwick, 1770-2', *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 78 (1984); *ibid.*, 'Provincial Servants' Reading in the Late Eighteenth Century', in *PRR*.

⁸¹ For the reception of Scott in circulating libraries, see St Clair, 245-6; C. Skelton-Foord, 'Walter Scott and the engendering of the popular novel: circulating library holdings of British fiction 1805-1819', in *W*.

of the most popular works in the whole collection, while all of his novels and narrative poetry were borrowed with great regularity – especially relatively recent releases like *Quentin Durwood*, *Redgauntlet* and *Ivanhoe*.

In sharp contrast, barely any non-fiction was borrowed from the Chambers Library in the period covered by the ledger. Volumes of the *Statistical Account* were borrowed on four occasions, as was a collected edition of Mackenzie's *Mirror* magazine, while Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* was borrowed three times. The 1829 catalogue confirms that Chambers also stocked standard non-fiction like Robertson's *History of Scotland* and Charles V, Arnot's *History of Edinburgh* and Kames' *Sketches*, and even some rarer works like John Anderson's *Prize Essay on the Present State of Knowledge in the Highlands* and Bishop Burnet's *History of His Own Times*.⁸² However, one searches in vain for a single verifiable loan of such books in the surviving ledge. A 'History of Scotland' (probably by Robertson or his continuator Laing) was borrowed twice, while the 'History of Edinburgh' (also unattributed, but almost certainly Arnot's) was borrowed just once, but these remain the only conceivable candidates.

On the face of it, then, Chambers' borrowing records would seem entirely to corroborate St Clair's argument that 'the business of most English circulating libraries was ... to rent out the latest novels and romances when they first appeared'.⁸³ However, it would be a grave mistake to extrapolate such conclusions to other Scottish circulating libraries in our period. The Chambers Library, we should not forget, was hardly representative of the type of library that concerns us here, and customers of Forsyth, White and Caldwell (like the proprietors themselves) occupied a very different mental and material world from those of Robert Chambers. Moreover, it is more than likely that Chambers' customers had already read books like Robertson's *History of Scotland* or Arnot's *History of Edinburgh* by 1828. The library had stocked them for at least five years by then and both

Huber (ed.), *The Corvey Library and Anglo-German cultural exchanges, 1770-1837* (Munich, 2004), 101-16; Raven, 'Libraries', 256. Circulating libraries across Britain were 'reckoned to have made thousands of pounds by lending Waverley novels', K. A. Manley, 'Engines of Literature: Libraries in an Era of Expansion and Transition', in *CHLB2*, 514.

⁸² *Catalogue of Chambers' Circulating Library*.

⁸³ St Clair, 244.

works were standard issue in the drawing rooms of Queen Street and Charlotte Square in the first decades of the new century. It would also seem that luminaries like Robertson and Kames were passing out of fashion in 1820s Edinburgh – to be replaced, no doubt, by the novels of Sir Walter Scott.

VI

It is certainly possible to believe, with St Clair, Varma and others, that circulating libraries occupied a specific niche in the literary market place, offering the kind of light literature that associational and endowed libraries tended to avoid. The Chambers Circulating Library fulfilled precisely that role amongst the fashionable set of New Town Edinburgh in the late 1820s, but it is quite misleading in our attempts to understand reading habits in provincial towns in the high age of the Scottish Enlightenment. There are sure indications that in such environments circulating libraries had to serve a more general purpose to remain commercially viable, not dramatically different from other types of library. Ultimately, it made perfect financial sense that readers in provincial towns like Elgin, Inverness, Irvine and Beith could get their fill of Hume, Robertson, *et al* from circulating libraries, regardless of the hostile propaganda that surrounded them. As we shall see in the next chapter, endowed and religious libraries offered ordinary Scots yet more opportunities to encounter the major works of the Scottish Enlightenment.

CHAPTER FOUR

‘A Taste for Reading in the Country’ Religious and Endowed Libraries

In November 1790, one of the great historical writers of the Scottish Enlightenment lay dying at his country home, Millfield, near Polmont in south-east Stirlingshire. As he looked around at the precious books he had collected over a lifetime of earnest scholarship and erudition, he made an important decision: ‘I Doctor Robert Henry one of the ministers of Edinburgh being desirous to dispose of my small library as the foundation of a greater, and to excite a Taste for reading and information in the people of this country have resolved to make over the same in perpetuity ... [to] the magistrates and town council of the burgh of Linlithgow’.¹

Though he clearly intended the library to be a gift to posterity every bit as enlightening as his *History of Great Britain* (1771-93), little more is known about Henry’s Linlithgow Library. We do not know how fully his plans came to fruition, whether the books were ever lent to readers beyond the presbytery as Henry had hoped, what the collection looked like, how it developed after his death, and which titles users chose to borrow most frequently. However, Henry’s bequest merely built on a much wider tradition in Scottish cultural history and the survival of borrowing records from longer-established endowed and religious libraries allows us to add extensive evidence of loans to our speculations about how such institutions influenced provincial culture.

I

Religious library provision in Scotland has a proud if somewhat obscure past.² In 1699 James Kirkwood published *An Overture for Founding and Maintaining of Bibliotheks in*

¹ NAS B48/18/45, Reg’d Gift of Mortification of Library. Doctor Robert Henry to The Town Council and Presbytery of Linlithgow, 1790; *ODNB*.

² For the fullest account, see Aitken, 8-17.

*every paroch throughout this Kingdom.*³ Eventually, the bold scheme was limited to those areas where books were most scarce, with around 70 collections being established mostly in the Highlands and Islands by the General Assembly between 1704 and 1709. These collections typically consisted of between sixty and 130 volumes, covering a range of titles that apparently went well beyond religious subjects. Although very little is known about how they functioned they were clearly intended to be open to all members of the community (upon payment of a deposit). As Kirkwood had written in the original plan, ‘he [the librarian] was to lend books out only to heritors of the parish, to ministers of the presbytery, and to such residents in the parish as should find sufficient caution’.⁴

Kaufman was convinced that such libraries were ‘potentially at least major sources of culture, secular as well as religious’,⁵ but the fate of most remains clouded in mystery. Some undoubtedly found their way into private collections, while many others were lost through accident or violent action – the library kept by Daniel Mackilligin at Alness, for instance, which was destroyed by a Highland raiding party in 1718.⁶ Suffice to say, three were mentioned in Sir John Sinclair’s *Statistical Account* in the 1790s, while only a handful more were found to be in existence in an enquiry conducted by the SSPCK in the early nineteenth century.⁷

Though the Kirkwood scheme may therefore appear to be a dead end for our purposes, one library at least survived to become a major force in provincial Scottish culture – the Dumfries Presbytery Library. Founded in around 1706, the original Kirkwood stock of

³ *ODNB*.

⁴ Quoted by Aitken, 9. Kirkwood’s scheme came about at a time when there was increasing interest in parish libraries throughout the British Isles, though Kirkwood apparently granted his librarians ‘a much more liberal remit’ than the schemes instigated throughout England and Wales by Thomas Bray and on the Isle of Man by Thomas Wilson; see W. M. Jacob, ‘Libraries for the Parish: Individual Donors and Charitable Societies’ and Graham Best, ‘Libraries in the parish’, both in *CHLB2*, quote from Best, 341.

⁵ Kaufman, 274; cf. Kaufman, *Reading Vogues at English Cathedral Libraries of the Eighteenth Century* (New York, 1964); idem., ‘Readers and their Reading in Eighteenth-Century Lichfield’, *The Library* 5th Series 28 (1973); E. Brunskill, *18th Century Reading: Some Notes on the People who Frequented the Library of York Minster in the Eighteenth Century, and on the Books they Borrowed* (York, 1950); S. Hingley, ‘Ecclesiastical Libraries: Libraries for the Higher Clergy’ and J. Williams, ‘Ecclesiastical Libraries’, both in *CHLB2*.

⁶ Aitken, 12.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 17; John Anderson, *Prize Essay on the State of Society and Knowledge in the Highlands of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1807), 107.

around one hundred volumes was substantially enhanced through the century by a steady stream of donations, most notably by Dr. John Hutton (d.1712), M.P. for Dumfries and physician to William and Mary.⁸ A 1784 catalogue listed 2,350 titles – putting the collection at least in terms of size on a par with the Greenock Subscription Library, the Paisley Library Society and Isaac Forsyth’s Elgin Circulating Library.⁹ But we know far more about the functioning of the Dumfries Presbytery Library than simply the extent and shape of its collection due to the survival of a set of borrowing registers dating from 1732 until 1826. Although now in a very fragile condition, the borrowing registers demonstrate not only who was using the library and how often they were borrowing certain books, they also allow us to look more closely at the reception afforded to a number of key works of the Scottish Enlightenment.

In the first instance, it is possible to identify 140 individuals who borrowed from the library in this period. As Table 4.1 demonstrates, the overwhelming majority of these borrowers were associated with the church, with 57 ministers, 7 preachers and 27 students (mostly designated ‘students of divinity’ in the borrowing records) – perhaps a sign of the primary intention of the original Kirkwood scheme.¹⁰ Moreover, it is abundantly clear that the 57 ministers who used the library also dominated loans from the library, accounting for at least 2,000 of nearly 2,700 loans that have so far been positively identified.¹¹ The preponderance of church ministers amongst the borrowers also accounts for the geographical distribution of borrowers, with books lent to all corners of the Presbytery of Dumfries and as far afield as Kirkcudbright and even Cumberland across the English border.

⁸ *ODNB*. On the early development of the Dumfries Presbytery Library, see George Shirley, *Dumfriesshire Libraries* (1933). The Library was returned to the General Assembly in Edinburgh in 1885.

⁹ *A Catalogue of the books in the Library Belonging to the Presbytery of Dumfries* (Dumfries, 1784), NLS APS.2.82.31.

¹⁰ A considerable concern was that divinity students did not have access to books to continue their reading and studies in periods away from their divinity halls; see Jacob, ‘Libraries for the Parish’, 78.

¹¹ Ewart Library, DG(02)f, Dumfries Presbytery Library: Issue Book, 1732-1826. It would be impossible to conduct a complete statistical survey of this source material because some of the notes of borrowings have been irrevocably obscured by the conversion of the loan book around 1767, when the log was changed to a personal loan record, with each person apportioned a page – with the index slit down the side. The consequent mutilation of all records in the book means that the first and fourth columns are regularly missing vital information, if they are legible at all.

Occupation	Number	Estimated Borrowings
Ministers (including Episcopalian clergy)	57	2,000
Students	27	210
<i>Civis</i> (ie laymen)	22	200
Military	7	60
Preachers	7	20
Schoolmasters	6	92
Merchants	6	60
Medical Men	3	26
Customs Official	1	21
Stationer	1	7
Law	1	2

Table 4.1: Occupations of Borrowers from the Dumfries Presbytery Library

But the Dumfries Presbytery Library also continued to conform to Kirkwood's broader vision of a series of public libraries that should be available to secular members of the community. On at least 92 occasions a book was lent by the librarian to one of the six schoolmasters identified in the borrowing registers, including George Chapman (1723-1806), the highly-esteemed rector of Dumfries Academy whose 38 borrowings between 1751 and 1773 included Kames' *Elements of Criticism*, Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* and Hume's *History*.¹² While two more of these schoolmasters eventually entered the ministry in their own right, evidently reaping the intellectual fruits of the library's collections, borrowers also included seven army officers, six merchants, three medical men, one stationer, one lawyer, one customs official and 22 laymen simply designated 'civis' by the librarian of the time. And these secular borrowers included some mildly rapacious readers: Major Ferguson of Isle whose 23 loans included every volume of Hume's *History* and Robertson's *History of Scotland*; William Irvine, laird of Gribton ('civis'), who borrowed items on 70 separate occasions between 1751 and 1764, and who was evidently another repeat borrower of Hume's *History*; the surgeon, Alexander

¹² Chapman's *Treatise on Education, with a sketch of the author's method of instruction while he taught the school of Dumfries, and a view of other books on education* (1773) reached a fifth edition in 1792, while his teaching is said to have drawn the compliments of Lord Kames, amongst others. He believed a classical education should extend to 'a general view of the history of England, and the figures of rhetoric' (*Treatise of Education*, 79-80). He retired from teaching at Dumfries in 1774, though he continued to take private pupils in the area and only moved away in 1801 to establish a private academy in Banffshire. *ODNB*.

Gordon, responsible for borrowing 13 volumes in 1750-2; and William Bell, a merchant whose 13 loans included Robertson's *History of Scotland* on 20th November 1760.

In spite of the religious origins of the library, borrowings across the whole period were dominated by historical works, with only Shuckford's *Connections* and Butler's *Analogy* representing religion, as well as such ecclesiastical histories as Bower's *History of the Popes* and Burnet's *History of the Reformation*.¹³ Naturally enough, the standard histories by Clarendon, Goldsmith, Oldmixon and Rollin were all regularly withdrawn from the Dumfries bookshelves, as was the *Modern Universal History*, Dupin's *History of the Sixteenth Century*, Vertot's *History of the Revolutions in Spain* and Daniel's *History of France*. Other popular titles included periodicals like the *Annual Register*, a collection of voyages, Diogenes' *Lives of the Philosophers*, and, perhaps a measure of the intellectual capacity of Dumfries readers, Hobbes' *Leviathan*.

For our purposes, the 1784 catalogue confirms that the Dumfries Presbytery Library did hold a small collection of titles that have since been associated with the Scottish Enlightenment.¹⁴ For sure, the range of titles is a little more restricted than in other types of library, with no imaginative literature to speak of and very little philosophy or science. There was no Millar, no Reid and no *The Wealth of Nations*, but the 1784 catalogue did include works by Ferguson, Kames, Robertson, Hume, Beattie, Campbell and Blair. With no acquisition records it is impossible to know when, how or why these authors were added to the collection. The best we can do is note when these titles first started being borrowed from the library. Hume's *History*, for instance, first appears in the borrowing register in November 1754 (borrowed by Robert Wight (1684-1764), minister of St Michael's in Dumfries, and active in the registers from 1733 to 1763), and was thus available the year it was first published. Robertson's *History of Scotland* and *History of America* were both borrowed the year after they were published, though his *Charles V*, published in 1762, was not borrowed until 1769, while Ferguson's *Essay* (published 1767, first borrowed 1769) and Francis Hutcheson's *System of Moral Philosophy* (1755,

¹³ Assessments of the general trends are derived from Kaufman, and my own research.

¹⁴ *Catalogue of Dumfries Presbytery Library*.

1758) were each borrowed soon after their publication. Indeed, of the Scottish Enlightenment titles in the 1784 catalogue, only Colin MacLaurin's *Account of Newton* shows a significant lag between its publication in 1748, and its first appearance in the Dumfries borrowing register in 1768 – probably a sign that it was not likely to be borrowed as often as a Robertson or Hume, rather than certain proof that it was only acquired in the 1760s. Of course, with only one catalogue to go by it is impossible to know which titles were added to the collection after its compilation in 1784 except those that turn up in the borrowing register. We can therefore acknowledge that Dugald Stewart's *Philosophical Essays* was eventually acquired as it was borrowed by the minister Thomas Tudor Duncan (1776-1858) in the 1820s,¹⁵ but we do not know if the library even owned copies of Reid's *Essays* or Smollett's *Continuation of Hume's History* (works that were regularly borrowed at comparable libraries at Wigtown and Dundee), let alone the immensely popular works of Burns and Scott.

Given the problems involved in establishing when the library acquired certain titles and in identifying loans after around 1767, the most fruitful way to test the reception of these texts by patrons of the Dumfries Presbytery Library is simply to analyse how many borrowed them. Of the 140 borrowers identified in the registers, the activity of some 45 can be shown to have predated the publication of Hume's *History* in 1754, including significant borrowers like the ministers Edward Buncle (64 loans, active 1732-48) and John Johnstone (51 loans, 1739-50). A further 45 who were active past 1754 show no hint of Scottish Enlightenment borrowings, including the prolific John Scott (1697-1770), minister of Holywood, who registered 296 loans after 1732, as well as Thomas Lawson, a student with 19 loans between 1762 and 1764. According to this basic test, then, just under a half of all borrowers active after 1754 apparently showed no interest in the Scottish Enlightenment, at least in terms of the texts available to them at the Dumfries Presbytery Library – though any of them may, of course, have acquired these titles from a different source.

¹⁵ *Fasti*.

More intriguingly still, a small handful appear in the register as borrowers of texts that explicitly sought to attack certain elements of the Scottish Enlightenment, certainly in its more radical expressions. William McMillan (1700-1764), minister of Torthorwald, borrowed Daniel MacQueen’s virulent *Letters on Hume’s History*, without apparently consulting Hume’s original. Andrew Brown, ‘civis’, was another who borrowed MacQueen’s *Letters* without countering him with Hume, though MacQueen was borrowed alongside Hume by the more fair-minded John Ewart (1717-1799), minister of Troquire, contributor to the *Statistical Account* and one of the most prolific borrowers at Dumfries with over 234 loans to his name. Brown’s isolated loan of MacQueen may well be put down to curiosity rather than any particular distaste for Hume himself (it was, after all, an unlikely addition to any private library), but when MacQueen was coupled with James Oswald’s *Appeal to Common Sense*, one of the more successful attacks on Hume’s sceptical philosophy, it is tempting to see a pattern emerging. This was the case with Bryce Johnson (1747-1805), another minister of Holywood, who registered MacQueen and Oswald amongst just ten borrowings overall, and Archibald Lawson (1719-1796), minister of Kirkmahoe – though Lawson also borrowed Kames’ *Sketches*, Robertson’s *History of Scotland* and Hume’s *History* (at least twice). Even so, MacQueen was only borrowed by six individuals overall and Oswald by perhaps three and as Table 4.2 demonstrates some key works of the Scottish Enlightenment were a great deal more popular.

Hume, <i>History</i>	27	Macpherson, <i>Works of Ossian</i>	3
Robertson, <i>History of Scotland</i>	18	Oswald, <i>Appeal to Common Sense</i>	3
Kames, <i>Elements of Criticism</i>	10	Beattie, <i>Essay on Truth</i>	2
Robertson, <i>Charles V</i>	9	Gillies, <i>History of Ancient Greece</i>	2
MacQueen, <i>Letters on Hume’s History</i>	6	Kames, <i>Sketches of the History of Man</i>	2
Dalrymple, <i>Memoirs of Great Britain</i>	5	MacLaurin, <i>Account of Newton</i>	2
Henry, <i>History of Great Britain</i>	5	Montesquieu, <i>Works</i>	2
Ferguson, <i>Essay on the History of Civil Society</i>	4	Stewart, <i>Philosophical Essays</i>	2
Robertson, <i>History of America</i>	4	Campbell, <i>Essays on Miracles</i>	1
Robertson, [unspecified]	4	Ferguson, <i>History of the Roman Republic</i>	1
Smith, <i>Theory of Moral Sentiments</i>	4	Hutcheson, <i>System of Moral Philosophy</i>	1

Table 4.2: Dumfries Presbytery Library, Borrowers of Selected Titles

Hume's *History*, of course, proved to be absolutely dominant, with 27 individuals borrowing this mainstay of the Scottish Enlightenment at least once – implying that perhaps as many as a third of all borrowers active after 1754 had read at least a part. These included fifteen ministers, four students and a preacher – as well as seven laymen, the merchant Andrew Smith, Major Ferguson of Isle, another army officer, two schoolmasters and two men marked simply 'civis'. Another measure of the supreme popularity of Hume's *History* that is less easy to convey statistically given the condition of the borrowing registers is the sheer number of readers who returned to Hume again and again. Robert Wight borrowed each of the six volumes at least once between November 1754 and March 1764, as did John Ewart between December 1754 and 1770, while Major Ferguson, the laird of Gribton, the student John Crockat and at least five more ministers were also repeat borrowers of Hume – with Reverends Wight, Andrew Beveridge (1703-1776) and George Duncan I (1692-1765) already old men by the time they encountered Hume, in spite of what Beattie had to say about his impact on Scottish youth.¹⁶

Robertson's profile in the borrowing records is a good deal less clear cut, with the *History of Scotland* rating as one of the most frequently-loaned titles in the entire collection, but with the *History of America* borrowed by just four individuals (two ministers and two students). Robertson's clerical colleagues were far and away the most consistent supporters of his historiography, with fourteen borrowing at least one of his works and ten borrowing the *History of Scotland* – though only Ewart borrowed all three. Perhaps on the recommendation of their local ministers, students and unlicensed preachers also showed an occasional interest in Robertson – especially the student Joseph Kirkpatrick, who borrowed both *Charles V* and the *History of Scotland*. On the other hand, surprisingly few 'civis' readers loaned Robertson in light of lay enthusiasm for his works in provincial subscription libraries and private libraries, borrowers of the *History of Scotland* limited to two military officers, two schoolmasters, the merchant William

¹⁶ Beattie's fear for the corruption of Scottish youth was reflected also in Hume's reception in America, where Abigail Adams was typical in writing, 'I have a thousand fears for my dear Boys as they rise into Life, the most critical period of which is I conceive, at the university; there infidelity abounds, both in example and precepts, there they imbibe the specious arguments of a Voltaire a Hume and Mandevill', quoted by Spencer, *HR*, I, 83.

Bell and the 'civis' George Vair. The sad fate of Robertson's *History of America* at Dumfries is particularly instructive, given the usual presumption that its subject matter particularly appealed to west-coast readers, with increasing commercial and personal ties between west coast Scotland and colonial America. Robertson's reception at Dumfries therefore adds a degree of subtlety to analyses based on library catalogues, but the overall picture remains broadly familiar with polite history and particular histories of Scotland and the British Isles proving more popular than the technical challenges posed by Ferguson's *Essay* (monopolised by four Church of Scotland ministers), Kames' *Sketches* (borrowed by two men, Reverends Ewart and Lawson) or even Robertson's *History of America*.

The one obvious exception to the dominance of history is the profile of Kames' *Elements of Criticism*, borrowed by ten individuals in our period in another apparent reflection of the popularity of Scottish writing on taste. It may be, however, that Kames' *Elements* owed something of its popularity to the approval of the Academy's headmaster, Chapman. Certainly, its borrowers in the 1770s included five students besides their headmaster, so it is conceivable that this work featured on the syllabus at the Dumfries Academy for a time – echoing curricula developments in the Scottish universities.¹⁷ However, Blair's *Lectures* would appear from other borrowing registers and library holdings data usually to have been more popular than Kames' *Elements*, but Blair's *Lectures* failed to register a single loan in our period – despite being marked down in the 1784 catalogue. Other philosophical works also fare far less well, and the fate of Beattie's *Essay on Truth* is a particularly fine illustration of the dangers of taking contemporary comment at face value. Beattie was egged on as the popular tormentor of Hume, but even in the supposedly conservative halls of an ecclesiastical library he found little support – borrowed first in 1775 by the veteran John Marshall, minister of Lochmaben, and then

¹⁷ Kames' *Elements of Criticism* was also immensely popular with borrowers at the University of St Andrews Library, being the most frequently borrowed text in 1782 with twelve loans; M. Simpson, 'St Andrews University Library in the Eighteenth Century: Scottish education and print-culture' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of St Andrews, 1999), Appendix. Much work still needs to be done on school libraries in eighteenth-century Britain; see I. Green, 'Libraries for School Education and Personal Devotion', in *CHLB2*. For Scotland, the sole authority remains J. Grant, *History of Burgh and Parish Schools of Scotland* (London, 1876), 436-8.

only once more in 1777 by the Academy's young mathematics teacher James Dinwiddie.¹⁸

One would be a great deal more surprised to find Hutcheson's *System of Morals* and MacLaurin's *Account of Newton* in a contemporary library catalogue than the relatively commonplace *Essay on Truth*, as we discovered in Chapter 1. But with the added evidence of borrowing records for the Dumfries Presbytery Library, we can see that the fact of these works' inclusion in the 1784 catalogue does not actually say very much about their circulation, still less their popularity in this particular corner of provincial Scotland. MacLaurin's popularisation of Newton attracted just two borrowers (both ministers), while Hutcheson's *System* was apparently taken from the shelves once in nearly a hundred years (by Rev. Ewart, on 1st November 1758).¹⁹ Most surprising of all, James Macpherson's infamous 'translations' of the epic poetry of the Celtic bard Ossian, on first sight a significant exception to this library's general moratorium on imaginative literature, was borrowed by just three individuals after its acquisition some time in the 1770s – besides Ewart, the teenage Dumfries Academy student John Wightman (1762-1847, eventually presented to the parish of Kirkmahoe in 1797) and the future Professor of Divinity at the University of Edinburgh, Andrew Hunter of Barjag (1743-1809).²⁰

In spite of the failure of these works to attract readers, then, it is nevertheless clear that a religious library could facilitate access to at least some of the key works of the Scottish Enlightenment, and in the case of Dumfries we glimpse yet another confirmation of the sheer ubiquity of the historiography of William Robertson and, especially, David Hume.

¹⁸ Dinwiddie (1746-1815) studied at the Dumfries Academy and the University of Edinburgh with the intention of entering the ministry, but had been 'irrecoverably riveted by science' and taught mathematics at Dumfries Academy before embarking on a career as an itinerant lecturer and inventor; *ODNB*. Of course, any Dumfries borrower could have owned a copy of Beattie's *Essay*, which was frequently found in private collections and was available in the relatively inexpensive formats of octavo (Kincaid & Bell's original 1770 edition) and duodecimo (Ewing's 1773 edition, priced at 3s. 3d.); *EB*, 640-1.

¹⁹ J. Moore, 'Hutcheson's Theodicy: The Argument and the contexts of *A System of Moral Philosophy*', in P. Wood (ed.), *The Scottish Enlightenment: Essays in Reinterpretation* (Rochester, 2000).

²⁰ *Fasti*. Wightman's borrowings also included Hume's *History*, Robertson's *Charles V*, Kames' *Elements of Criticism* and Campbell's *Essays on Miracles*, all before he was eighteen. He was later private tutor to Henry, future Lord Brougham. Ossian was also commonly held in private collections and available in inexpensive editions, including the original octavo edition of the *Fragments of Ancient Poetry*, available in 1760 for 1s.; *EB*, 630-1.

More than this though, Paul Kaufman for one believes that the Dumfries Presbytery Library inspired lovers of reading and literature in the area to pursue their passions further. It was clearly possible for determined readers to get a great deal out of the Dumfries collection. Reverend Ewart, whose leadership of the Dumfries militia against the Jacobites in 1745 and contribution to the *Statistical Account* in the 1790s evidently framed an eminently enlightened career,²¹ returned time and again to Hume, Robertson, Kames, Ferguson and Smith. He also borrowed material ranging from MacLaurin to MacQueen, from Hutcheson to the *Annual Register*, not to mention some of the most challenging authors from the continent, including Voltaire, Rousseau and Montesquieu. But the collection had its limits, determined by the scope and terms of its original foundation, by the quality and intellectual specialisms of its subsequent benefactors, and by the restrictions imposed on secular readers (Ewart was, of course, a minister and by the 1770s a leading light in the local presbytery).

Kaufman, therefore, suggests that the reading experiences facilitated by the Presbytery Library may have fostered the ‘desire of a small group to assemble secular reading far beyond the limits of the presbyterial collection’ – in other words, the religious library founded in Dumfries may have stimulated and encouraged a thirst for knowledge and passion for reading.²² Certainly, Dumfries witnessed the foundation of one of the very first subscription libraries in Britain, the Gentlemen’s Library in around 1750, and a second associational collection, the Dumfries Subscription Library, was established there in 1792.²³ Neither subscription lists nor catalogues survive for these institutions until well into the nineteenth century so it is impossible to connect any users of the Presbytery Library with either of them, but it is inconceivable given what we know about the foundation and ongoing membership of other Scottish subscription libraries that some of

²¹ *Fasti*.

²² Kaufman, 275.

²³ Alston; there is no firm data on when the Gentlemen’s Library was founded, though it was in existence by the early 1750s.

the merchants, military officers and especially ministers who frequented the Presbytery Library would not have been deeply involved.²⁴

II

Although source material relating to religious libraries is scant for most of our period, with Dumfries the glorious exception, further evidence does exist for the role that some played in promoting the literature of the Scottish Enlightenment from the end of our period. Most importantly, borrowing registers also survive for the School Wynd Congregational Library of the United Association Secession Church in Dundee from 1825 that corroborate some of the trends suggested by borrowings from Dumfries. The Library was again open to all members of the community upon payment of a 6d. quarterly fee as security – though a managerial committee could also offer use gratis to those they ‘deem[ed] unable to pay the ordinary subscription’.²⁵ Unlike the Presbytery Library, the School Wynd collection was not primarily the preserve of church ministers, with perhaps only three or four active in the registers in the 1820s. Instead, the borrowing register suggests a remarkably diverse readership as can be readily demonstrated by Table 4.3, with thirteen manufacturers, nine shipmasters, seven merchants, three machine makers, three fleshers, and two meal sellers.²⁶ Moreover, where the Dumfries Presbytery Library was apparently alien territory for the fairer sex (as primary borrowers, at any rate), 26 women were active members of the School Wynd Congregational Library, of whom thirteen shared a surname with another borrower – a good, but not certain, indication that the remaining thirteen approached the library free of male supervision.

Women	26
Manufacturers	13
Ship masters	9

²⁴ *Catalogue of Books in the Dumfries [Subscription] Library Taken November 1818* (Dumfries, 1819); *Catalogue of the Society Library [The Gentlemen’s Library], Dumfries, taken 3rd June 1835; with a copy of the Library Regulations* (Dumfries, 1835).

²⁵ *Regulations and Catalogue of the Library belonging to the Congregation of the Secession Church, School Wynd, Dundee* (Dundee, 1832).

²⁶ The Dundee Central Library holds a number of commercial, congregational and residential directories for the city in the 1820s and 30s that allows us to identify borrowers’ trades and occupations with a reasonable degree of certainty.

Grocers, merchants	7
Vintners	5
Writers	4
Customs officials, fleshers, machine makers, ministers, shoemakers, spirit dealers, tailor	3
Cabinet makers, clothiers, dealer, excisemen, ironmongers, meal sellers, painters, schoolmasters, wrights	2
Bleacher, brewer, candlemaker, cooper, dress maker, dyer, engraver, haberdasher, jeweller, mill manager, miller, mill-wright, nurseryman, postmaster, stoneware dealer, surgeon, tide surveyor, timber merchant, tobacco-pipe manufacturer, umbrella maker	1

Figure 4.3: Occupations of Borrowers from the School Wynd Congregation Library (60 unidentified)

The borrowing registers themselves, apparently unknown by historians of Scottish reading before now, do pose some problems, although they are a great deal more legible than the earlier registers at Dumfries.²⁷ Most problematic is the fact that for the entire period covered by the registers (1825 to later than 1880) titles borrowed from the library are only identified by code – a characteristic though usually insurmountable problem for those working with antique library registers. A fragmentary register survives for the Sanquhar Subscription Library near Dumfries, for instance, in which both the titles of books borrowed and the names of individuals who borrowed them are recorded in code, with no additional evidence to allow us to crack that code.²⁸ At the School Wynd Library, however, the borrowers did at least sign for the books they borrowed, allowing us to put a name to each loan, and the additional survival of a catalogue dated 1832 provides a probable key.²⁹ Each title in the catalogue is assigned a number, and the numbers in the borrowing registers correspond to the numbers in the catalogue – so Beattie’s *Minstrel*, catalogue number 37, was assigned page 37 in the borrowing register, while Hume’s *History* (catalogue numbers 201-213 inclusive) was assigned page numbers 201 to 213. Thus we can explore with some degree of certainty the reception of works in the catalogue, a realisation that may in a future project prove to be of immense value in tracing Scottish reading habits through the course of the nineteenth century.

²⁷ Dundee City Archives, CH3/93/29, Library Registers of the School Wynd Congregation Library, 1825-c.1888.

²⁸ Dumfries and Galloway Archives, Sanquhar Subscription Library Register.

²⁹ *Regulations and Catalogue of the Library belonging to the Congregation of the Secession Church, School Wynd, Dundee* (Dundee, 1832).

For our purposes, the School Wynd borrowing registers suggest that Dumfries readers' passion for historical works, and especially for the historiography of Hume and Robertson, was shared by patrons of this much later religious foundation. Hume's *History* was borrowed on 232 occasions between 1825 and 1832 by 87 different individuals: not only was it therefore one of the most heavily perused books in the small collection held at School Wynd, it was read by nearly a half of all borrowers during these early years of the library, and most of these followed up their initial interest with at least one, and usually three or four additional borrowings. Indeed, the unique arrangement of the School Wynd borrowing registers allows us to trace the reception of individual volumes of Hume's *History*, with the Stuart volumes being the most popular – especially volume 10 of Cadell's 1793-4 edition in duodecimo, which was borrowed by more individuals (26) than any other volume and covered the crucial years of the English Civil War up to the trial and execution of King Charles I.³⁰ The popularity of the Stuart volumes at the School Wynd Library reflected their continued relevance for late Georgian party politics, which remained sharply delineated along the party lines (Whig vs. Tory) that had first emerged in the Civil War, the Restoration and the Glorious Revolution.

Robertson, meanwhile, also went down well. The *History of America* was the clear favourite this time, perhaps owing to the increasing international profile of an independent America in the 1820s. It was borrowed on 63 occasions by 38 individuals, who included Alexander Scott, a spirit dealer who borrowed the first volume once and the second three times, the painter John Hendry, the machine maker Thomas Duff and the dealer Thomas Thomson. The *History of Scotland* evidently lagged slightly behind, although it was still one of the more popular works surveyed here (Robertson's sentimental treatment of Mary Queen of Scots proving especially popular with six women readers), with *Charles V* surprisingly registering less borrowers than the *Historical Disquisition on India* (perhaps bolstered by increased interest in Britain's affairs in India by the 1820s).

³⁰ David Hume, *The History of England, from the invasion of Julius Caesar to the Revolution in 1688...* A new edition, printed by T. Cadell and sold by T. N. Longman, 13 vols. (London, 1793-4).

Title	No. Borrowers	No. Borrowings
Henry, <i>History of Great Britain</i>	105	247
Hume, <i>History</i>	87	232
Smith, <i>Wealth of Nations</i>	56	93
Reid, <i>Essays</i>	56	88
Robertson, <i>History of America</i>	38	63
Blair, <i>Lectures</i>	27	28
Robertson, <i>History of Scotland</i>	25	60
Robertson, <i>Historical Disquisition on India</i>	20	23
Beattie, <i>Minstrel</i>	19	21
Gillies, <i>History of Ancient Greece</i>	18	39
Campbell, <i>Essays on Miracles</i>	17	17
Robertson, <i>Charles V</i>	16	26
Thomson, <i>The Seasons</i>	16	17

Table 4.4: School Wynd Congregation Library, Borrowings of Selected Titles 1826-1832

Although the School Wynd borrowing registers do therefore corroborate some of the main trends suggested by the Dumfries registers, there are a number of significant differences. As Table 4.4 shows, Henry's *History* actually overtakes Hume as the most frequently borrowed of the titles sampled here, being borrowed on at least 247 occasions by 105 different readers.³¹ Henry's *History* had been monopolised by five Church of Scotland ministers at the Dumfries Presbytery Library, suggesting that it took longer for its reputation to become established amongst a lay readership (Henry was a minister himself, of course) – though it would be hardly surprising if the Moderate divine proved more amenable to readers than the Great Infidel Hume as the evangelical revival gathered pace.³²

Imaginative literature also fared far better at the School Wynd Library: although in stark contrast to most subscription libraries of the 1820s it did not own editions of Scott, Smollett, Mackenzie or even Burns in the 1820s, Thomson and Beattie do at least seem to

³¹ Robert Henry, *The History of Great Britain, from the first invasion of it by the Romans* (3rd edition, London, 1799-1800), 12 vols.; see ESTC N009056. Book 6 (volumes 11-12) was published posthumously with an appendix by Malcolm Laing.

³² J. R. McIntosh, *Church and theology in Enlightenment Scotland: the popular party, 1740-1800* (Edinburgh, 1998); Ned Landsman, 'Presbyterians and provincial society: the Evangelical Enlightenment in the west of Scotland, 1740-1775', in J. Dwyer and R. B. Sher (eds.), *Sociability and society in eighteenth-century Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1993).

have attracted something of a dedicated following. Borrowers of Thomson included Peter Nicol (a cabinet maker), David Watson (a clothier), George Keay (a customs official) and Alexander Dryden (a vintner), while *The Minstrel* was taken out by Robert Ross (a cooper), Thomas Robertson (a dealer), Alexander Christie (a writer) and by three ministers (Reverends Adie, Clark and Hamilton). Neither, intriguingly, was borrowed by one of the many women who frequented the library, a further indication perhaps that imaginative literature tended to be borrowed by men on behalf of other members of their families.

Of greater interest still is the performance of Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* and Reid's *Essays*.³³ Neither had been acquired by the Dumfries Presbytery Library before 1784, nor did they attract a great deal of notice at the subscription libraries for whom borrowing records survive. Yet at the School Wynd Congregation Library in the 1820s and early 1830s, they rate as the third and fourth most frequently borrowed of the works in our sample – outperforming Robertson's historiography, Gillies' popular *History* and Blair's much more accessible *Lectures*. *The Wealth of Nations* was withdrawn by the cabinet-maker Nicol, manufacturer James Lindsay and Thomas Galloway a nursery and seedsman, as well as by ship masters William Law and Peter Martin for whom Smith's topic was particularly apposite. Reid's borrowers included the tobacco-pipe manufacturer Peter McLean, haberdasher James Gall, and tailor David Honeyman, and his popularity once again reflects his success in rescuing Christian orthodoxy from the ruinous scepticism unleashed by Hume (see Chapter 6, below).

Not all religious libraries offered such liberal collections, of course. Founded originally as a subscription library in 1802,³⁴ a surviving catalogue of the Inverkeithing Evangelical Library proudly heralds the religious overtones this association had acquired by 1820 – and the collection gives further evidence of the single-minded devotion of the members.

³³ Though usually in three volumes, four-volume editions of *The Wealth of Nations* had been released in Glasgow and Edinburgh in 1805 and 1814 respectively; see, for example, copies held by the NLS at shelfmarks NG.1299.c.3 and [Ab].4/1. Collected editions of Reid's *Essays* were commonplace in the early 1800s – see for example Thomas Reid, *Essays on the powers of the mind, to which is prefixed An account of the life and writings of the author (By Dugald Stewart)*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh, 1803).

³⁴ Alston.

No Hume, Robertson, Reid, Smith or Blair here, let alone Scott or Burns, the small collection gathered at Inverkeithing consisted almost entirely of religious and devotional material, with sermons and ecclesiastical histories featuring heavily – including Crookshanks' *History of the Church of Scotland* and McCrie's fervently 'enthusiastic' *Life of Knox*.³⁵

Nevertheless, and though the School Wynd Congregation remains the only set of borrowing registers discovered to date, some religious libraries did reflect the same openness to new kinds of literature. Of the catalogues, the Canal Street Relief Library in Paisley bears suggestive comparison. Founded around 1815, the Canal Street collection already numbered over a thousand volumes by 1817 when the only surviving catalogue was compiled.³⁶ Like the School Wynd Library, this Paisley library owned copies of Robertson's and Hume's histories, as well as Campbell *On Miracles* and Blair's *Lectures* – though Reid and Smith, seemingly great favourites of the School Wynd Congregationalists, were absent. Instead, the collection covered some of the more generally popular titles of the time – Gregory's *Father's Legacy*, Stewart's *Life of Robertson*, the second *Edinburgh Review*, the *Scots Magazine*, the *Lounger* and a collected edition of Ossian. The Paisley collection was also far stronger in continental literature, containing a copy of Buffon's *Natural History* (in Smellie's popular translation) and a set of Voltaire's *Works*.

More intriguing still is the comparison with the book collection of the Associate Synod Theological Hall, moved from Haddington to Selkirk in 1787 to allow George Lawson to continue as pastor there on his appointment as professor of Theology.³⁷ Catalogued in 1800, the library naturally enough reflected the reading tastes of the students' principal teacher, as well as the toleration for which he was renowned (see above, Chapter 2).³⁸

³⁵ *Catalogue of Books in the Evangelical Library, Inverkeithing. Established, January 20, 1802* (Dunfermline, 1822).

³⁶ *Catalogue of Books Belonging to the Paisley Canal-street Relief Library, instituted 1815* (Paisley, 1817). Cf P. Kaufman, 'Zion's Temple, Manchester: An Introduction to Libraries of Dissent', *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 62 (1968).

³⁷ *Dictionary of Scottish Church History & Theology* (Edinburgh, 1993); *Lawson*, especially Ch6.

³⁸ *Catalogue of the Library of the Selkirk Theological Hall* (1800). In addition, Lawson was apparently quite happy for students to raid his own collection of books, and we cannot rule out the possibility that

The polite historical works of Robertson and Hume, with Smollett's *Continuation*, were counterbalanced by MacQueen's *Letters* and Stevenson's implacably Presbyterian *History of the Church and State of Scotland*, while the library was also strong in Scottish conjectural historiography – including Ferguson's *Essay*, Kames' *Sketches* and *The Wealth of Nations*. Students at the Selkirk Theological Hall could also access the philosophical works of Reid, apparently so popular with their co-religionists in Dundee, as well as Beattie's *Essay on Truth*, Oswald's *Appeal*, Campbell's *Essays on Miracles*, Stewart's *Elements* and Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Moreover, and besides the evangelical fare offered by the Library's copy of Witherspoon's *Works*, these future secession ministers were also exposed to the published sermons of Moderate ministers John Farquhar, John Logan and Hugh Blair, never mind the philosophy of the Great Infidel himself, courtesy of Hume's *Essays and Treatises* – though students were protected from the deleterious effects of imaginative literature, with no Smollett, Burns or Ossian.³⁹

III

A small number of endowed libraries also flourished in provincial Scotland in the age of Enlightenment, closely related, in motivation at least, to libraries like the Dumfries Presbytery Library and others of the Kirkwood scheme. According to John Crawford, there were around 20 such foundations actively loaning books during our period, including collections at Kirkwall (founded by William Blaikie of Stronsay, but merged with the Orkney Subscription Library in 1815), Rothesay (based on the library of Bishop Archibald Graham, although of uncertain relationship with the Subscription Library founded there in the 1790s), Jedburgh (established by Thomas Rutherford around 1714), Lochmaben (gifted by James Richardson, a merchant of Reading, in 1726), and Logie

some made use of the Selkirk Subscription Library. One former student, Rev. Robert Simpson of Sanquhar, remembered that 'The Hall library was by no means extensive, though it contained a fair collection of good books', quoted in *Lawson*, 292.

³⁹ One book which was explicitly banned from the Library was Paine's *Rights of Man*, Lawson decreeing that 'he could not permit such books to have a place in their library, or to be circulated amongst them. Though attached to liberal principles, he was unwilling that they should engage as disputants or partisans in the political contests of the day', *Lawson*, 293.

(founded around 1750 by Walter Bowman).⁴⁰ Little is known about the bulk of these charitable bequests, except the presumption that their original book stocks must have contained a high proportion of religious books, as well as many in classical or foreign languages reflecting the interests of their former owners. However, documentary evidence does survive for three endowed libraries (at Haddington, Dunblane and Innerpeffray) which demonstrate that each facilitated access to texts associated with the Scottish Enlightenment, in spite of their early foundation and the limited scope of their original collections. More importantly still, each of these endowed institutions boasts surviving borrowing registers for much of our period, demonstrating the extent to which they played a role in the reception and diffusion of Enlightenment books in provincial Scotland.

The earliest foundation of the three was the library founded at Innerpeffray by David Drummond, 3rd Lord Madertie, in two wills dated 1680 and 1691, ‘for the benefit and encouragement of young students’.⁴¹ Hidden away in a remote and relatively inaccessible part of rural Perthshire, four miles from the nearest town of Crieff, the Innerpeffray Library has long held an honoured place in library history in Scotland, and continues to attract hundreds of visitors each year from the British Isles and North America. In assessing the ‘unique record of a people’s reading’ to be found preserved in the library room at Innerpeffray, Paul Kaufman argued that the survival of an almost unbroken sequence of borrowing records from 1747 until the cessation of lending in 1968 offers a ‘tragically rare’ opportunity to open a ‘window’ into the use of books in Scotland in the past – so representing ‘one of the all too scanty sources of re-creating the life of the Scottish people’.⁴²

Though isolated today, the Library actually occupied a propitious position in eighteenth-century Scotland. Lying near a major crossing point of the River Earn in use since the Roman occupation, Innerpeffray actually stood at a major junction in the Scottish cattle

⁴⁰ Alston; Crawford, ‘Origins’, 54-5; Aitken contains a description of the Blaikie mortification at Kirkwall, 3-6; for Walter Bowman (1699-1782), tutor, antiquary and celebrated traveler, see *ODNB*.

⁴¹ Quoted by P. Kaufman, ‘Unique Record of a People’s Reading’, *Libri*, 14 (1964-5), 227.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 228.

trade, thereby supporting a surprisingly substantial local population. This is demonstrated by the wide social distribution of the 287 individuals who borrowed from the library in our period, including at least 27 different occupations besides the ubiquitous ‘esq.’ or country gentleman. This included professionals and middling sorts who we have already seen formed the bedrock of associational reading in this period, Church of Scotland ministers, medical men, army officers, schoolmasters, farmers, estate factors, manufacturers and merchants – the kind of men who might otherwise have founded their own subscription library in Crieff before 1818, if they had not had Innerpeffray.⁴³ Also represented, though, are a wide range of trades and vocations not automatically associated with the consumption of books, including barbers, coopers, dyers (and a dyer’s apprentice), flaxdressers, gardeners, glovers, quarriers, servants, smiths, tailors, weavers and wrights – further indication that reading in Scotland, as elsewhere, was a recreation that reached far down the social scale in the age of Enlightenment.⁴⁴ Furthermore, Innerpeffray was yet another venue where women could become engaged in the world of books, with eleven women borrowing books from the library before 1800.⁴⁵

Though the original bequest dated to the seventeenth century, more recent releases associated with the Enlightenment were available thanks to the generosity of the founder’s grandson – Robert Hay Drummond (1711-1776), a confidante of the royal family and Archbishop of York from 1761, whose own extensive collection of books was gifted to the Library on his death.⁴⁶ Hay Drummond had kept abreast of the latest developments in historiography, science and philosophy (he was known to be a keen admirer of Ferguson’s *Essay*),⁴⁷ and the collection bequeathed to the Innerpeffray Library reflected his status both as a major figure in public life and as a senior member of one of Scotland’s major landholding families, the Hay Earls of Kinnoull. Not only did he own

⁴³ Alston.

⁴⁴ R. McKeen Wiles, ‘The Relish for Reading in Provincial England Two Centuries Ago’, in Paul J. Korshin (ed.), *The Widening Circle: Essays on the Circulation of Literature in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (Philadelphia PA, 1976)

⁴⁵ This summary of the social distribution of Innerpeffray readers is based on borrowers’ own notes, Kaufman’s ‘Unique Record’ and my own research in the usual sources.

⁴⁶ *ODNB*.

⁴⁷ The Archbishop’s first encounter with the *Essay* is recorded in *The Letters of David Hume*, ed. J. Y. T. Greig, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1932), II, 121; and *The Correspondence of Adam Ferguson*, ed. Vincenzo Merolle with an Introduction by Jane E. Fagg, 2 vols (London, 1995), I, 71-2.

copies of Robertson's historiography and Arnot's *History*, but he also owned rarer books like MacLaurin's *Account of Newton*, Francis Home's *Experiments on Bleaching*, Gerard's *Essay on Genius* and even Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature* – all of which were duly put at the disposal of Innerpeffray readers. He did not, though, own much contemporary fictional literature, accounting for the absence of Smollett, Mackenzie, and 'Ossian' from the Innerpeffray collections.

On the face of it, however, the Innerpeffray Library borrowing registers suggest that Enlightenment made little progress in this particular corner of provincial Scotland. 370 titles were borrowed between 1747 and 1800 (out of a total of nearly 4,000), and their distribution by category is usually cited for the prevalence of devotional material – and thus for the continuing interest at this 'working-class' library in traditional reading matter at the expense of the recent historiography and philosophy of the Enlightenment.⁴⁸ Significantly more religious titles were borrowed than those from any other category, with 171 compared to 85 books on history, law and politics, eighteen agricultural texts and just eight on mathematics and science.⁴⁹

Broken down in another way, however, a closer analysis of the 1,483 loans from this first period suggests that enlightened literature did not pass Innerpeffray readers by entirely – quite the contrary, in fact. With 46 loans, Robertson's *Charles V* was actually the most regularly borrowed title in this period by some margin, and other Enlightenment books fared similarly well. Robertson's *America* was borrowed on 18 occasions, Buffon's *Natural History* (again in Smellie's translation) was loaned 27 times, Beattie's *Essay on Truth*, Arnot's *History of Edinburgh* and the *Philosophical Transactions* were each borrowed thirteen times, Watson's *Philip II* was borrowed twelve times, and Adam Dickson's *Treatise of Agriculture*, eleven. As Anand Chitnis suggests,

⁴⁸ See for example, R. A. Houston, *Scottish Literacy and the Scottish Identity: Illiteracy and Society in Scotland and Northern England 1600-1800* (Cambridge, 1985), 176-8.

⁴⁹ Kaufman, 'Unique Record', 269-71. Compare with Jacob's summary of the borrowing registers of fifteen parish libraries in England, where titles like Wallis' *Infant Baptism*, Tillotson's *Sermons*, Plutarch's *Lives* and Kennet's *Antiquities* were most popular; 'Libraries for the Parish', 70-1.

Innerpeffray’s borrowing register shows the capacity of ordinary people in central, Lowland Scotland of the mid- to late-eighteenth century to support and countenance an intellectual movement in the university towns and cities. If William Robertson, regarded as one of the great European intellectuals of his day, was regularly read by artisans in Perthshire, the intellectual elite of Scotland were not operating in a sphere totally above that of their fellow countrymen.⁵⁰

The picture is still more revealing if we look at borrowing patterns over the next twenty years, summarised in Table 4.5. Buffon and the *Scots Magazine* retain their impressive profile, while Robertson’s *America* replaces *Charles V* as the most popular of his historiography – though both continue to feature on nearly every page of the borrowing record.

Title	No. Borrowers	No. Borrowings
Buffon, <i>Natural History</i>	39	56
Robertson, <i>History of America</i>	25	30
Hume, <i>Essays and Treatises</i>	21	35
Kames, <i>Sketches of the History of Man</i>	18	22
<i>Scots Magazine</i>	18	41
Beattie, <i>Essays</i>	17	21
Ferguson, J., <i>Astronomy</i>	14	17
Ferguson, J., <i>Mechanics</i>	14	16
Reid, <i>Inquiry into the Human Mind</i>	14	20
Robertson, <i>Charles V</i>	14	20
Abercrombie, <i>Martial Achievements</i>	11	15
MacLaurin, <i>Philosophical Discoveries of Newton</i>	11	16
Hume, <i>Treatise of Human Nature</i>	8	8
Watson, <i>Philip II</i>	7	7
Ferguson, <i>Essay on the History of Civil Society</i>	5	6

Table 4.5: Innerpeffray Library, Borrowings of Selected Titles, 1801-20

Much more dramatic, however, is the impression made by Hume’s *Essays and Treatises*, apparently borrowed by no less than 21 individuals including James Bain (cooper in Muthill), James Drummond (flesher in Comrie), James Morison, (tanner in Auchterarder) and Duncan Stalker (schoolmaster in Comrie). Moreover, borrowers of Hume’s *Essays* at Innerpeffray registered some very interesting associations: Thomas Taylor of Crieff, for

⁵⁰ A. C. Chitnis, *The Scottish Enlightenment: A Social History* (London, 1976), 19.

instance, took Hume's *Essays* out with a copy of Descartes, while James Paton complemented Hume with the Newtonian divine Samuel Clarke, as well as the first volume of Lord Monboddo's *Origin and Progress of Language*. In fact, Paton was also one of eight Innerpeffray readers who returned to borrow the *Essays* again, though none were as keen on Hume as Peter Nelson of Dalpatrick – who borrowed the *Essays* no less than seven times between 1801 and 1820, as well as the library's copy of Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature*. Indeed, the borrowing registers at Innerpeffray actually represent one of the very rare pieces of evidence we have that Hume's landmark philosophical treatise made any impact at all on a Scottish readership. The *Treatise* was borrowed by eight readers at Innerpeffray, including a surgeon and a schoolmaster, and with two borrowing different volumes in the same week (the surgeon John Alexander and farmer Robert Nelson) it is possible that these readers were discussing their experiences of Hume.

Though Hume leads the way amongst Scottish philosophers, it is evident from Table 4.5 that his Common Sense opponents also found some favour with Innerpeffray readers. Though Beattie's *Essay on Truth* was one of the most frequently borrowed titles before 1800, Reid had made no impression at all. Yet in this second period, and as at the School Wynd Congregational Library, we witness an explosion in the popularity of Reid's philosophy at the beginning of the nineteenth century. As well as ministers like the Edinburgh University-educated Patrick McIsaac (1774-1829) of Comrie, Reid's borrowers – like Hume's – included a smattering of readers from across the social scale (the solicitor Andrew Barlas, originally of Glasgow, Peter McLaren, a cart and plough wright from Comrie and James Young, merchant of Crieff). Moreover, Innerpeffray readers were reading across both sides of the philosophical divergence at the heart of the Scottish Enlightenment. Three took out Hume, Reid and Beattie, including Peter Nelson and the tanner Morison, and three more complemented Hume with either Reid or Beattie – none of whom were ministers in the Church of Scotland or gentlemen of particular note, giving the lie to the idea that Enlightenment was restricted to a privileged few in provincial Scotland.

Indeed, Innerpeffray also offers evidence to suggest that the popularity of science that helped define elite culture in Britain was shared by some provincial readers. The astonishing frequency with which Buffon, the foremost naturalist of his age, was borrowed over the course of fifty years at Innerpeffray is quite sufficient evidence to substantiate this impression. But another consistent performer was MacLaurin's *Account of Newton*, borrowed seven times before 1800 and sixteen more between 1801 and 1821 – suggesting that MacLaurin made far more impact at Innerpeffray than at Dumfries. Indeed, MacLaurin also carried appeal across the social spectrum, loaned to two publicans (James Gow and James Sharp of Crieff), to the distiller John Drummond and to Patrick MacFarlane, a grocer in Comrie. Coupled with the frequency with which another account of Newton was loaned, Ferguson's *Astronomy* (borrowed by fourteen individuals in the second period, including both Gow and Drummond), as well as the popularity of Newton's follower Clarke, the borrowing registers at Innerpeffray therefore suggest that Newtonianism – a core component of the Enlightenment across Europe, of course – was keenly followed in this part of provincial Scotland.

IV

Another provincial community whose access to the Scottish Enlightenment was facilitated by the generosity of a benevolent donor was Haddington, East Lothian. Rev. John Gray (1646-1717), preacher, scholar and linguist, gathered one of the finest collections of early printed books in Scotland which he bequeathed to the town of his birth when he died – perhaps inspired by the example of Gilbert Burnet, who had donated books to the presbytery library at nearby Saltoun in 1715.⁵¹ Though Crawford suggests that 'consultation rights were [initially] restricted to members of the clergy and borrowing rights to Haddington's two ministers',⁵² surviving records demonstrate that the Library was functioning according to Gray's original intentions by 1732, to serve 'the community ... of the town of Haddington' – apparently free of charge, as at Innerpeffray.

⁵¹ Aitken, 3, 7-8; V. S. Dunstan, 'Glimpses into a Town's Reading Habits in Enlightenment Scotland: Analysing the Borrowings of Gray Library, Haddington, 1732-1816', *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, 26 (2006): 42-59.

⁵² Crawford, 'Origins', 67.

Certainly, Haddington's incumbent ministers were amongst the most prolific borrowers, including Robert Scott (1731-1807) and William Sibbald (1760-1833), but so too were leaders of the lay community – the men, in fact, charged with the management of the library according to the terms of Gray's mortification. These included Provosts William Cunningham (a keen follower of Robertson's life and works) and William Dod (whose loans included Blair's *Lectures*), Bailies William Pringle (a repeat borrower of Hume, Henry, Robertson and Gibbon) and Alexander Galloway (who borrowed Ossian and Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*) and the town clerk David Hay Donaldson (apparently a keen student of Scottish history, borrowing Hailes' *Annals* as well as Buchanan and Pitscottie). But like Innerpefferay, the Gray Library registers also allow us to explore reading preferences further down the social scale, including the nurserymen John Affleck (who borrowed Robertson, Burns and Blair's *Sermons*) and Peter Dodds (apparently an avid fan of Gibbon), the butcher James Nisbet (who took out histories of Scotland by Buchanan and Robertson), the tailor William Dudgeon and the shoemaker John Anderson (who both borrowed Hume's *History*).⁵³

As this brief survey of borrowers from the Gray Library indicates, the collection developed sufficiently through the course of the eighteenth century to facilitate readers' encounters with the Scottish Enlightenment. The key to the development of the collection lay in the terms of Gray's original mortification. Although the original collection (around 1,200 volumes) was apparently so specialised that the city fathers had been rather embarrassed by the gift, Gray also left money to support charitable causes and provide for the upkeep of the library.⁵⁴ The trustees used the interest from this sum to expand the

⁵³ Kaufman regretted that borrowers did not enter their occupations as a matter of course when borrowing books from the Gray Library: 'What we lack in this record at Haddington is light on the social status of the borrowers. All we have are the designations after the names of three ministers, two merchants, an apothecary, one lone wright – and a dancing master'; Kaufman, 267. However, occupations can be gleaned for borrowers across the whole period covered by both registers from the Trustees' Minute Book, held at the NLS MS16479, which also details the use of money set aside from Gray's mortification to finance apprenticeships in the town; as well as from the usual biographical sources. See also Dunstan, 'Glimpses', 44.

⁵⁴ *Gazetteer for Scotland*, accessed online at www.geo.ed.ac.uk/scotgaz/people/famousfirst1144.html: 'Mr John Gray minister of the gospel at Aberlady, for the regard he had, for the town of Haddingtoun, the place of his nativity, did mortify, this library for the community & also did mortify, the sum of 3,000 merks Scots & appointed the annual rent thereof, to charitable uses agreeable to his will, under Ye management, of Ye Magistrates & Town Clerk thereof.'

collection intermittently from the 1740s, reflecting both their own reading priorities, and perhaps those of the patrons of the Gray Library. The collection was never that large – a catalogue compiled in 1828 recorded 1,335 titles, perhaps only 200 more than the original bequest – but the trustees were nevertheless able to accumulate many of the canonical works of the eighteenth century. The earliest surviving minutes confirm the acquisition of standard texts like the *Modern Universal History*, Rollin’s *Ancient History* and *Roman History*, Rapin’s *History of England*, Fielding’s *Works*, Callendar’s *Voyages*, Plutarch’s *Lives* and *Nature Delineated*, as well as older Scottish historians like Buchanan, Pitscottie, Abercrombie and Burnet. From 1774, however, the trustees’ proposals featured titles associated with the Scottish Enlightenment with increasing frequency. Robertson’s *Charles V* was ordered on 25th May 1774, with Maitland’s *History of Edinburgh* following on 15th March 1776, while Blair’s *Sermons* and Hailes’ *Annals of Scotland* were both part of the order drawn up on 6th April 1779.⁵⁵

According to the borrowing register, some of these works clearly made an immediate impact on the intellectual horizons of Haddington readers. Though the legibility of borrowers’ signatures is a particularly acute problem in this instance, Kaufman established that 2,837 loans were registered between 1732 and 1789. Popular titles included the works of Henry Fielding, travel literature by the likes of Anson, Callendar and Cook, the historiography of Rollin and Rapin and the *Universal History* – as is indicated by Table 4.6. Classics were represented by Gordon’s translation of Tacitus, but religious and devotional texts failed to register much interest even in the earlier years of regular loans.

<i>Universal History</i>	280	Wraxall, <i>Memoirs</i>	48
Rollin, <i>Ancient History</i>	241	Plutarch, <i>Lives</i>	45
Fielding, <i>Works</i>	121	Robertson, <i>History of Scotland</i>	42
Callender, <i>Collection of Voyages</i>	91	Anson, <i>Voyage Round the World</i>	42
Sully, <i>Memoirs</i>	87	<i>Nature Delineated</i>	40
Rollin, <i>Roman History</i>	82	Tacitus (tr. Gordon)	38
Robertson, <i>History of Charles V</i>	73	Boswell, <i>Account of Corsica</i>	37
Rapin, <i>History of England</i>	71	Rollin, <i>Study of Belles Lettres</i>	36
Raynall, <i>East and West Indies</i>	65	Walker, <i>Sermons</i>	31

⁵⁵ NLS MS16479, Minute Book of the Trustees of the Gray Library.

Ludlow, <i>Memoirs</i>	57	De Retz, <i>Memoirs</i>	29
Burnet, <i>History of the Reformation</i>	55	Lindsay, <i>History of Scotland</i>	28
Buchanan, <i>History of Scotland</i>	54	Mosheim, <i>Ecclesiastical History</i>	26
Lyttleton, <i>Works</i>	54		

Table 4.6: Gray Library Loans, 1732-96 (total loans in period, 2,837) ⁵⁶

Moreover, even in this early period it is immediately evident that Haddington readers were as enthusiastic about Robertson's historiography as readers in other parts of provincial Scotland. His *History of Scotland* was borrowed 42 times before 1789, while *Charles V* was one of the most frequently borrowed texts over the whole period – despite the fact that it was not even acquired until 1774. To put this in context, 1,180 loans date to the period between 1774 and 1789, so the 73 loans registered by Robertson's *Charles V* actually represented a much greater share of the borrowings even than that reflected in Table 4.6. The first volume of Blair's *Sermons*, on the other hand, failed to make much impression on Haddington readers in this first period – registering just six loans between 1779 and 1789.

Interest in the Scottish Enlightenment at the Gray Library really exploded in the period covered by the second volume of borrowings – 1790-1796 and 1804-1816.⁵⁷ Many works associated with the Scottish Enlightenment were only acquired by the Gray Library for the first time in this second period, already pointing to an increasing demand for them – including Robertson's *History of America*, Smith's *Wealth of Nations* and Hume's *History* (all ordered on 15th October 1804), Blair's *Lectures*, Campbell's *Essays on Miracles* and Stewart's *Life of Robertson* (13th October 1806) and Ferguson's *History of Rome* (17th October 1808).⁵⁸

⁵⁶ NLS MS 16480, Book for the Receipts of Books lent out of Mr John Gray's Library [Haddington], 1732-1789. This analysis of the earlier period is based on Kaufman, 265-8 and my own research, though it is important to note Kaufman only took analysis up to 1789. For a more recent summary of general trends, see Dunstan, 'Glimpses'.

⁵⁷ There is a gap in the borrowing register between 1796 and 1804. This may simply result from inefficient book keeping on the part of the Trustees, though it may also be possible that the books were taken out of circulation for a period while the Trustees secured new premises. Dunstan, 'Glimpses', provides an analysis of the general trends by decade, confirming my conclusion that library use was revitalised in this second period.

⁵⁸ Gray Minutes.

Title	No. Borrowers	No. Borrowings
Burns, <i>Poetic Works</i>	54	93
Robertson, <i>Charles V</i>	49	93
Robertson, <i>History of Scotland</i>	37	46
Hume, <i>History</i>	36	101
Robertson, <i>History of America</i>	34	58
Fielding, <i>Works</i>	33	64
Buchanan, <i>History of Scotland</i>	32	36
Henry, <i>History of Great Britain</i>	31	96
Scott, <i>Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border</i>	29	48
Hailes, <i>Annals of Scotland</i>	23	28
Blair, <i>Lectures</i>	20	24
Smollett, <i>History of England</i>	19	38
Burnet, <i>History of his Own Times</i>	19	26
Macpherson, <i>Ossian's Works</i>	18	23
Blair, <i>Sermons</i>	17	25

Table 4.7: Gray Library Loans, 1790-1816

Though acquired late in our period, then, when they were available to readers they made an immediate and dramatic impression on their borrowing habits – as demonstrated by Table 4.7.⁵⁹ Hume's *History* and Henry's *History* joined Robertson's historiography amongst the most popular titles in this second period as another proof of the widespread appeal of the polite historiography of the Scottish Enlightenment. Hume's borrowers included three Trustees (including Bailie Alexander Matthew, deputy clerk of the sheriff court, who borrowed the *History* on seven occasions and Smollett's *Continuation* four times) and a minister in the United Secession Church (William Hogg, whose loans included Hume three times and Smollett's *Continuation* twice), but also an accountant, a surveyor, a shoemaker and a tailor. Indeed, unlike borrowers at the Wigtown Subscription Library and the School Wynd Congregational Library, borrowers at the Gray Library seem to have been remarkably persistent readers of both Hume and his continuators. Of nineteen borrowers of 'Smollett's History', thirteen had already withdrawn various volumes of Hume's *History*, including Baillie William Pringle, who borrowed the original on eight occasions and Smollett's *Continuation* four times, William

⁵⁹ Based on NLS MS16481, Account of Books borrowed from the public Library of the Town of Haddington, from 1st April 1792.

Martin (seven and five times), the Bank of Scotland accountant James Gibson (four and three times), the tallow chandler James Fairbairn (three times each) and the surveyor of taxes William Erskine, who borrowed the original once and the *Continuation* twice.

Moreover, the library registers often feature dense clusters of loans of Hume's *History* around the same time – suggesting (as with Hume's *Treatise* at Innerpefferay) that there was an element of sociability in these borrowings, with readers perhaps exchanging comments as they returned one volume to withdraw the next. Hume's *History* was borrowed with some intensity in April and May 1809, magistrates Matthew and Pringle exchanging borrowings with Robert Darling and John Laidlaw Esq., before Alexander Watson and George Irvine started reading Hume in July and August that year. Four more readers were borrowing Hume's *History* simultaneously in February 1810, while five borrowed it in March 1811.

Robertson also seems to have attracted dedicated communities of readers, with concentrated loans of *Charles V* in August 1793 and of the *History of America* around March and October 1808. Overall, the borrowing profile of Robertson's works at the Gray Library demonstrates again that polite historiography could appeal to readers across the social scale – in contrast to the near monopoly of Robertson by his ministerial colleagues at Dumfries. Amongst Haddington's ruling elite, those who borrowed Robertson included at least nine magistrates (all Trustees of the Gray Library, of course), including Bailie James Roughead (who loaned the *History of Scotland* three times), Bailie Alexander Nisbet Jnr. (*Charles V* twice) and Provost William Cunningham (all three major works), as well as two merchant councillors (including William Shiells, a brewer who borrowed *Charles V* twice and *History of America* once, as well as Henry's *History* five times) and three writers (among whom, Patrick Dudgeon WS borrowed *Charles V* four times and the *History of America* twice).⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Patrick Dudgeon (1798-1846), *Register of the Society of Writers to Her Majesty's Signet* ed. Ronald K. Will (Edinburgh, 1983).

But Robertson's historiography was also quite clearly familiar to readers beyond the council chambers. The baker William Hunter, for instance, borrowed *Charles V* four times and the *History of Scotland* twice, while tanner Andrew Pringle also borrowed *Charles V* four times, as well as the *History of America* once. Less privileged borrowers of Robertson also included a wright, a watchmaker, a vintner, a china dealer, a carrier, a flesher, a grocer, at least one ironmonger, two tailors and five schoolmasters (including the Rector of the Haddington Academy William Graham, as well as James Brown, appointed Librarian in 1792). Meanwhile, another schoolmaster James Johnston (also appointed Librarian, this time in 1806), was among four borrowers who borrowed each of Robertson's three major histories – though only John Laidlaw Esq. borrowed the *Historical Disquisition on India* as well. Such was the intense interest in Robertson's *America*, finally, that the Trustees ordered a replacement copy in 1809.⁶¹

Away from historiography, Blair appears to have made a dramatic recovery amongst Haddington's readers after 1789. Blair's *Lectures* was borrowed by twenty different readers (who notably included two schoolmasters), confirming once again the widespread provincial interest in Scottish work on taste – though with limited resources, the Trustees never attempted to acquire works on a similar topic by Kames, Campbell or Alison. Blair's *Sermons* had a slight head start, as we have seen, but only really started to make an impact in this second period – justifying the order placed for 'Blair's Sermons, Vols 2, 3, 4, and 5' in October 1804. Once again, the ministers of Haddington showed very little interest in Blair (alone amongst his colleagues, Sibbald, who had been awarded a D.D. from the University of Edinburgh in 1800 and had contributed an account of Johnstone to the *Statistical Account*,⁶² borrowed the *Sermons* twice), with borrowers instead including laymen like the builder John Swinton, the baker William Hunter and the weaver George Baillie – though only five, including Hunter, borrowed more than one volume of the *Sermons*.

⁶¹ Gray Minutes, 22 February 1809.

⁶² *Fasti*.

The second borrowing register from the Gray Library also provides compelling evidence for the enthusiastic reception of imaginative literature. Sir Walter Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* made an immediate impression, appearing on nearly every page of the register from its acquisition in October 1808 and loaned to 29 individuals, who included six women and a dancing master, as well as three ministers, a cutler, a draper and a grocer. Similarly, Macpherson's Ossianic translations were clearly a welcome addition after their donation in 1810,⁶³ with eighteen borrowers including five women, two ironmongers, two ministers and a butcher. But clearly the most popular in this regard once again was Burns, whose *Poems* were actually borrowed by more individuals than any other title. Although there were only three women among them, it is likely that many of the men who borrowed Burns – including a bookseller, a china dealer and a watchmaker – choose him for communal family use, or on the explicit request of a female member of the household. It is likely that the schoolmaster Richard Hay, who had been appointed librarian in 1798, borrowed Burns' poetry no less than seven times because he was sating the appetite of other members of his household.⁶⁴ For at least one reader, the dancing master John Richardson, Burns evidently proved far too engrossing – he was chastised by the trustees for losing a volume of Burns in October 1808 and banned from borrowing books for a year.⁶⁵

V

Though the Innerpeffer Library and the Gray Library allowed provincial readers to encounter some of the core texts of the Scottish Enlightenment, they were both partially restricted by the terms of their foundation. An endowed library offering far more extensive holdings, and thus enabling us to explore some of the finer detail of provincial reading preferences, was that founded at Dunblane by Robert Leighton (1611-1684), Bishop of Dunblane (1661-1670) and Archbishop of Glasgow (1670-1674). Dismissed by Aitken as 'scarcely' a public library at all,⁶⁶ the Leightonian Library actually seems to

⁶³ Gray Minutes, 12 March 1810.

⁶⁴ Currie's edition of Burns, ordered by the Trustees on 15th October 1804, only came in four volumes.

⁶⁵ Account of Books, flv; minute noted 17 October 1808.

⁶⁶ Aitken, 3.

have been a major feature of the cultural landscape – warranting pride of place in the *Statistical Account* of the parish composed by two of its regular clerical patrons.⁶⁷ From 31st October 1734, when lending services commenced on a subscription basis, it served a wide hinterland and loaned books with a far greater frequency than the Innerpeffray Library or Gray Library, while the Trustees regularly added new works and attracted new benefactors.⁶⁸ A measure of its prestige is that Hay Drummond, Innerpeffray’s benefactor, ‘matriculated’ at the Leightonian Library on 30th August 1740: the slightly younger foundation at Dunblane may therefore have provided important inspiration for the growth of Innerpeffray in the second half of the eighteenth century.⁶⁹

The Leightonian Library was exceptional amongst documented endowed libraries in the rate at which it acquired the canonical works of the Scottish Enlightenment.⁷⁰ *The Wealth of Nations*, Robertson’s *America*, Campbell’s *Philosophy of Rhetoric* and Stewart’s *Elements* were all acquired by the Trustees in the year of their publication. The Library also held early editions of a number of other contemporary best sellers, including the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and *Statistical Account*, Blair’s *Sermons*, Gerard’s *Essay on Genius* and Ferguson’s *Essay*, as well as important early works such as Archibald Campbell’s *Essay on the Original of Moral Virtue* (acquired 1740), Innes’ *Critical Essay* and, like Dumfries and Innerpeffray, Hutcheson’s *System*. Many books were presented by their authors: James Hamilton donated a copy of his *Purgative Medicines*, Samuel Charters sent trustees his collected *Sermons* (though the library already possessed copies of the original 1786 edition and an 1804 reprint), while Henry Mackenzie presented them with his collected works in 1807.

The prestige of the Leightonian Library was once more reflected in the social distribution of its borrowers. We know of at least 320 individuals who frequented the Library

⁶⁷ OSA, XII, 307-8.

⁶⁸ Gordon Willis, ‘The Leighton Library, Dunblane: Its History and Contents’, *The Bibliothek*, 10 (1981), 139-57.

⁶⁹ University of Stirling Archives, MS25, Leighton Library Matriculation Book, 31st October 1734-1814.

⁷⁰ *A Catalogue of the Leightonian Library, Dunblane* (Edinburgh, 1793); University of Stirling Archives, MS 24, *Catalogue of the Leightonian Library, Dunblane*, compiled by Cameron Dinwoodie, 1940; Gordon Willis, *The Leightonian Library, Dunblane: Catalogue of Manuscripts* (Stirling, 1981).

between 1734 and around 1826 – on payment of the requisite security.⁷¹ Secular borrowers included Francis Stuart, the 9th Earl of Moray (1737-1810), the ex-Jacobite Trustee Sir Hugh Paterson of Bannockburn (1686-1777)⁷² and the laird of Aberuchill Castle, near Comrie, Sir James Campbell (a prolific reader of the historiography of Hume and Robertson), as well as representatives of the major landed families of Perthshire and Stirlingshire – such as William Graham of Airth (1730-90), the Stirling lairds of Kippendavie and Kippenross and the Ramsays of Ochertyre.⁷³ The Library also had the support of the professional classes of Dunblane and Stirling, with thirteen medical men and at least twelve writers, as well as an architect, a couple of land surveyors and four schoolmasters – not to mention the merchants, manufacturers and farmers who supported libraries across Scotland.

Consequent on the ecclesiastical origins of the library (Bishop Leighton had originally bequeathed his books to the Cathedral of Dunblane), the preponderance of religious readers at the Leightonian Library bears comparison with the Dumfries Presbytery Library. With nearly fifty clergymen, 27 students of divinity and twelve ‘preachers of the Gospel’, the Leightonian Library was clearly run to a large extent for the succour of the religious community – certainly ministers like Patrick Murray (d.1837) of Kilmadock, William Sheriff (d.1832) of St Ninian’s and William Macgregor Stirling (1771-1833) of Port of Menteith were amongst the most prolific borrowers from the library. Even for clergymen who were not such avid readers, the Leightonian Library served the manifold professional commitments of a provincial minister in the Church of Scotland: some consulted the library’s strong religious holdings, such as Burnet’s *39 Articles*, while others sought out its medical texts – including Murray of Kilmadock, who was one of only three borrowers of Hamilton’s *Purgative Medicines*.

⁷¹ Willis argues that the security demanded was originally £3 in 1734, though this would seem rather too high in light of subscription library fees – it is unclear whether the fee represented a permanent subscription or a temporary deposit. The rate for temporary readers was apparently 2s.6d., Willis, ‘Leighton Library’.

⁷² A sympathetic pen-portrait of this ‘kind hearted ... if not worldly wise’ Jacobite ‘cavalier’ appears in *Ochertyre*, 185.

⁷³ My analysis of borrowings from the Leightonian Library is based on NLS MS26, Notes of borrowings from the Leightonian Library, 1725-8, 1746-8 and 1792-3; MS27, Register of borrowings from Leighton Library, May 1780-1833, and 1840; MS29, Notes of borrowings from the library 1812-28; and MS30, Register of borrowings from the library by short term visitors, August 1815-July 1833. Biographical details and insights into the characters of many of these landed members can be found in *Ochertyre*, xxii-xxvi.

Also noticeable is the ecumenical flavour of the matriculation records, entirely in keeping with both the reconciliatory persona of Leighton himself and the moderation of Enlightenment culture.⁷⁴ Prominent Episcopalian borrowers included Hay Drummond and Bishop George Gleig of Stirling, as well as Hugh James Cheyne and Alexander Cruickshank, Episcopal incumbents at Stirling and Alloa respectively.⁷⁵ On the other hand, Michael Gilfillan, Dunblane's first secession minister and a leading light in Secession Church disturbances of the 1780s and 90s,⁷⁶ borrowed a huge range of titles – including the historiography of Hume and Robertson, the Common Sense philosophy of Beattie and Reid, Kames' *Elements*, Hutcheson's *System*, Ferguson's *Essay* and *The Wealth of Nations*, as well as continental authors like Voltaire and Montesquieu.

The library's rich collections also attracted specialist scholars from further afield. Antiquaries like Walter McFarlane of McFarlane and John Callander of Craigforth came in search of the rarities featured in Leighton's original bequest, while other published authors to consult the collections included William Cairns, Professor of Logic, Rhetoric and Belles Lettres at the Belfast Institute, a former Dunblane resident and a minor contributor to Scottish Common Sense philosophy.⁷⁷ Daniel MacQueen, minister of Stirling West Kirk between 1740 and 1758, also matriculated as a borrower at the Leightonian Library, though his critique of Hume's *History* was probably not facilitated by the Leightonian copy – he certainly did not admit to borrowing it.

⁷⁴ ODNB; D. Allan, 'Reconciliation and Retirement in the Restoration Scottish Church: the Neo-Stoicism of Robert Leighton', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 50 (1999), 251-278. The ecumenical atmosphere at the Leightonian Library may have influenced the attitudes of lay members. John Ramsay of Ochtertyre, for instance, read sermons by Episcopalian and Presbyterian ministers alike, and may have been inspired by rubbing shoulders with men like Bishop Gleig and the Presbyterian minister of Callander, John Robertson, at the library; *Ochtertyre*, xix.

⁷⁵ David M. Bertie, *Scottish Episcopal Clergy 1689-2000* (Edinburgh, 2000).

⁷⁶ Robert Small, *History of the Congregations of the United Presbyterian Church From 1733 to 1900*, 2 volumes (Edinburgh, 1904).

⁷⁷ ODNB. In this regard, the Leightonian Library remained similar to the English cathedral libraries, which were often visited explicitly for their obscure scholarly, medical or scientific holdings – Samuel Johnson, for instance, borrowed Floyer's *Treatise on Asthma* from one such collection; Williams, 'Ecclesiastical Libraries'.

Most intriguingly, the library was also frequented by a youthful James Smith (1789-1850).⁷⁸ Appointed manager of the vast cotton mill at Deanston at the age of eighteen, Smith's philanthropic restructuring of the mill included a works library for the betterment of the material and moral condition of the workers – perhaps inspired as much by his experience of the Leightonian Library as by examples of other philanthropic industrialists who set up works libraries. Smith's use of the Leightonian Library was also highlighted by his borrowing of the *Statistical Account* and county agricultural reports like James Robertson's *Account of Perthshire* at a time when he was developing solutions to the perennial problems of draining and ploughing in Scottish agriculture – particular problems, indeed, that were highlighted by countless contributors to the *Statistical Account*.⁷⁹ In coming to terms with these problems, moreover, it may have helped Smith – still just 21 when he borrowed the *Statistical Account* from Dunblane – that men like Robertson (minister of Callander and author of the *Account of Perthshire*) were fellow matriculands at the Leightonian Library, raising the prospect once again of sociable reading at provincial Scottish libraries.⁸⁰

One final aspect of the distribution of Leightonian Library borrowers that bears notice is the amount of temporary readers who are recorded in the matriculation book pointing to the increased tourism that was beginning to infiltrate provincial Scotland towards the end of the eighteenth century – some taking the waters at Port of Menteith or visiting the mineral springs recently discovered on the Cromlix estate, others stopping off on their way north to the savage beauty of the Trossachs.⁸¹ Not only did the library serve a wide hinterland of local readers therefore, encompassing Stirling, Tillicoultry, Alloa, and Dollar to the south and east, Comrie to the north and Aberfoyle and Callander to the west, it also registered readers from much further afield – from Glasgow, Dumbarton and

⁷⁸ ODNB.

⁷⁹ Conversely, Smith's influence in agricultural and industrial improvement ('Deanstonization') is evident throughout the *New Statistical Account*; ODNB.

⁸⁰ Robertson's account of Callander represents one of the most impressive reports in the *Statistical Account*, thoroughly immersed in the principles of Smith; OSA, XI, 574-627.

⁸¹ See Willis, 'Leighton Library', 143. Robertson played his own part in stimulating tourism in Scotland, the description of its 'Romantic Prospects' in his account of Callandar parish in the *Statistical Account* described as 'an early brochure on the Beauties of the Trossachs' by his modern editor, xii, xxxvi

Renfrewshire; from Edinburgh, Leith and East Lothian; and even from Belfast and London.

To serve these different constituencies successfully, the Leightonian Library was clearly a most flexible collection that meant different things to different people – so an analysis of borrowings, even of the small sample of titles that interests us here, is not straightforward (see Table 4.8). Of the polite genres that we have already seen dominate both aggregate analyses of catalogue holdings and individual borrowing registers, history retains its position as the most popular with Scottish readers: the ubiquity of Hume’s *History* and Robertson’s historiography is once again confirmed, but so too is the popularity of authors like Gillies, Dalrymple, Henry and Watson who are now all but forgotten. Impressive too is the frequency with which Scottish writing on taste was borrowed from the Leightonian Library – with readers looking to these books and to periodicals like the *Critical Review*, the *Monthly Review* and the *Gentleman’s Magazine* for advice on what to read and how to read (see below, Chapter 5). This is particularly true of Blair’s *Lectures*, one of the most frequently borrowed titles in the whole collection – though Kames’ *Elements of Criticism*, Campbell’s *Philosophy of Rhetoric* and Alison’s *Essays on Taste* were also borrowed with some frequency. Imaginative literature, of course, was another genre which readers at Dunblane embraced with enthusiasm, particularly the poetic works of Burns and Ossian, though the poor performance of some otherwise popular Scottish literary texts is noticeable – especially the works of Henry Mackenzie (never borrowed from the library in our period, in spite of the author’s generosity) and James Thomson. Finally, the reception of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* suggests that the cultural and intellectual programme developed in Edinburgh was attractive in this particular hub of provincial Scotland, with the 32 individuals borrowing the *Encyclopaedia* including ministers, writers, surgeons and landed gentlemen – a veritable directory of the most influential stakeholders of provincial culture.

Title	No. Borrowers	No. Borrowings
Sinclair, <i>Statistical Account</i>	40	55
Hume, <i>History</i>	37	47

<i>Encyclopaedia Britannica</i>	32	48
Smith, <i>Wealth of Nations</i>	26	28
Blair, <i>Lectures</i>	25	31
McPherson, <i>Ossian's Works</i>	24	29
Smellie, <i>Philosophy of Natural History</i>	23	29
Kames, <i>Sketches</i>	22	27
Robertson, <i>History of Scotland</i>	22	37
Gillies, <i>History of Ancient Greece</i>	21	24
Henry, <i>History of Great Britain</i>	21	23
Boswell, <i>Life of Johnson</i>	21	22
Reid, <i>Intellectual Powers</i>	20	26
Robertson, <i>Charles V</i>	20	30
Robertson, <i>History of America</i>	20	23
Stewart, <i>Elements</i>	17	17
Ferguson, <i>History of the Roman Republic</i>	17	20
Millar, <i>Origin of Ranks</i>	16	17
Reid, <i>Active Powers</i>	16	18
Arnot, <i>History of Edinburgh</i>	16	18
Smollett, <i>Works</i>	15	17
Reid, <i>Inquiry</i>	15	18
Nimmo, <i>Stirlingshire</i>	15	17
Burns, <i>Poems</i>	14	17
Dalrymple, <i>Memoirs</i>	14	19
<i>Transactions of the Royal Society</i>	14	17
Kames, <i>Elements of Criticism</i>	14	16
Alison, <i>Essays On Taste</i>	14	14
<i>Edinburgh Review</i>	13	15
Beattie, <i>Evidences</i>	13	18
Watson, <i>Philip II</i>	13	16
Hailes, <i>Annals of Scotland</i>	13	13
Campbell, <i>Philosophy of Rhetoric</i>	13	17
Ferguson, <i>Essay</i>	12	12
Scott, <i>Lady of the Lake</i>	12	13
Blair, <i>Sermons</i>	12	16
Campbell, <i>Essay on Miracles</i>	12	15
Charters, <i>Sermons</i>	12	13
Hutcheson, <i>System</i>	11	12
Smith, <i>Moral Sentiments</i>	11	11
Robertson, <i>India</i>	11	11

Table 4.8: Leightonian Library, Borrowings of Selected Titles

Away from the canon of most widely distributed works, the borrowing records at Dunblane shed further light on the reception of some less well-circulated works in

provincial Scotland. With its borrowers including ministers, gentry, medical men, preachers and students, there appears to have been interest across the social scale in Nimmo's *Stirlingshire*, for instance, showing the broad local appeal of this typical piece of regional historiography.⁸² Interest in local history and antiquities was also reflected in the frequent loaning of Hailes' *Annals of Scotland*, though Lord Kames' less accessible *Essays on British Antiquities* made little impact. Though there was some early interest in Innes' *Critical Essay*, borrowers at Leighton were keener on polite historiography than less fashionable works by Gilbert Burnet, Patrick Abercrombie and especially George Buchanan (borrowed once, by John Stirling, laird of Kippenross). Similarly, though Principal Campbell's *Lectures on Ecclesiastical History* was borrowed by seven matriculands of the Leightonian Library (including, naturally enough, four ministers and two students in divinity), there was little appetite for historians on either side of the sectarian divide – Crookshanks, McCrie, Calderwood, Spotswood and Keith all shunned by readers familiar with the ecumenical heritage of the Leightonian Library.

In fact, of far more appeal was the conjectural historiography that had helped define Enlightenment in Scotland, including *The Wealth of Nations*, Ferguson's *Essay*, Kames' *Sketches* and even the more challenging works of John Millar. Indeed, the borrowing registers at Dunblane provide one of the most telling indicators that these keynote works of the Scottish Enlightenment were read extensively in provincial Scotland, though the greater concentration of university-educated readers at Dunblane probably accounts for the greater popularity there of such challenging works.⁸³ Millar's *Distinction of Ranks*, for instance, was borrowed by three clergymen (Robert Clason of Logie and Robertson of Callendar, as well as the Burgher minister Michael Gilfillan, who also borrowed Miller's *Historical View*) and at least three local landowners of note (the lairds of Kippendavie, Newton and Aberuchill), but also by a banker, a surveyor, a writer and a surgeon. Meanwhile, Robert Stirling, minister of Dunblane, was one of two individuals to borrow both volumes of *The Wealth of Nations*, while other borrowers included two merchants (Finlayson of Dunblane and John Wright of Stirling) and the farmers Banks of Craighead

⁸² Nimmo was a former member of Dunblane Presbytery, *Fasti*.

⁸³ As many as 25% of Leightonian borrowers may have attended one of the Scottish universities, compared with less than 10% at the Selkirk Subscription Library.

and Smith of Watston, for each of whom Smith would have provided a vital insight into contemporary economic policy in the United Kingdom – quite apart from his more famous account of the wider processes of political economy through history.⁸⁴

A similar picture emerges for the philosophical works held by the Leightonian Library. Reid's *Essays* again performed well at Dunblane (proving especially popular once again with the evangelical reader Gilfillan – who borrowed the *Active Powers* twice and the *Intellectual Powers* four times), while the appeal of his Common Sense philosophy especially in the early years of the nineteenth century was confirmed by the loan of the *Inquiry* to fifteen borrowers – including five ministers, three students of divinity, a preacher and a surgeon, all of whom were university-educated readers. Indeed, at least four matriculands borrowed all three of Reid's principal philosophical works, namely the ministers Stirling of Dunblane and James Robertson of Gargunnoch, and the laymen 'Stewart, surgeon in Dunblane' and Banks of Craighead. Reverends Robertson and Stirling were also among seventeen individuals who borrowed Stewart's *Elements*, another core text of the Common Sense school.

Evaluating the reception of Beattie's philosophy at the Leightonian Library is slightly more complex. Only eight individuals appear to have borrowed his *Essay on Truth* (usually 'Beattie's Essay', but sometimes simply 'On Truth') including two lairds, two ministers and three students of divinity, but six more borrowed the *Essays on Poetry and Music* ('Beattie on poetry and music', occasionally 'Beattie Essays') – which, of course, was published as part of the second edition of Beattie's *Essay on Truth*. Whether the total number of borrowers for Beattie's *Essay on Truth* was therefore more like an aggregate of the two (perhaps fifteen), thus putting it on a par with Reid's *Inquiry*, it is impossible to tell from the available evidence – though only Campbell of Aberuchill registered borrowings of both 'Beattie's Essay' and 'Beattie on poetry and music', suggesting that the two were not mutually exclusive.

⁸⁴ See D. Allan, 'A Reader Writes: Negotiating *The Wealth of Nations* in an Eighteenth-Century English Commonplace Book', *Philological Quarterly* (2004), 207-33.

Of Scottish philosophy more broadly, the frequency with which Smith's *Moral Sentiments* and Hutcheson's *System of Moral Philosophy* were taken out reflects their significance in the wider Scottish Enlightenment programme. Seven ministers dominated the borrowings of Hutcheson's *System*, though it was also loaned to John Kinross – a baker who later took out Smith's *Moral Sentiments*. Smith, on the other hand, was a great deal more likely to be borrowed by laymen, eleven individuals who withdrew the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* from the library including just three ministers – Sheriff of St Ninians, Finlay of Norriestown and Alexander Stirling of Tillicoultry. However, there is absolutely no sign in the borrowing registers of the defining philosopher of the Scottish Enlightenment, David Hume. In fact, the Library did not even own a copy of the *Essays and Treatises* – with the Innerpefferay comparison particularly instructive here. Whereas the Leightonian Trustees at Dunblane chose not to acquire Hume's philosophy (in spite of huge appetite for his *History* there), the *Treatise* and *Essays* were read extensively at libraries where they were available – even by the markedly less affluent clientele of the Innerpefferay Library.

The reception of religious works associated with the Scottish Enlightenment at the Leightonian Library makes further interesting reading. Blair's *Sermons* attracted a diverse readership which included a student, two writers, an army captain and a woman, but no ministers (thanks to its generalist appeal to lay readers), while Charters' *Sermons* proved far more amenable to the clergymen of the area – many of whom had served on the Presbytery of Dunblane with him.⁸⁵ However, James Fordyce's immensely popular *Sermons to Young Women* made little impact, despite the fact that he too had once served the local community,⁸⁶ and nor did George Hill's *Theological Institutes*. Again, none of the library's fully-fledged clerical patrons borrowed Hill's systematisation of Moderate theology – which, together with their collective lack of interest in Blair's *Sermons*, represents resounding indifference to the intellectual priorities of the Moderate party on the part of the Presbyteries of Stirling and Dunblane.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Charters was minister of Kincardine in Menteith between 1769 and 1772, *Fasti*.

⁸⁶ Fordyce served briefly as minister of Alloa and Tullibody, *Fasti*.

⁸⁷ On the narrow support base of the Moderate party, compare *CU* and MacIntosh, *Church and Theology*. For Ramsay's belligerent view of the sentimental style of the Moderates, see *Ochertyre*, 34, 74, 122-3.

Instead, of far more interest to Leightonian readers were works that attacked Hume's critique of religious belief head-on in another measure of the conservative tastes of this most prestigious endowed library. Campbell's *Essay on Miracles* was borrowed three times by Rev. Murray of Kilmadock alone, and was also withdrawn by the Earl of Moray and Campbell of Aberuchill. Meanwhile, Aberuchill borrowed Beattie's *Evidences of the Christian Religion* three times – along with Rev. Robertson of Callander (four times), the writer Wingate (twice) and the ministers of Gargunnoch, Kilmadock and Dunblane. Returning once more to the comparison with Innerpeffray, it would appear that the less socially exclusive institution – quite clearly Innerpeffray – proved the more receptive to the subversive undercurrent of the Scottish Enlightenment represented by David Hume.

Finally, it is evident that the Leightonian Library fostered members' scientific interests, despite the fact that Buchan's *Domestic Medicine* and Hamilton's *Purgative Medicines* had only strictly vocational appeal – with loans of these medical texts limited to parish clergy and one physician. The frequency with which the various volumes of the *Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh* were loaned provides a hint, offering as it did a digest of cutting-edge scientific research – including a paper by one of their own, Christopher Tait on 'the Peat-Mosses of Kincardine and Flanders in Perthshire'.⁸⁸ But the real clinching factor in this regard is the popularity of the *Statistical Account* – the most frequently borrowed text in the entire collection. As Deanston must have realised, Sinclair's conviction that contributors should comment on the agriculture and natural history of their parishes meant that the *Statistical Account* actually represented a statement of how far Scotland still had to go in terms of agricultural improvement – as well as giving accounts of the most successful experiments that had been conducted towards improvement in various parts of the country. For budding improvers, with their minds attuned to the pragmatic programme at the heart of intellectual culture in late-eighteenth-century Britain, the *Statistical Account* thus told them what needed to be done to prepare the land around Dunblane for the modern age.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ *Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh*, iii (1794), 266-79.

⁸⁹ *OSA*, XII, xvii-xxviii.

VI

Borrowing records at these five libraries suggest that endowed and religious libraries enabled many readers to encounter the Enlightenment. Hume and Robertson were consistently amongst the most frequently borrowed authors at each of them, and there was even an enthusiastic following for Scottish scientists and philosophers – especially so in the case of Thomas Reid and other philosophers of the Common Sense School, whose works enjoyed increasing popularity as our period came to an end. They also have implications more generally for our impression of reading habits in provincial Scotland. Reading was quite clearly something that transcended the social scale in Georgian Scotland, as has long been suspected.⁹⁰ Moreover, butchers, tanners and nurserymen could in the right conditions be as ready recipients of the books written by Hume, Robertson, Smith, Reid *et al* as the writers, ministers, medical men and lairds who are more usually associated with elite culture – leading to a strong suspicion that the consumption of Enlightenment spread far beyond the landowning and professional elites who dominated the production of culture in Scotland.

Reading was also a sociable experience: time and again we glimpse clusters of borrowings of the same title, with the implication that these texts were being consumed socially – readers talked about the relative merits of books, recommending them to others or helping friends, family and associates overcome the intellectual challenges posed by certain authors. No doubt Smith of Deanston, Robertson of Callendar and the other farmers and contributors to the *Statistical Account* who frequented the Leightonian Library constituted a community of readers discussing the origins and progress of agriculture and industry in the same way that Ridpath and his cronies discussed Hume at the Kelso Subscription Library, working through Smith, Millar, Ferguson *et al* together

⁹⁰ For the literacy debate in Scotland, compare Houston, *Scottish Literacy* and D. J. Witherington, 'Schooling, Literacy and Education', in *PS*.

towards a shared goal in the improvement of the local economy.⁹¹ Readers at Dunblane and Dumfries might eventually have been inspired to indulge their passion for reading and learning still further – by founding subscription libraries or book clubs, where they could take acquisitions policy into their own hands and institutionalise discussions of books and the wider significance of reading.

Ultimately, however, borrowing records can only ever give us an impression of reading preferences in the past. The familiar notion that meaning is inscribed in texts does allow us to surmise why certain books were more popular than others, but beyond this supposition such sources leave a great deal left unsaid. What did the tanner James Morison make of the many texts he borrowed from the Innerpefferay Library? Was his experience of Hume's *Essays* or Reid's *Inquiry* significantly different from the responses of the surgeon John Alexander or the minister Patrick McIsaac? Why did readers like history so much? Did they understand Hume's strategic treatment of the Glorious Revolution, or Robertson's sentimental rehabilitation of Mary Queen of Scots? For answers to these types of questions, the historian can only turn to sources that take us to the heart of the reading experience – to individuals' own reading notes, meticulously taken down in commonplace books or scrawled across the margins of books as they read them. It is therefore to the reading experience itself that we must now turn in Part II.

⁹¹ I have come across only the merest hint of a discussion between Leightonian borrowers in the historical record, in Ramsay of Ochtertyre and Bishop Gleig's discussion of the merits of George Campbell's *Four Gospel Translated From the Greek* (1789) in November 1799; *Ochtertyre*, 5.

PART II

EXPERIENCING ENLIGHTENMENT

CHAPTER FIVE

‘This Map of my Mind’

Reading Experiences and the Construction of the Self

In 1762 a manhunt was in progress at the University of St Andrews. Patrick Bower had reported a substantial stash of books stolen from his book shop on South Street, and in due deference to town-gown relations a search of the private apartments of all students was authorised by Professor Robert Watson. The 63 volumes were eventually recovered from a locked chest in the room of one David Rattray, and included MacLaurin’s *Treatise on Algebra*, Wilkie’s *Epigoniad*, Hutcheson’s *System of Moral Philosophy* and Smith’s *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, as well as numerous works of Voltaire and Addison.¹ The incident signalled the abrupt end of the young man’s academic career, yet suggested that in some perverse way he was attempting to engage in the polite print culture of his time. Nevertheless, Rattray’s dubious possession of such eminent works actually tells us nothing about how he responded to them. Indeed, the key to the chest was entrusted by Rattray to the university porter for safe-keeping, so Rattray probably did not even read them. He treated the books with a superstitious regard for the mystical status of knowledge, hoarding the contraband volumes to lay material claim to the ideas invested in them rather than attempting to make sense of each author’s ideas for himself.²

Although Rattray represents an exceptional case, his fate illustrates perfectly the point that evidence for the ownership of certain books or access to them through libraries can never illuminate fully the experience of the individual reader. It is therefore to evidence of private reading experiences that we now turn, for an insight into what the books of the

¹ SAUL MS LY980/1, Miscellaneous Library Papers (Eighteenth Century), A to I. The case of Rattray is discussed in more depth in M. Simpson, ‘St Andrews University Library in the Eighteenth Century: Scottish education and print-culture’ (unpublished PhD thesis, University of St Andrews, 1999).

² On the psychology of book theft, see Alberto Manguel, *A History of Reading* (London, 1996): ‘physical ownership becomes at times synonymous with a sense of intellectual apprehension. We come to feel that the books we own are the books we know, as if possession were, in libraries as in courts, nine-tenths of the law...; as if their presence alone fills us with their wisdom without our actually having to labour through their contents’, 245.

Scottish Enlightenment meant to contemporary readers with no specialist interest in its philosophy, science or history, and no particularly extraordinary intellectual capacity. By all means, scholars have subjected the reading habits and experiences of the writers themselves to exhaustive analysis and speculation in attempting to uncover their intellectual influences.³ However, no one has yet explored the range of practices, experiences and responses of ordinary readers – the merchants, physicians, surgeons, seedsmen, farmers, manufacturers, lawyers, military men, naval officers, clerks, civil servants, schoolmasters, country lairds and church ministers who never made a significant contribution to the republic of letters, yet who each read books in their own idiosyncratic ways. Bernadette Cunningham observes that ‘books come to life when they are read. Each reader, each listener to a text being read, responds to it in the light of his or her own prior knowledge and life experience’.⁴ By turning to readers’ engagement with the books of Hume, Robertson, Reid, Smith *et al*, we can therefore hope to breathe life into the Scottish Enlightenment – not as it is usually conceived by modern scholars as a check list of leading authors and their ideas, but as a body of literature that was encountered by contemporary readers and that informed their basic values and beliefs.

I

Readers today only take notes in specific circumstances (the notes of a diligent undergraduate student, for instance, or the expert jottings of the academic researcher), and very rarely leave anything that might constitute hard, documentary evidence to succeeding generations about how and why they read. It is fortunate for us, therefore, that reading in the past did tend to generate material which illuminates the world of the ordinary reader, and not just material of the kind utilised by Jonathan Rose, who built his fine enquiry into the reading habits of the British working class largely on a self-selecting

³ For example, Paul Wood explores the ‘direct and intellectually fruitful’ relationship between Thomas Reid and John Robison through the latter’s extensive marginal commentary on a copy of Reid’s *Essays*, ‘Marginalia on the Mind: John Robison and Thomas Reid’ in his (ed.), *The Culture of the Book in the Scottish Enlightenment: An Exhibition* (Toronto, 2000), 91.

⁴ B. Cunningham, ‘Introduction: the Experience of Reading’, in her and M. Kennedy (eds.), *The Experience of Reading: Irish Historical Perspectives* (Dublin, 1999), 2.

sample of published autobiographies.⁵ As Robert DeMaria advises in excavating the remarkable life of reading of Dr Samuel Johnson, ‘evidence for lives of reading ... should not come from the public published statements of writers, but rather, wherever possible, from documentary sources: marginalia, notebooks, commonplace books, diaries, anecdotes, letters and casual, conversational remarks’.⁶

In taking up DeMaria’s check list for the empirical study of reading experiences in the past, many of these types of source are readily familiar and need no particular clarification. Amongst their many other functions, letters in the Georgian period were often treated as sites for the recording of reading experiences and the discussion of books. In 1771, for instance, the teenager Charlotte Murray wrote to her grown-up brother about their family’s reading in his absence: ‘After tea we went to our work as the Duke [of Atholl] began reading a new book to us, Humphrey Clinker, it seems very entertaining so far as we have gone in it’.⁷ The letters of the Edinburgh judge and reformist Henry Cockburn from the 1790s are packed with much more acute observations on books and their authors, a marker of the still vibrant intellectual culture that persisted in Edinburgh even after the death of Hume, Robertson, Smith, Hutton *et al.*⁸ Such sources point to the sheer ubiquity of books in the polite culture of Georgian Britain and can add anecdotal colour to investigations of reading experiences, although they are usually too unpredictable in scope and character, and too widely scattered, to provide a basis for a systematic study of the meaning of reading.⁹

⁵ J. Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Class* (New Haven CT, 2001); on Rose’s views on the possibility of an empirical history of reading, see his ‘How Historians Study Reader Response; or, What did Jo Think of *Bleak House*?’, in J. O. Jordan and R. L. Patten (ed.), *Literature in the Marketplace* (Cambridge, 1995); ‘Rereading the English Common Reader: A Preface to a History of Audiences’, *JHI*, 53 (1992). Compare R. K. Webb, *The British Working Class Reader, 1790-1820* (London, 1955).

⁶ R. DeMaria Jr, *Samuel Johnson and the Life of Reading* (Baltimore MD, 1997), 2; cf D. R. Woolf, *Reading History in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2000).

⁷ NRAS 234, Box 54/II/148, Charlotte Murray to John Murray; see also boxes 49, 59 and 65.

⁸ A. Bell (ed.), *Lord Cockburn: Select Letters* (Edinburgh, 2005); see also A. Bell (ed.), *Lord Cockburn: a Bicentenary Commemoration* (Edinburgh, 1979); *Memorials of His Time*, ed. Karl Miller (Chicago and London, 1974).

⁹ On the use of correspondence in researching the history of reading, see St Clair, 397-9; and more generally in the eighteenth century, Vickery, 10-11, 61-72, 114-8 and 354-64.

Others recorded their engagement with books for their own benefit, keeping diaries which can be used to enumerate the books that an individual actually read. The diaries of Christian Broun (1786-1839) list all the books she read during her adult life, including amongst very many other titles, the works of Scott, Robertson, Blair, Stewart, Reid and Burns.¹⁰ A diary started in August 1823 gives us a comprehensive insight into the immature reading habits of a Kirkcudbright factor's son, David Campbell. Campbell read Scott, Mackenzie, Thomson and Burns for fun, but also looked over his old logic notes from his days at Glasgow University, prepared for his prospective legal career by reading through the various works of Kames, and perfected his French by working on a translation of Voltaire's *History of Charles XII*.¹¹

In these instances, each individual's diary allows us to build up a picture of the role of reading in their life, reiterating once again how ubiquitous books were in Britain in the decades around the turn of the century and sometimes giving insights into their reading practices. Christian Broun, for instance, often mentions reading in a sociable context: books played a role in her courtship with George Ramsay (1770-1838; the future 9th Earl of Dalhousie), and when they were married, he habitually read sermons to her on Sundays, while visitors were enjoined to take part in the family's fireside reading.¹² However, thanks to their multifunctional status, diaries very rarely tell us much, if anything, about what an individual thought of the books he or she read. Broun never commented on the books she recorded reading in her diaries, and her likely responses to specific texts can only be inferred in the broadest sense from her reputation as an indefatigable botanical collector and Edinburgh hostess.¹³ Campbell found Burnet's *History of His Own Times* 'amusing' but did not elaborate any further, while he drew attention to an account of the local parish of Minnigaff in an unnamed volume of the

¹⁰ NRAS 2383, Bundles 60-66, Diaries of Christian Broun, Countess of Dalhousie, 1811-1839; *ODNB*. Compare, St Clair, 397-400.

¹¹ Stewartry Museum, 1996/22/04-07, Diary of David Campbell, Kirkcudbright, August 1823.

¹² Diaries of Christian Broun. On sociable reading practices in the eighteenth century, see Brewer, *Pleasures*, 196; St Clair, 394-5; N. Tadmor, "'In the even my wife read to me": Women, Reading and Household Life in the Eighteenth Century', in *PRR*; Woolf, *Reading History*, 80.

¹³ *ODNB*; one commonplace book survives from Christian Broun, consisting in the main of poetic and dramatic transcriptions; NRAS 2383, Bundles 57-8, Extracts from literary works, Christian Broun, 1804.

Statistical Account he had read, but left no trace of what he thought of the account, how he used the information it contained and why he highlighted that particular account.¹⁴

On occasion, however, such sources can provide an exceptionally eloquent insight into an individual's reading experiences. The diary of George Ridpath mentions by name well over one hundred and fifty separate titles, many in multiple volumes, and we can presume that this represents an under-estimation of his reading life even for the six year period it covered (1755-1761).¹⁵ Amongst these books, some borrowed from the Kelso Subscription Library, others borrowed from friends and neighbours and a few owned by Ridpath himself, are many modern editions of the classics, Horace, Plato and Epictetus foremost; the older historians of Scotland, George Buchanan, John Knox and writers from both sides of Scotland's religious past; political and natural histories of other countries, especially travellers' accounts of the newly-discovered territories and peoples of America; books on a wide range of subjects in natural philosophy, with a particular interest in medicine from the twelfth-century *Regimen Sanitatis Salernitano* through to Scottish authors at the cutting edge of modern research, including Home and Whytt; some fiction, including *Gulliver's Travels* and *Tristram Shandy*, though not the best-selling works of Fielding and Smollett; and reviews of the latest releases in the foremost literary journals and magazines of the day. Most pertinently for our purposes, this remarkable record of Ridpath's reading demonstrates that he had access to the most recent works of Scottish authors like Robertson and Hume at a time when the Scottish Enlightenment was entering its formative phase.

But what really sets Ridpath's journals apart from those compiled by Broun or Campbell is the discursive style in which he commented on many of the books he reported reading, using the process of recording his reading as a way of working out and consolidating his own highly perceptive responses to many significant texts. For instance, a hasty diary

¹⁴ Diary of David Campbell, entries dated 11 May 1824 and 25 September 1821; compare *OSA*, VII.

¹⁵ *Ridpath*. Ridpath's reading is discussed in general terms in Balfour Paul's introduction (xi-xv), and individual titles are referenced in his index. Another exceptional diary was compiled by Anna Larpent, summarised in Brewer, *Pleasures*, 194-7, and analysed in more detail in his 'Reconstructing the Reader: Prescriptions, Texts and Strategies in Anna Larpent's Reading', in *PRR*; on diaries more generally, see S. Colclough, 'Recovering the Reader: Commonplace Books and Diaries as Sources of Reading Experiences', *Publishing History*, 44 (1998); Woolf, *Reading History*, 94, 118.

entry on 29th March 1759 recorded that he had been ‘very much entertained and not a little instructed’ by a first reading of the second volume of Robertson’s *History of Scotland* (1759), which he had borrowed from a friend in Edinburgh within a few days of its release. He spent the forthcoming days revising this first impression, and when he obtained the first volume he devoted his whole attention to it, allowing for a more thorough critical assessment:

The work certainly deserves great praises. The choice of facts is judicious, the disposition of them clear and regular, the descriptions animated, reflexions just and natural, characters painted in glowing colours, and the stile elegant, perspicuous, easy, and full of vigour. What seems most liable to objection is a want of sufficient detail in some facts of consequence, which, by sparing some reflexions and declamation, might have been given without increasing the bulk of the work; and I cannot help thinking that there is at least a striking impropriety in the kindness shown to Mary, when ‘tis plain the author holds her guilty of the worst of crimes. This also is naturally accompanied with a severity to Elizabeth for which there scarce appears sufficient ground, when the dangers to which she and her people were continually exposed by the increasing plots of her rival are impartially attended to.¹⁶

Over the next few days, Ridpath followed up his doubts, compared passages in Robertson with such other established authorities on the Marian controversy as Goodall, Camden and Buchanan and eventually noted another ‘fault in Robertson that he does not enter into particulars of the bad character of Bothwell’.¹⁷ Ridpath was not content simply to lavish praise on the work’s stylistic excellence, pointedly registering his agreement with a published review of Robertson which was ‘very favourable, but not more than the work deserves’.¹⁸ But in his eagerness and capacity to criticise Robertson’s account of the Marian controversy he identified precisely the issue that has made Robertson’s *History of Scotland* so diverting for recent commentators. As Karen O’Brien has argued, Robertson was ‘a fertile inventor of narrative strategies for conflict elimination’, and his treatment

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 242; compare with William Robertson, *History of Scotland* (London, 1759), II, 150-1; I, 390.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 243. On the Marian controversy, see K. O’Brien, *Narratives of Enlightenment: Cosmopolitan History from Voltaire to Gibbon* (Cambridge, 1997); L. L. Bongie, ‘The Eighteenth-Century Marian Controversy and an Unpublished Letter by David Hume’, *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 1 (1963-1964); M. Lee Jr., ‘The Daughter of Debate’, *SHR*, 68 (1989).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 243.

of the rival queens, though so disorientating for Ridpath, was apparently designed to consolidate the 1707 Union by neutralizing this most divisive myth of the partisan past.¹⁹ Ridpath was actually an exceptionally well-qualified reader of this particular text, being on good terms with Robertson as colleagues in the General Assembly and having ‘had a good deal of chat with him about his History’.²⁰ Even so, Ridpath regarded as its greatest weakness the very aspect of the *History of Scotland* that has most impressed modern commentators. Instead, he brought his own impeccable Whiggish politics to bear on an episode that, with all its Jacobite associations, still held considerable political currency in Scotland in the 1750s.²¹

Ridpath was a great deal less enthusiastic about Smith’s *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), another Scottish Enlightenment classic to reach the manse at Stitchell with impressive speed. ‘The work shows him to be a man of knowledge and of genius too’, Ridpath acknowledged, ‘but yet I can by no means join in the applauses [sic] I have heard bestowed on it. What is new in it is perhaps of no great moment in itself, and is neither distinctly explained nor clearly established’. In light of the critics’ general approval for the work Ridpath revised his reading ‘with more attention than before’, but remained convinced of his initial conclusion: ‘his indulging of this humour for playing everywhere the orator, tho’ his oratorical talents are far from being extraordinary, has made him spin out to the tedious length of 400 pages what in my opinion might be delivered as fully and with far more energy and perspicuity in 20’.²²

The fact that Ridpath rooted his own precocious criticism of both Robertson and Smith so firmly in the wider framework provided by the professional critical reviews is highly

¹⁹ K. O’Brien, ‘Robertson’s place in the development of eighteenth-century narrative history’, in S. J. Brown (ed.), *William Robertson and the Expansion of Empire* (Cambridge, 1997), 75; idem., *Narratives*; C. Kidd, *Subverting Scotland’s Past: Scottish Whig Historians and the Creation of an Anglo-British Identity, 1689-c.1830* (Cambridge, 1993); D. Allan, *Scotland in the Eighteenth Century: Union and Enlightenment* (London, 2002); Mary Fearnley-Sander, ‘Philosophical History and the Scottish Reformation: William Robertson and the Knoxian Tradition’, *Historical Journal* (1990).

²⁰ *Ridpath*, 143

²¹ Pointedly, Ridpath was a member of the Edinburgh-based Culloden Club; *Ibid.*, xvi.

²² *Ibid.*, 276; Ridpath’s notes on Smith are reproduced in J. Reeder (ed.), *On Moral Sentiments: Contemporary Responses to Adam Smith* (Bristol, 1997). Originally, it was little more than an expansion of Smith’s lectures in ethics; see Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (eds. D. D. Raphael and A. L. Macfie, Oxford, 1976), 15-20.

revealing for the way in which eighteenth-century readers learned to read in this interrogative fashion. Besides their attempts to control ‘undisciplined or unprincipled desires in reading’, influential periodicals like the *Monthly* and *Critical Reviews* also promoted a specific ‘ideology of reading’ that laid the ‘emphasis on individual judgement’.²³ They outlined different levels of reading, and encouraged their own readers to aspire to be ‘good’ readers, who would above all be ‘curious and critical’. As Frank Donoghue points out, the Reviewers’ vision of ‘the ideal reader’ was ‘always uncomfortably reflexive: taste is an aesthetic judgement that is passed on one’s ability to make aesthetic judgements’.²⁴ But for our perspective, this explains precisely why readers like Ridpath were so keen to cast themselves in the Reviewers’ own image: by seeking to evaluate the books they read, aspiring readers throughout the English speaking world were identifying themselves as readers of good taste. Ridpath even went so far as to cast critical judgement on the Reviews themselves:

Got in the evening from Sir Robert [Pringle, 3rd baronet of Stichel] by Nancy [Ridpath’s sister] a number of the *Critical Review* which I saw there the other night. Read most of it. I see it is contrived to please the Tories and High Church in political articles and other things, though, perhaps, there is more vivacity and even a greater show of learning than in the *Monthly Review*; yet a satirical spirit seems to be much more intemperately indulged. Nor is the writing in general so correct, so that, as far as I can judge from this specimen, I think the *Monthly Magazine* [ie the *Monthly Review*] much preferable.²⁵

The journal in which these polished reports of Ridpath’s reading experiences were entered, moreover, was only one part of a strikingly self-conscious process of chronicling, evaluating and assimilating his reading experiences – reflecting further his eagerness to prove himself the reviewers’ ideal reader, both ‘candid and judicious’.²⁶ Ridpath did not simply skim the contents of books he read, as might be implied by

²³ Donoghue, *FM*, 40, 19, 25, 28 (quoting *Critical Review*).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 41.

²⁵ *Ridpath*, 239; for the political outlook of the two leading journals, see Roper, *Reviewing*, 174-8.

²⁶ Donoghue, *FM*, 42, quoting the *Critical Review*.

modern claims for the extensive reading habits of eighteenth-century readers:²⁷ as we have seen, Ridpath took great care to assess the books he read critically, both in style and content, often revising his initial impressions of a particular book with further re-readings, and complementing certain books with others on the same subject to aid his comprehension of the arguments of the text and to gauge its place in the wider literature on a subject.²⁸ He entered material that he considered most thought provoking in these regards into a series of commonplace books, and occasionally annotated the books themselves when he was particularly struck by passages he had read – or offended by typographical or factual errors he came across. Though no examples survive (we know about them solely through references to them in the diary), such specialist reading notes clearly functioned as an important guide and explanatory tool for his ongoing reading – on 23 March 1755, for example, Ridpath ‘read in my old *Adversaria* some chemical things that helped me the better to understand Dr. Hexham’s *Treatise of Antimony*, which I read over again’.²⁹

Diaries can therefore help contextualise historical reading, fleshing out the evidence of reading habits provided by catalogues and borrowing records, and in exceptional instances allow us to assess the typicality of specific reading experiences. But the fact that readers like Ridpath actually developed specialist ways of recording, detailing and interrogating their reading experiences – inspired directly by the rise of criticism and critical reading in the eighteenth century – is a much more exciting prospect. As Ridpath’s example demonstrates, there were two main practices by which readers in

²⁷ I refer here to Engelsing’s notion of a ‘reading revolution’ in the eighteenth century, originally expounded in R. Engelsing, *Der Bürger als Leser: Lesergeschichte in Deutschland 1500-1800* (Stuttgart, 1974) – the notion that reading habits in the eighteenth century shifted from the intensive reading (close attention, re-readings, thoughtful reflection) of a small number of texts (generally religious), to the extensive reading (skimmed, superficial) of a much wider range of material (typically magazines, journals, secular material and novels). The dichotomy is discussed by Darnton, ‘First Steps’, 12; R. Wittmann, ‘Was there a Reading Revolution at the End of the Eighteenth Century?’, in G. Cavallo, and R. Chartier (eds.), *A History of Reading in the West* (1995; trans., L. G. Cochrane, Cambridge, 1999); R. DeMaria, ‘Samuel Johnson and the Reading Revolution’, *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 16 (1992), 86-102; see my Conclusion, below.

²⁸ The reading practices of Sir William Drake reflected similar features; K. Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions: The Politics of Reading in Early Modern England* (London, 2000), 85.

²⁹ *Ridpath*, 60. The ‘*Adversaria*’ mentioned here would have been one of Ridpath’s commonplace books – as well as one for general reading, Ridpath appears to have kept specialist volumes of medical and border history *adversaria*.

Georgian Scotland kept track of their responses to books, and whose survival allows us to construct a history of reading experiences: marginalia and commonplace books.

II

Marginalia are ‘a contested goldmine’, according to the leading pioneer of their use in the history of reading: ‘common assumptions about marginalia that they are spontaneous, impulsive, uninhibited, that they offer direct access to the reader’s mind, fail to take into account inherent complexities of motivation and historical circumstance’.³⁰ If a book was likely to be read by more than one individual, as we have seen was commonly the case in the eighteenth century, we have to consider whether marginalia should be considered as a kind of semi-public performance, with a reader playing up to his or her anticipated audience. Most dramatically, instances have been uncovered of readers treating marginal comments as love letters, highlighting passages in books which a reader feels encapsulate his or her feelings towards another, or simply writing notes to each other unrelated to a text.³¹ Even when we can be sure that one individual is responsible for the annotations on the pages of a book, we should bear in mind that ‘it takes time to read a book’, and that changing moods might account for the differing frequency or tone of his or her annotations.³²

Such complex motivations aside, marginalia take on a myriad of forms, ranging from the simplest marks of ownership to intermittent glossaries squeezed into the spaces between lines of text to full-blown critical essays spilling over marginal spaces onto end and title pages. Most commonly, annotations simply take the form of inscriptions of ownership. Nearly every book in the library at Brodie Castle still holds the book plate and manuscript inscription of James Brodie of Brodie, while William Urquhart’s signature

³⁰ H. J. Jackson, *Marginalia: Readers writing in Books* (New Haven CT and London, 2001), 6, 99; Morris R. Brownell, ‘Hester Lynch Piozzi’s Marginalia’, *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 3 (1977), 97-100.

³¹ Jackson, *Marginalia*, 71-2, 84-5; Jackson argues that sociable annotations were actually particularly prevalent in the eighteenth century, 54-72; on the ‘addressee’ more generally, see 82-100.

³² *Ibid.*, 97; for an example, see 248.

appears on the title pages of many books in the collection surviving at Craigston Castle.³³ Other simple annotations record details of the acquisition of the book, or the date of an individual's reading of the book. An annotation on the title page of the Craigston copy of Hume's *History* confirms that 'M.U. read this book in 1815 in the 43rd year of her age', presenting yet more evidence for the immense readership of this text in Scotland in the Georgian period.³⁴

Some annotations on the front matter of books go further, reflecting a reader's attempt to enhance his or her engagement with a text. Where a book had been published anonymously, readers frequently added in manuscript the name of the author, if it was known to them, and sometimes added basic details of an author's life and career. Both Urquhart and Brodie added the name of Lord Kames to books he had published anonymously.³⁵ Urquhart also speculated that a volume of *Letters on Mr Hume's History of Great Britain* was 'supposed [sic] to be wrote by the Revd. Dr. MacQueen of Edinr.', and identified the author of *Some Thoughts Concerning Religion, Natural and Revealed* (Edinburgh, 1753) as 'Duncan Forbes of Culloden Late President of the Session' – correctly in each instance.³⁶

More exceptionally, readers could customise the introductory material of a book, perhaps contextualising an author's dedication (Urquhart elaborated on John Ogilvie's dedication of his *Poems on Several Subjects* (1762) to Lord Deskford), or adapting a table of contents to help navigate through the work (Urquhart added a manuscript index to a collection of *Discourses on Government* by the renowned republican Andrew Fletcher of

³³ I am grateful to the National Trust of Scotland (Brodie Castle) and to Mr William Pratesi Urquhart (Craigston Castle, near Turriff) for permission to raid the shelves of their libraries, and for allowing me to quote from marginalia in books in their possession. On ownership inscriptions, see Jackson, *Marginalia*, 19; D. Pearson, *Provenance Research in Book History: A Handbook* (London, 1994).

³⁴ Hume, *History of England under the House of Tudor*, Craigston copy, classmark, F3, inside cover. M.U. may have been the second wife of William Urquhart of Craigston and Cromarty (d.1796), originally Margaret Ogilvie of Auchiries, though they also had a daughter called Mary. There is a family tree in H. Gordon Slade, 'Craigston Castle, Aberdeenshire', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 108 (1976-7), 262-99. I have also benefited on this point from conversations with the current librarian at Craigston, Sandra Cumming.

³⁵ [Kames], *Historical Law Tracts*, Craigston copy, classmark J1; Brodie copy [no classmark]; [Kames], *Essays upon Several Subjects concerning British Antiquities*, Craigston copy, K4. On Kames' anonymity, see *EB*, 151, 153.

³⁶ Macqueen, *Letters*, Craigston copy, shelfmark F4; Forbes, *Some Thoughts*, Craigston copy.

Saltoun).³⁷ Finally, notes added to the front matter of books could represent an individual's attempt to manipulate another's reading experiences, most frequently when a concerned guardian gifted a book to a reader in the explicit hope of promoting their intellectual improvement. A copy of Robertson's *Historical Disquisition on India* surviving at Delgatie Castle contains one such note, inscribed 'To Douglas Ainslie as a reward for part good conduct and an encouragement to future perseverance and study'.³⁸

Manuscript additions to the main body of texts (literally 'marginalia' when inserted in the margins of pages) also take a wide variety of forms. Often, they could simply take the form of a reader's correction of what he or she perceived to be typographical or factual mistakes in a text. In a particularly splenetic journal entry, Ridpath admitted mutilating Kelso's copy of Thomas Stanley's old standard *History of Philosophy*: 'corrected many gross typographical errors, though many no doubt still remain. Never was there a good book so horribly mangled in the printing ... This is an infinite pity, and what Millar deserves to be whipt for, that Stanley should be printed so incorrectly'.³⁹ Ridpath later added dates to the margins of Guthrie's *History of Scotland* which he thought 'it was silly of the printer to neglect',⁴⁰ while James Brodie (aptly demonstrating that such annotations often arose from privy information on the part of the reader) made a range of minor corrections to Shaw's *History of Moray* that pertained directly to his own family's history.⁴¹

Marginal commentary on the text itself was also 'particularly well-calculated for minute criticism and "close" reading',⁴² allowing readers to engage with a text on the most intimate – and sometimes on the most belligerent – of terms. John Robison's marginalia

³⁷ Ogilvie, *Poems on Several Subjects*, Craigston copy, shelfmark E5; Fletcher, *Discourses on Government*, Craigston copy, shelfmark E6. On manuscript lists of contents and indexes, see Jackson, *Marginalia*, 25, 37-8, 40.

³⁸ Robertson, *Historical Disquisition Concerning the Knowledge the Ancients had of India*, Delgatie copy, inside front cover. My thanks to Mrs Joan Johnson for allowing my access to the books at Delgatie Castle. Douglas Ainslie may have been a son of Burns' friend Robert Ainslie (1766-1838), a writer to the signet; his brother was Sir Whitelaw Ainslie (1767-1837), who spent twenty years in India as a surgeon; see *ODNB*.

³⁹ *Ridpath*, 40, 35; see Jackson, *Marginalia*, 86.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 179.

⁴¹ Shaw, *History of Province of Moray*, Brodie copy, no shelf mark, 107, 109 and 114.

⁴² Jackson, *Marginalia*, 28, quote on 42; the term 'marginalia' was apparently coined by Coleridge, 7-8.

in Reid's *Essays* usually took the form of extended critical essays squeezed into the empty spaces at the side and the bottom of pages, in which Robison agreed with his friend's philosophical views and occasionally took issue with him over important details. The marginalia suggest that 'reading Reid's works for Robison was akin to a conversation or debate about major themes in metaphysics and moral philosophy', and that Robison was 'an intensive reader'.⁴³ The same might be said of the historian Alexander Fraser Tytler, who proved a serial annotator of all kinds of books. Extensive annotations in Wodrow's *History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland* (1721-2) and Goodall's *Examinations of the Letters of Mary Queen of Scots* (1754) clearly represented preparatory research towards Tytler's own historical compositions,⁴⁴ but others were far more personal – including a series of caustic notes in his copy of Hume's *Essays and Treatises* which fit neatly into the pejorative reception of Hume's works explored below in Chapter 6.⁴⁵

However, it is rare indeed to come across marginalia that are as coherent as these. Much more representative are annotations that consist simply of a series of incoherent symbols: the dashes, crosses, arrows, ticks, exclamation marks and underlinings that many of us still use today to help shape our reading of books, with no explicit elaboration of their meaning.⁴⁶ The Urquharts of Craigston Castle seem to have been avid annotators of their books, but the marks they made are largely unintelligible to the modern researcher. For instance, a series of manuscript sketches adorn the pages of their copy of Hume's *History of England under the Tudors*: one of a chest (with dimensions), another of a horse and cart, yet another of a man with a hat and walking stick, and one more of an 'English gallant' stabbing a 'Spaniard' in a sword fight.⁴⁷ The last may be easily enough related to Hume's account of the Armada, but it is impossible to say what these sketches reveal

⁴³ Wood, 'Marginalia on the Mind', 116. He reprints pages from Robison's annotated copies of Reid on 114-5; the originals are located at the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto.

⁴⁴ Similar motivations explain David Macpherson's marginalia in a copy of Innes' *Critical Essay* now held at Edinburgh University Library, classmark La.III.652, clearly intended as preparatory research towards his *Geographical Illustrations of Scottish History* (1796).

⁴⁵ Tytler's copies of Wodrow and Goodall are now at YUL; his copy of Hume's *Essays and Treatises* is held in a private collection.

⁴⁶ Jackson, *Marginalia*, 14, 28-9; Roger Stoddard, *Marks in Books* (Cambridge MA, 1985).

⁴⁷ Hume, *History of England under the Tudors*; Craigston Castle copy, classmark F3, 433 and 703. These are by no means extra-illustrations of the sophisticated kind discussed by Jackson, *Marginalia*, 185-96.

about the Urquharts' reading of Hume – why they decided to annotate Hume in this way, whether the sketches were actually mindless doodles, what they thought of Hume, even which member of the family was responsible for the sketches.

A series of vertical, diagonal and horizontal dashes also adorn certain parts of the Craigston copy of Hume's *History*,⁴⁸ yet only one of these is accompanied with coherent textual commentary – the execrable outburst '+ Good Riddance, of Bad Rubbish' alongside the death of Mary Tudor, presumably reflecting little more than the Urquharts' implacable opposition to the Queen's Catholic faith.⁴⁹ There exists no such easy explanation for the list of page numbers scrawled on the title page of the Craigston copy of Kames' *Sketches* alongside a contextual reference to another major Scottish work ('p.116, 241, 281 Ossian, 343, 380X, 434'), nor for the various passages that a reader has underlined and accompanied by '!' and '+' signs scattered through the text.⁵⁰

At least the notes made in a copy of Blair's *Sermons* at nearby Delgatie Castle demonstrate a reader's positive experience: still no explicit textual commentary, though the initials 'G', 'VG', 'Exc' alongside specific passages highlighted by curly brackets '{ }' are self-explanatory.⁵¹ But without knowing who the reader was who ticked off each sermon with the child-like annotation 'Have Read', it is impossible to use his or her annotations to understand why Blair was so popular with contemporary readers.⁵²

Deriving usable evidence from marginalia is actually a remarkably frustrating process. The significance of marginalia is often completely lost in the processes of time, with

⁴⁸ Jackson suggests that such marks were used by readers 'to show that these passages were later to be copied out into their commonplace books', *Marginalia*, 184; the exact same point is made in relation to Drake's reading by Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions*, 277. Similar anonymous marks can be found in a 1742 copy of Hume's *Essays* held at GUL RB3843, and Smith's *The Wealth of Nations*, copy at GUL RB2942-4.

⁴⁹ Hume, *History of England under the Tudors*, Craigston copy, 400; for other examples, see 7, 165, 327, 714-5.

⁵⁰ Kames, *Sketches*, Craigston copy, classmark K1; inside front cover, 355 and 426.

⁵¹ Blair, *Sermons*, 9th edition, Delgatie copy [no classmark], Vol. 3, 196, 203, 209, 310, 312, 313, 329, 331, 336-9.

⁵² On the popularity of Blair in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, see St Clair, 270-3

most readers not leaving keys to enable historians to break their coded marks in books.⁵³ Annotations are usually not signed or dated so we often know neither who read them nor when. The possibilities that more than one reader marked up a book, or that the annotations were made on multiple readings affected by different circumstances and motivations cannot always be set aside. Most importantly, marginalia commonly exist in isolation of any other evidence of an individual's wider reading experiences. Where such knowledge is lacking marginal annotations can contribute very little to a systematic analysis of reading experiences.⁵⁴

Quite apart from these methodological problems, the historian is also faced with many more practical difficulties in locating and interpreting marginalia.⁵⁵ The attrition rate for such sources is exceptionally high, with very few Georgian examples uncovered in British research libraries to date.⁵⁶ Old books in which marginalia are inscribed have usually passed through many different pairs of hands over the centuries, and new owners tended to regard the marks of previous owners as imperfections – rubbing out pencil jottings,⁵⁷ cutting out marks of ownership which no longer apply and recropping the edges of pages. The books themselves tend to be fragile. A heavily used volume that has been marked up by its owner(s) is simply much less likely to have survived intact, and marginalia in books are as subject to the vagaries of time as the books themselves – including accidental damage by fire or water. And not everyone annotated books in the past: most surviving books have no marginalia even when they do bear inscriptions of ownership,⁵⁸ and there were many kinds of books for which marginal annotations were

⁵³ Rev. James Gambier of Langley in Kent left one such key; discussed in *Making British Culture*, Ch5, 6; Jackson, *Marginalia*, 28-9.

⁵⁴ Jackson argues that they 'have to be addressed case by case, with as much knowledge of the historical and personal context as we can muster', *Marginalia*, 43; D. Allan, 'Some Methods and Problems in the History of Reading: Georgian England and the Scottish Enlightenment', *Journal of the Historical Society*, 3 (2003), 108-110.

⁵⁵ For a more detailed discussion of all the issues outlined in this paragraph, see Pearson, *Provenance Research*, 5-9.

⁵⁶ See, for instance, the number of eighteenth-century annotations listed in R. C. Alston, *Books with Manuscript: A Short-Title Catalogue of Books with Manuscript Notes in the British Library...* (London, 1994).

⁵⁷ On the medium in which annotations were made, Jackson, *Marginalia*, 43.

⁵⁸ The ratio between books with ownership inscriptions and those with annotations in the Craigston Library is greater than 10:1. At Brodie, Shaw's *History of Moray* was the only text bearing the inscription of James Brodie of Brodie that was found to contain marginalia.

outlawed.⁵⁹ Finally, there remain immense problems in locating surviving marginalia, since in most research collections marginalia are only catalogued when they represent authorial corrections or are otherwise associated with famous readers.⁶⁰

III

Given this range of problems, it is hardly surprising that marginalia have only recently begun to feature with any frequency in scholarship on the history of reading.⁶¹ The continuing neglect of commonplace books by modern researchers, however, can be far less easily understood. A commonplace book was on its most basic level a blank book into which passages were transcribed from books and other thoughts, remarks, anecdotes and occurrences recorded. They existed primarily to record their owner's reading, acting as a filing system not only for the contents of books they had read but also, commonly, for comments on their reading experiences. As such, according to one commentator, commonplace books represent 'the finest available evidence of Georgian reading

⁵⁹ On resistance to marginalia, see Jackson, *Marginalia*, 74, 234-44, especially 236. Subscription libraries, circulating libraries, book clubs and other types of library specifically banned members from writing in library books. Members of the Arbroath Subscription Library were typical, agreeing on 24 August 1797, 'Rule 19: That no subscriber shall write either upon the margin or blank leaves of any book, and if he injure it more than may be reasonably allowed for a fair reading, he shall pay such sum as the managers shall judge adequate to the damage and shall be prohibited the use of the library till the same is paid.', Angus Archives, MS451/1, Minute Book.

⁶⁰ On locating marginalia, see Jackson, *Marginalia*, 9-10; Allan, 'Methods', 106, who stresses 'a generous measure of good fortune'; for two eminent exceptions, see R. C. Alston, *Books with Manuscript: A Short-Title Catalogue of Books with Manuscript Notes in the British Library...* (London, 1994); H. R. Luard, *Catalogue of Adversaria and Printed Books Containing MS. Notes, Preserved in the Library of the University of Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1864). For famous marginalia, see G. Whalley and H. J. Jackson (eds.), *Marginalia*, in *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 6 vols (Princeton NJ, 1980-); E. Merritt (ed.), *Piozzi Marginalia: Comprising Some Extracts from Manuscripts of Hester Lynch Piozzi and Annotations from Her Books* (Cambridge MA, 1925); E. G. Fletcher (ed.), *The Life of Samuel Johnson LL.D., by James Boswell, with Marginal Comments from Two Copies Annotated by Hester Thrale Lynch Piozzi*, 3 vols (New York, 1963). 'Association copies' are discussed in Jackson, *Marginalia*, 244.

⁶¹ For noteworthy exceptions, see Allan, 'Methods', 106-7; A. Grafton and L. Jardine, "'Studied for Action": How Gabriel Harvey Read His Livy', *Past and Present*, 129 (1990), 30-78; V. F. Stern, *Gabriel Harvey: His Life, Marginalia and Library* (Oxford, 1979); A. Grafton, 'Is the History of Reading a Marginal Exercise?: Guillaume Bude and His Books', *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 91 (1997), 139-57; W. H. Sherman, *John Dee: The Politics of Reading and Writing in the English Renaissance* (Amherst, 1995); Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions*.

experiences’, yet ‘not a single coherent monograph appraisal of the commonplace book in Enlightenment cultural history exists’.⁶²

Commonplace books had developed in the Renaissance from the classical tradition of collecting rhetorical *sententiae*, as well from the medieval practice of compiling *florilegia* – literally, ‘collections of flowers (literary excerpts)’ characterised by ‘morally led selection and ... arrangement’.⁶³ As Ann Blair explains, readers selected ‘passages of interest for the rhetorical turns of phrase, the dialectical arguments, or the factual information they contain’ which they then copied into their commonplace book, ‘grouping them under appropriate headings to facilitate later retrieval and use, notably in composing prose of one’s own’.⁶⁴ In this manner, the technique originated as a specialist tool for the academic, the lawyer and the physician; commonplace books were treated as storehouses of readily available knowledge that a writer, orator or courtier could parachute into his own arguments and discourse.⁶⁵

The perception still persists that commonplace books became much less important towards the end of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Indeed, building on modern usage of ‘commonplace’ to mean ‘everyday’ and ‘banal’, Ann Moss believes that ‘the decline of the commonplace into the trivial and the banal was foreshadowed in the seventeenth century, accelerated in the eighteenth century, and was irreversible by the nineteenth ... It was by Locke’s time a rather lowly form of life, adapted to fairly simple tasks, and confined to the backwaters of intellectual activity’.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, the

⁶² Allan, ‘Methods’, 110-3; D. Allan, ‘Opposing Enlightenment: Revd Charles Peters’ Reading of the Natural History of Religion’, *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 38 (2005); D. Allan, ‘A Reader Writes: Negotiating *The Wealth of Nations* in an Eighteenth-Century English Commonplace Book’, *Philological Quarterly* (2004); Colclough, ‘Recovering the Reader’; S. Miller, *Assuming the Positions: Cultural Pedagogy and the Politics of Commonplace Writing* (Pittsburgh PA, 1998); Robert Darnton, ‘Extraordinary Commonplaces’, *New York Review of Books*, 47:20 (21 Dec, 2000); P. Beal, ‘Notions in Garrison: The Seventeenth-Century Commonplace Book’, in W. Speed Hill (ed.), *New Ways of Looking at Old Texts* (Binghamton NY, 1993); and especially Earle Havens, *Commonplace Books: A History of Manuscripts and Printed Books from Antiquity to the Twentieth Century* (New Haven CT, 2001).

⁶³ A. Moss, *Printed Commonplace-Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought* (Oxford, 1996), 25; M. J. Lechner, *Renaissance Concepts of the Commonplaces* (New York, 1962; repr. Westport, CT, 1974).

⁶⁴ A. Blair, ‘Humanist Methods in Natural Philosophy: The Commonplace Book’, *JHI*, 53 (1992), 541.

⁶⁵ On professional legal and medical commonplace books, see Moss, *Printed Commonplace-Books*, vi, 39.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 2, 279. Richard Yeo argues that the commonplace tradition was dead by the nineteenth century, ‘commonplace’ developing its modern meaning as ‘a well known piece of information, something that had

technique was given a fresh lease of life and a significant new direction by John Locke, whose 'New Method' was published in English for the first time in 1706.⁶⁷ Locke laid down strict rules to allow the commonplace book to act more efficiently as a filing system, dividing entries by subject rather than author or text, and indexing them for ease of cross reference. The Lockean method was thereby designed to develop independent critical and orderly thinking rather than to circulate a stable body of established knowledge: as Locke himself argued, 'when we take in any fresh Ideas, Occurrences and Observations, we should dispose of them in their proper places, and see how they stand and agree with the rest of our Notions on the same subject'.⁶⁸ Dugald Stewart later elaborated that by organising notes under 'certain general heads', a reader 'would not only have his knowledge much more completely under his command, but as the particulars classed together would all have some connexion, more or less, with each other, he would be enabled to trace, with advantage, those mutual relations among his ideas, which it is the object of philosophy to ascertain'.⁶⁹

Locke's method was extremely successful in Britain during the age of Enlightenment, selling increasingly well and appearing in many different editions and adaptations.⁷⁰ As DeMaria observes, 'almost all serious readers in the eighteenth century compiled such works with a table of contents at the beginning; presumably, they read with an eye to filling out that table'. Samuel Johnson maintained a commitment to recording his reading experiences in precisely this way, 'reflecting on them and evaluating himself by means of such reflection'. Keeping a commonplace book was thus the indispensable tool of the self-critical reader, allowing him or her to negotiate their way through the 'revolutionary' new world of extensive reading with 'enforced and regulated intensity' – to avoid, in

become unremarkable', 'Ephraim Chambers's *Cyclopaedia* (1728) and the Tradition of Commonplaces', *JHI*, 57 (1996), 178. On this debate, see the review of Havens' *Commonplace Books* in *LH*, 19 (2003), 157-8, by Peter Beal.

⁶⁷ In France, Sharpe points out that 'theories and models remained constant [throughout our period] ... the Thermidoreans dreamed of a family book of exempla, a commonplace book that might inculcate virtue in citizens', *Reading Revolutions*, 280.

⁶⁸ L. Dacome, 'Noting the Mind: Commonplace Books and the Pursuit of the Self in Eighteenth-Century Britain', *JHI*, 65 (October 2004), 7; quoting Locke. Sharpe suggests that diversity, dissent and subversion of received wisdom often tended to be the end product even of older commonplace techniques, *Reading Revolutions*, 279.

⁶⁹ Dugald Stewart, *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind* (London, 1792-1827), I, 428.

⁷⁰ Dacome, 'Noting the Mind'; Jackson, *Marginalia*, 184.

Dugald Stewart's words, the detrimental 'habit of extensive and various reading, without reflection'.⁷¹ It also came to be presented as a tool for the common reader rather than just the preserve of the scholar, so that when John Bell released an updated version of Locke's *Common Place Book* in 1770, he argued that

It is not solely for the Divine, the Lawyer, the Poet, Philosopher, or Historian, that this publication is calculated: by these its uses are experimentally known and universally admitted. It is for the use and emolument of the man of business as well as of letters; for men of fashion and fortune as well as of study; for the Traveller, The Trader, and in short for all those who would form a system of useful and agreeable knowledge, in a manner peculiar to themselves, while they are following their accustomed pursuits, either of profit or pleasure.⁷²

All this derived from the fact that the commonplace book was actually remarkably well suited to the processes of self-improvement and self-fashioning that lay at the heart of eighteenth-century notions of the self. Locke himself had argued that 'self identity lay in the mind and resided in the continuity of memory and consciousness', hence his reinvention of commonplace books as repositories for individualised memories rather than as storehouses for a stable canon of collective knowledge.⁷³ This realisation in turn helped provoke a revolution in intellectual culture in Britain by which the pursuit of self-knowledge and self-improvement became the leading motives of Addisonian politeness and sociability: as John Brewer argues, 'the ideals of politeness ... required that a person fashion a polite identity by regulating and refining his passions, a goal that could best be achieved through the medium of literature and the arts'.⁷⁴ In this potent cultural context, commonplace books were compiled by readers in search of 'their own intellectual, moral

⁷¹ DeMaria, 'Samuel Johnson and the Reading Revolution', 88. The quote from Dugald Stewart is taken from *Elements*, I, 446.

⁷² Bell's *Common Place Book, for the pocket; form'd generally upon the principles recommended and practised by Mr. Locke* (London, 1770), [ii]. For a heavily used example, see NAS GD113/1/475, Commonplace Book of a member of the Innes family of Stowe, discussed in detail in Chapter 6, below.

⁷³ Quoted by Dacome, 'Noting the Mind', 605.

⁷⁴ Brewer, *Pleasures*, 106-110, quote from 106; on politeness, see also L. Klein, 'Property and Politeness in the Early Eighteenth-Century Whig Moralists: The Case of *The Spectator*', in J. Brewer and S. Staves (eds.), *Early Modern Conceptions of Property* (London, 1995); idem., *Shaftesbury and the Culture of Politeness* (Cambridge, 1994); and in Scotland, see N. Phillipson, 'Politics, Politeness and the Anglicisation of Early Eighteenth-Century Scottish Culture', in R. Mason (ed.), *Scotland and England, 1286-1815* (Edinburgh, 1987); N. Phillipson, 'Politics and Politeness in the Reigns of Anne and the Early Hanoverians', in J. G. A. Pocock (ed.), *The Varieties of British Political Thought, 1500-1800* (1993).

and social edification’, desiring ‘to achieve good taste and refinement’ and ‘to mold [their] character’.⁷⁵

This was precisely the message conveyed by Scottish philosophers who advocated the use of commonplace books by readers to keep track of their experiences and to improve their own minds. Stewart, for one, argued that excerpting material from one’s reading facilitated ‘perpetual progress in the intellectual powers of the individual’,⁷⁶ while the editors of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* informed readers that the process of keeping a commonplace book ‘not only makes a man read with accuracy and attention, but induces him insensibly to think for himself, provided he considers it not so much as a register of sentiments that strike him in the course of reading, but as a register of his own thoughts upon various subjects’.⁷⁷ Indeed, this was the crucial point: in the ideal world, readers would not excerpt material unthinkingly and mechanically from the books they read, but would impose their own scheme on the knowledge they acquired through reading – whether by divorcing material from its original context and entering it instead under philosophical heads, as Locke and Stewart had recommended, or by taking notes from books in their own words. As James Beattie explained, in a work we have seen was very widely available in provincial Scotland:

When we are so much master of the sentiments of another man as to be able to express them with accuracy in our own words, then we may be said to have digested them, and made them our own; and then it is, and not before, that our understanding is really improved by them. If we chuse to preserve a specimen of an author’s style, or to transcribe any of his thoughts in his own words on account of something that pleases in the expression, there can be no harm in this, provided we do not employ too much time in it.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 108; Miller, *Assuming the Positions*, 23. In this sense, commonplace books were ideally placed to contribute to individuals’ self-fashioning of themselves; ‘self-fashioning’ was first advanced to describe how Renaissance authors constructed identity in themselves and in their readers by S. Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago and London, 1980; 2005).

⁷⁶ Stewart, *Elements*, I, 445.

⁷⁷ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*... (Edinburgh, 1771), II, 241.

⁷⁸ James Beattie, *Essays. On Poetry and Music, ... On Laughter, ... On the Utility of Classical Learning* (Edinburgh, 1776), 519; Beattie was merely rehashing the advice offered by standard pedagogical writers of the eighteenth century, especially Isaac Watts; see Yeo, ‘Ephraim Chambers’s *Cyclopaedia*’, 172.

Moreover, commonplace books served to enhance readers' concentration on books, and by sharpening the focus of their reading practices, improve their critical judgement. As Lord Kames explained in his *Loose Hints on Education* (1781), 'a person who reads merely for amusement, gives little attention: ideas glide through the mind, and vanish instantly. But let a commonplace book be in view: attention is on the stretch to find matter, and impressions are made that the memory retains'. By forcing a reader to be constantly on the look out for material worthy enough to be extracted into his or her commonplace book, Kames argued that 'the judgement is in constant exercise, in order to distinguish what particulars deserve remembrance', with the ultimate effect – if the reader persevered in the practice – of fostering 'a habit of expressing our thoughts readily and distinctly'. He was therefore in no doubt that 'young persons, male and female, should have always at hand a commonplace book, for keeping in remembrance observations made in reading, reflecting, conversing, travelling. The advantages are manifold'.⁷⁹

That was the theory, at any rate. Georgian commonplacers did not always live up to the stringent standards expected of them, however, and one frequently comes across items described as 'commonplace books' by their compilers that bear little or no resemblance to the model advanced in the reading manuals and conduct literature. Readers frequently jettisoned the philosophical heads so enthusiastically propagated by Locke and others, and all sense of order and critical engagement was often abandoned by commonplacers more intent on excerpting the substance of books they borrowed from libraries for only a limited time.⁸⁰ Indeed, some readers' haphazard approaches to commonplacing have justified the pessimism of Moss and others regarding the fate of this great Renaissance tradition in the Georgian period:

⁷⁹ Lord Kames, *Loose Hints upon Education, Chiefly concerning the Culture of the Heart* (Edinburgh, 1781), 128-9.

⁸⁰ For example, George Ridpath 'revised some of Douglas [William Douglas' *Summary Historical and Politic...of the British Settlements in North America* (1749)], and wrote some things out of him in order to returning him to-morrow' on Friday 19th March 1756. He had borrowed the book from the Kelso Subscription Library on 23rd January; *Ridpath*, 53, 59.

It is by no means unusual to find examples of manuscript notebooks carefully ruled up as commonplace-books with the traditional run of mostly moral heads, and even with a nicely calligraphed index and a few desultory entries. But written consecutively across the blank pages will be extracts from reading unrelated to the heads, letters and poems by the owner or of personal interest to him, drafts of sermons, political and theological ruminations of topical interest, and scraps of uncoordinated trivia.⁸¹

Consider, for example, the range of surviving ‘commonplace books’ featuring notes from Adam Smith’s extremely influential and very widely distributed *The Wealth of Nations*. More often than not, such notes contain only a very brief précis of Smith’s leading points, as in the commonplace book of Stephana Malcolm of Burnfoot, for instance, or in the anonymous notes belonging to a member of the Stuart Stevenson family of Castlemilk and Torrance.⁸² They tend to be compliant to Smith’s original, extracting the very words he used (with varying degrees of accuracy) and making no effort either to engage in his broader arguments or to collate passages from different parts of the original that bear on similar themes. At least William Drummond, a nurseryman of Coney Park, near Stirling, attempted to compile an index of Smith’s leading themes, thereby enforcing his own scheme (albeit merely alphabetical) on the material he read, but given the enormity of his task he seems quickly to have given up and moved on to another book entirely.⁸³

Indeed, in an extensive trawl of surviving commonplace books dating from the Georgian period in Scotland, only two have been found whose compilers’ persisted with subjecting *The Wealth of Nations* to any degree of independent critical or organisational analysis. The first of these, compiled by Alexander Fraser of Reelig, had a clearly pedagogical intent. Fraser was destined to join his elder brothers in service in India and apparently compiled the commonplace book late in his teenage years as an introduction to the standards of commerce and trade that he might expect to meet in a nation whose

⁸¹ Moss, *Printed Commonplace-Books*, 279-280; for an example, see *Bell’s Common Place Book*, British Library copy reproduced on *ECCO*.

⁸² NLS Acc.6684/45-6, Commonplace books of Stephana Malcolm of Burnfoot; NLS MS 5330, Miscellaneous papers, Stuart Stevenson of Castlemilk and Torrance.

⁸³ NLS Acc.5699, Commonplace book of William Drummond of Coney Park, Stirling, ff62-64v. My identification derives from the will of a William Drummond, nursery and seedsman of Coney Park, who died in 1824; NAS SC67/36/8, 209.

circumstances were so different from those of modern Britain.⁸⁴ The opening pages of his commonplace book were filled up with a series of over eight hundred questions directly addressing Smith's original text, although it is not clear whether Fraser himself had composed these questions as a memory aid or whether they were set for him by the family tutor to test his reading. The questions ranged from simple one liners addressing core features of Smith's analysis, such as numbers 3, 'In what does the wealth [of] a country consist?', 7, 'How does Dr Smith illustrate the division of labour?', and 11, 'What is the principle which has given rise to the division of labour?', to more detailed questions that focused explicitly on the English East India Company that Fraser was soon to join, including numbers 516, 'In what respects do joint stock companies differ from private copartneries?', and 528, 'Why would the India company probably fail if they were to trade as a joint stock company after the expiration of their charter & without exclusive privileges?'.⁸⁵

Fraser may therefore have imposed his own organisational structure on Smith's arguments, but he was patently not exercising his own critical judgement. Though usually accurate, his answers did not represent independent engagement with Smith's text but rather compliantly followed the terms of Smith's analysis, usually copying Smith word for word. Fraser's answer to question 11 merely reads like the dutiful response of a slightly bored undergraduate student, reproducing the relevant portion of Smith's text mechanically and at full length.⁸⁶ Moreover, he was not especially persistent: he left many questions unanswered, many more were treated in the manner of question 516 noted above, to which Fraser merely appended a page reference, '122-123',⁸⁷ and many

⁸⁴ Very little is known about Alexander (who died as a young man in India), but his brothers James Baillie and William are both included in the *ODNB*. None of them appear to have been to university, so Alexander's approach to Smith may have been recommended by his private tutor in Edinburgh or at the family estate in Invernessshire. Alwyn Clark describes the impact made by the teachings of Hugh Cleghorn, Professor of Civil History at St Andrews University, whose lectures were clearly influenced by Smith, Millar and others, on students he later encountered serving in India; see A. Clark, *An Enlightened Scot: Hugh Cleghorn, 1752-1837* (Duns, 1992).

⁸⁵ NRAS 2696, volume 18, commonplace book of A. C. Fraser on Smith's *The Wealth of Nations*.

⁸⁶ Commonplace book of A. C. Fraser, f3r; compare Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, I, 25, 27-8 (hereafter, *WN*).

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, f95r; probably referring to *WN*, II, 740-1.

answers reflected the short-attention span of a teenage student day-dreaming of more exciting pursuits.

A Scottish reader who subjected *The Wealth of Nations* to a greater degree of critical analysis, while also being intimately associated with Britain's imperial effort, was Andrew Douglas of Cavers, paymaster in the Navy. Usually, he was content simply to compile a register of the basic planks of Smith's argument: 'Labour is the Fountain from whence flow the necessities & conveniences of life – and the wealth of nations'; 'The increased improvements in the productive Powers of labour seem to have been the effects of the division of labour'.⁸⁸ This was entirely consistent with his wider commonplace technique, as we shall see, although in this instance he added occasional commentary of his own. On 'man's help from his brethren', for instance, Douglas noted gratefully 'It is true – that it is imprudent there to expect so as to depend upon it – yet I thank God – that I as well as many others have there found it'. He elaborated on Smith's discussion of the origin of manufactures ('Charters were granted to corporations – which established a kind of monopoly, to nurse arts in their infancy – but the swaddling clothes of children – are absurd in mankind thus incorporated towns have drove manufactures into their suburbs & neighbourhoods'), while he added to Smith's argument that 'poverty ... is extremely unfavourable to the rearing of children' his own gloss, 'especially in an immoral and luxurious people'.⁸⁹

On occasion, Douglas criticised elements of Smith's analysis. He took exception to Smith's derogation of 'exclusive companies', with the East India Company once more explicitly in view, noting 'NB – without the united efforts of the wealth & strength of a company – could the English ever have established factories in Turkey, the East Indies or in Africa? Where individuals would require protective government, policy & security of some community'. Perhaps most fittingly, given his own career, he took issue with a note summarising Smith's view that mankind's trust in 'good fortune ... overrules our Army and Navy' with his own qualification, 'true, but who that resents all expenses, risks &

⁸⁸ NLS Adv. MS 17.1.10, Commonplace Book of Andrew Douglas, f203r; compare *WN*, I, 10, 13.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, f203r, f205v, f204v; compare *WN*, I, 26, 140-1, 97.

losses would ever put plough in ground'. These minor glosses were backed up with notes in which Douglas appeared to take direct issue with Smith's style of argument, such as the accusatory note, 'Subdivisions of self-evidence facts, or of obvious truths – rather obscure than clear them'.⁹⁰ Douglas was therefore prepared to engage on his own terms with Smith, even though for the most part his notes were eminently compliant and respectful of Smith's original. Nevertheless, Douglas's rare attempts to engage with Smith's original do not measure up to more independent critical readings, including those of the Westmorland commonplacer analysed by David Allan.⁹¹

Such treatments of Smith demonstrate that commonplacing was actually something of a double-edged sword, allowing critical readers on the one hand to improve their mental capacities, but also enabling less skilled or less highly motivated readers to copy material mechanically from books without much discernment or reflection. While Samuel Johnson used commonplace books as only one part of an exceptionally variegated approach to reading, in the hands of less proficient readers commonplace books could lead to mechanical and inattentive reading, as well as to a great deal of 'useless deliberation' – hence Swift's notorious quip, 'What tho' his *Head* be empty ... provided his *Commonplace-Book* be full'.⁹² This worry undoubtedly coloured much eighteenth-century discourse on the issue, and even prompted the Kirkcudbright diarist to jot down, 'Begin to think that taking notes on reading is not a beneficial practice'.⁹³

Nevertheless, even the most intellectually submissive commonplace books are useful in allowing us to assess how historical readers approached their reading, what influenced their reading habits, why they chose certain books and what they hoped to achieve by reading them. By extracting material from Smith in whatever degree of critical competency, each of the readers discussed above revealed that they regarded Smith as in

⁹⁰ Commonplace Book of Andrew Douglas, ff203r-211v; compare *WN*, II, 735, 125-6.

⁹¹ Allan, 'A Reader Writes'.

⁹² DeMaria, *Samuel Johnson*, 46; Swift quote on 89, though he was often a great deal more positive about commonplacing.

⁹³ Diary of David Campbell, 5 September 1823. Campbell's indecision on whether or not to make notes from his reading seems itself to have been an important part of his own self-fashioning process: in 1822, he had been perfectly happy to take notes from Beattie's *Life of Samuel Johnson*, determining 'to keep separately an account of what books I should read with remarks'; 6 February 1822.

some way important for understanding the world in which they lived. For Douglas and Fraser, involved as they both were (or were soon to be) in Britain's relations with elements of the non-commercial world, understanding what Smith had to say was clearly considered of vital importance to the way they set about their careers. With this in mind, we turn now to a brief survey of surviving commonplace books (contextualised wherever possible by other sources for reading experiences as outlined above) to explore why Scottish readers returned so often to three key genres in our earlier analyses of book circulation: philosophy (especially the *belles lettres*), history and science.

IV

It is clear that some philosophical texts of the Scottish Enlightenment were held to be central to the process of self-fashioning in which many contemporary readers were engaged. The navy paymaster Andrew Douglas, who never attended university as far as we can tell,⁹⁴ lavished a great deal of attention on Ferguson's *Institutes* (eminently well suited for the task as an explicitly pedagogical text) precisely because it demonstrated in simple terms how knowledge and philosophy related to everyday behaviour: 'In speculation we endeavour to establish general rules. In practice, we study particular cases, or apply general rules to regulate our conduct.'⁹⁵ By noting down Ferguson's definitions of basic terms in philosophical discourse ('a priori' vs. 'a posteriori', 'analytic' vs. 'synthetic', etc.), Douglas provided himself with a general introduction to moral philosophy. Having thus registered the key terms of Ferguson's *Institutes* to satisfy his own understanding, Douglas proceeded to fillet the rest of Ferguson's primer for useful tips and maxims on behaviour – under such traditional eighteenth-century commonplace heads as 'charity', 'luxury', 'credit', 'liberty' and 'public spirit'.⁹⁶ As was Douglas' habit, he transcribed material from Ferguson word for word, but did elaborate

⁹⁴ No one of his name appears in the matriculation or graduation records of the Scottish universities for this period, although it is notoriously difficult to identify students; *Matric. Glas.*; *Matric St A.* At Edinburgh University, records did not include students' place of birth (until 1811) or parents names (until 1920), and besides many did not bother with the formalities of matriculation or graduation.

⁹⁵ NLS Adv MS 17.10.12, f87r; compare, Adam Ferguson, *Institutes of Moral Philosophy. For the Use of Students in the College of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1769), 2.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, ff87-9; compare Ferguson, *Institutes*, 249, 270, 274, 288, 304. Douglas did not, though, deploy a Lockean index to keep track of such heads; his notes were arranged sequentially.

on occasion, adding ‘Queere’ (Query) alongside maxims that he considered needed further reflection – such as a note on justice that ‘the act of an individual is not the act of the state’.⁹⁷

Though he neglected the organisational niceties of formal commonplace technique, Douglas may have noticed parallels between his notes from Ferguson’s *Institutes* and his reading of Beattie’s *Essays on Poetry and Music*. Though ostensibly on a less technical theme, Douglas still managed to plunder Beattie for material of a generally moralistic nature that might guide his own conduct. In this instance, the favourite Scottish Enlightenment principle of sympathy came to the fore – indeed, Douglas labelled the extract ‘Beattie on Sympathy’.⁹⁸ Once again, Douglas first took time to note down a basic definition of his key term: ‘sympathy transmutes ourselves into the state of others, by adopting their joys & miseries as our own. They who have a lively imagination, keen feelings, or what we call a tender heart are the most subject to sympathy’. Douglas further noted how sympathetic instincts could be developed in someone who was not so naturally inclined to them, through a programme of ‘Attention, the study of the works of nature & art, experience of adversity, the love of virtue & of mankind, [which] tend greatly to cherish sympathy’, as well as ‘cautiously avoiding every occasion of giving pain or offence’. Finally, however, Douglas also made clear how vital sympathy was to human conduct apparently in a deliberate effort to manipulate and improve his own behaviour. Sympathy, he noted eagerly, ‘render[s] a man humanly amiable & useful’; ‘Sympathy might be made a powerful instrument of moral discipline employed in calling forth our sensibility towards such emotions only as favour virtue & invigorate the mind; cherishing the passions, which improve the heart can hardly be indulged to excess’.⁹⁹

Clearly, Douglas’ essentially submissive reading of Ferguson and Beattie was intended to have a direct, pragmatic effect on the way he conceived himself and behaved, and this is

⁹⁷ Ibid., f88r; compare Ferguson, *Institutes*, 229.

⁹⁸ NLS Adv. MS 17.1.10, f292v.

⁹⁹ Ibid., f128v; compare with Beattie, *Essays on Poetry and Music*, 489-92. On the concept of sympathy in the Scottish Enlightenment, see Dwyer, *VD*, 52-65; A. Broadie, *The Scottish Enlightenment: The Historical Age of the Historical Nation* (Edinburgh, 2001), 101-8; Luigi Turco, ‘Moral Sense and the Foundations of Morals’, in *CC*; Berry, 156-6.

a recurrent theme in eighteenth-century readings of Scottish philosophy.¹⁰⁰ A crucial part of such projects often focussed on language itself, as the means by which polite and mutually-sympathetic individuals communicated with each other. Douglas himself compiled a huge collection of notes from George Campbell's *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, starting once more by using Campbell to build up a definition of key terms like 'purity' and 'perspicuity', before progressing to tackle Campbell's thoughts on how those key concepts came into play in the canonical classics of English literature.¹⁰¹ From Beattie's *Essays on Poetry and Music*, too, Douglas compiled plentiful notes on important features of English composition, including 'hyperbole' and 'the pathetic'.¹⁰²

Another commonplacer, the young Henry Robert Oswald (1790-1862), compiled his own systematic abridgement of Blair's *Lectures* as an adjunct to completing his formal medical training – perhaps on the instruction of his professors, since this was a key subject in the Scottish curriculum.¹⁰³ Even the 2nd Earl of Mansfield gave pride of place to a discussion of the relative merits of the various writers on eloquence in a commonplace book he began for the explicit purpose of educating his children.¹⁰⁴ In all instances, readers' did not just transcribe notes on the basics of English language, but they also paid close attention to the Scottish rhetoricians' comments on practitioners in prose and verse – thus cultivating their own good taste in literature.

¹⁰⁰ Other philosophical commonplace books have a decidedly educational feel to them, like William Cochran's abridgement of Hutcheson's *Logicae Compendium* (1759), which was probably a student exercise prescribed a professor at Glasgow University to facilitate Cochran's memorization of important statements; NRAS 852 Bundle 129, William Cochran's *Logica Compendium*, c.1780; matriculand 3075, *Matric. Glas.*

¹⁰¹ NLS Adv. MS 17.1.11, ff213r-220v; compare, George Campbell, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (London, 1776), ix. On Scottish rhetoric, see P. G. Bator, 'The Unpublished Rhetoric Lectures of Robert Watson, Professor of Logic, Rhetoric, and Metaphysics at the University of St. Andrews, 1756-1778', *Rhetorica*, (12, 1994-5); T. Miller, *The Formation of College English: Rhetoric and Belles Lettres in the British Culture Provinces* (Pittsburgh, 1997); M. G. Moran (ed.), *Eighteenth-century British and American Rhetorics and Rhetoricians* (Westport Ct, 1994). On Campbell specifically, see J. M. Suderman, *Orthodoxy and Enlightenment: George Campbell in the Eighteenth Century* (Montreal and Kingston, Ont., 2001).

¹⁰² Adv. MS 17.1.11, f129v; compare, Beattie, *Essays*, 364.

¹⁰³ Oswald only appears in the Edinburgh student rolls in 1844, when he submitted his M.D. thesis, though it is likely he attended Edinburgh University much earlier than this. NLS MS 9002, Commonplace Book of Henry Robert Oswald; on Blair's *Lectures*, see V. Bevilacqua, 'Philosophical Assumptions underlying Hugh Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*', *Western Speech*, 31 (1967), 150-64.

¹⁰⁴ NRAS 776, Volume 814, Commonplace book of David Murray, 2nd Earl of Mansfield, f4r.

Of course, Scottish *belles lettres* need not always have had this generalist pedagogical appeal, and many aspiring authors turned to Blair, Beattie, Campbell *et al* to hone their literary talents. One such reader was the minister of Kirknewton outside Edinburgh, William Cameron,¹⁰⁵ whose commonplace book resembled in large part a manual for writing poetry. Cameron, who released a collection of his own poetry in 1780,¹⁰⁶ compiled fulsome notes from Gerard's *Essay on Genius* on the relationship between genius and the imagination: 'A man may have taste, judgement, learning but without invention is not a man of genius – On this acc't Shakespeare is a great Genius than Milton – Socrates, Aristotle & Bacon great original geniuses. Newton only improv'd upon the plan th't Bacon chalked out. The former was of most acute the latter the most comprehensive Genius'; 'Imagination is a source of Genius, but if it were left entirely to itself it would become wild & extravagant. Mere fancy or Imag'tn therefore cannot be call'd Genius. Imagination with moderate Judgement will constitute Genius but Judgement w't'out Imagin'tn cannot produce a single spark of Genius'.¹⁰⁷

Cameron's notes thereby leaned heavily on literary examples and also featured extensive biographical notes plundered from Samuel Johnson's *Lives of the English Poets* (1781), Thomas Wharton's *History of English Poetry* (1774) and Daniel Webb's *Remarks on the Beauties of Poetry* (1762). These not only contributed to Cameron's attempt to fashion a poetic identity for himself, but also helped him cultivate his own taste by exposing him to the canonical pantheon of English literature.¹⁰⁸ Moreover, much of the material on language in Cameron's commonplace book also informed his day job, including notes from Beattie's *Dissertations* clearly extracted with the composition of sermons in mind: 'To facilitate the mandating of sermons, a competence of theological learning is

¹⁰⁵ ODNB.

¹⁰⁶ William Cameron, *Poems on Various Occasions* (1780).

¹⁰⁷ NAS CH1/15/3, Commonplace Book of William Cameron, ff16v-17r; compare, Alexander Gerard, *An Essay on Genius* (London, 1774), 8-19, 36-9. See Berry, 175-7, 184.

¹⁰⁸ On the cultivation of taste, see Berry, 174-80; J. Flynn, 'Scottish Aesthetics and the Search for a Standard of Taste', *Dalhousie Review*, 60 (1980), 5-19.

necessary, also a knowledge of their language and sentiment. Passages of holy writ are the most valuable parts of a sermon when properly connected & judiciously chosen'.¹⁰⁹

The crucial point of all of this was that by making a particular study of language, readers could equip themselves with the necessary tools to engage with their textual authorities on their own terms. Andrew Douglas annotated his own transcription of John Home's tragedy *Alonzo* which he attempted to assess, in his own words, 'in the mercantile stile ... Creditor & Debtor'. As we can see, his criticism ranged from simple, one-word assessment to quite complex literary analysis:

From the colour of the dawn, he foretold the brightness of the day – The beauty of the expression is hurt by the vanity of the application
Mrs Barry: Reached the Summit of Perfection – An instance how exaggeration diminishes affected strength
Like Eastern Princes in this House you sit ... – Good
Our Heroines smile on you with all their might – very low
Should you but frown, even brave Alonzo flies – A tolerable point
Oh my dear Teresa! ... The fairest side of things – Very tender
Grief and care ... who dress the Queen of love in wanton smiles – Excellent painting, descriptive
But suddenly a troop of Spaniards came – Here is a lean, poverty of plot – miracles & accidents improbably are the stinking platters of poetic genius
The deserts vast/ of Asia and Africa have heard it – This flight is ridiculous – has desert ears?
When sore affliction comes ... and strips it bear of all its leaves – The comparison is just & beautifully melancholy.
Alonzo, fighting in my cause ... against the foes of Spain – The noble motive is nobly expressed¹¹⁰

In this way, Douglas deployed the fruits of his reading of Campbell, Beattie *et al* in analysing the linguistic merits and faults of the play, since he acknowledged in another apothegm culled from his reading that 'Criticism is a profitable exercise of the judgement

¹⁰⁹ Commonplace Book of William Cameron, ff29r-29v; compare, James Beattie, *Dissertations Moral and Critical. On Memory and Imagination. On Dreaming. The Theory of Language. On fable and Romance* (London, 1783), 47. Scottish Enlightenment dictates on pulpit eloquence are discussed in *CU*, 168-86.

¹¹⁰ Adv. MS 17.1.11, ff46v-48r; compare, John Home, *Alonzo: A Tragedy* (London, 1773), iii-v, 11, 13, 18, 37, 47-8 (original transcribed by Douglas in italics here).

when it is equally investigating beauties and blemishes'.¹¹¹ By practising his critical talents in such a self-conscious manner, he was more firmly entrenching his independent judgement as a reader.

Meanwhile, the particular linguistic agenda of certain Scottish writers to expunge 'Scotticisms' from their work also had an evident impact on the way readers conceived their own use of language in writing and speech. Publications like Sir John Sinclair's *Observations on the Scottish Dialect* (1782) and James Beattie's *List of two hundred Scotticisms with Remarks* (1779) were especially well suited to this kind of self-fashioning, leaving as they did blank spaces with an explicit invitation to readers that they should fill them out with the correct forms of English usage. It was precisely in this manner that John Drummond Erskine filled out his copy of Sinclair's *Observations*, no doubt attempting to refine his rough east-coast accent in preparation for taking up a post in India. He also added extemporaneous notes to the effect that, for instance, 'Word in Scotch means also mention, report + / I have heard no word about him / I have heard no mention of him', 'the English usually divide the Day into two parts only morning & evening – the Scotch divide it into four parts, morning, forenoon, afternoon, & evening', and 'Dull of hearing is used for deaf, but the single word dull is not used in that sense'.¹¹² Erskine also revealed his familiarity with the classics of Scottish literature in elucidating Sinclair's discussion of the term 'Gentle', pointing out that it meant 'of noble blood – The Gentle Shepherd All: Ramsay means the Shepherd of high birth'.¹¹³

Andrew Douglas also took an intense interest in Scotticisms, although his attempts to improve his use of the English language were guided by a much more unusual source – the *Animadversions upon the Elements of Criticism* (1771) published by another Scottish exile in England, James Elphinston.¹¹⁴ Douglas immediately homed in on Elphinston's

¹¹¹ Ibid.; I have not identified where this apothegm may have come from, and it may well have been Douglas' own phrase.

¹¹² Sinclair, *Observations on the Scottish Dialect* (1782), Dunimarle Library copy [no shelfmark]; for these examples, see 34, 47 and 101. Compare with James Beattie, *Scotticisms*, British Library copy, shelfmark c.61.b.6(1). On the Scottish obsession with Scotticisms, see especially Berry, 16-17; *CU*, 214.

¹¹³ Sinclair, *Observations on the Scottish Dialect*, Dunimarle Library copy; 102.

¹¹⁴ For Elphinston, see *ODNB*; what biographical detail we have on Douglas derives from his commonplace books, and personal ephemera he transcribed suggest he was based at the admiralty buildings in London.

introductory argument that ‘improvement ought to be the sole object of criticism. Expression may be improved in its arrangement, neatness, veracity, harmony, dignity, precision & purity’. He proceeded to translate Elphinston’s direct assault on the prevalence of Scotticisms in Lord Kames’ classic *Elements of Criticism* into a series of generalist injunctions which he could apply to his own use of the English language, ranging from snappy maxims (‘In terminations, avoid a feeble word’; ‘Licentious ellipses detract from beauty as well as from correctness’) to longer summaries: ‘Scoticism consists chiefly in the different application or construction of English words. No English word is so often misapplied by the Scotch as these for those. These, like this, exhibits its object near & definite; those, like that, its object remote or indefinite’.¹¹⁵

V

As we have seen, readers’ attempts to reconstruct the way they spoke were usually occasioned by an urgent professional or vocational need. The same could also be said of reading history, whose traditional purpose, of course, was in large part vocational – history being ‘philosophy teaching by examples’, it prepared young gentlemen for their entry into the world of political affairs.¹¹⁶ Some argued that being well versed in history remained a vital prerequisite to an active political career even in the late eighteenth century, including John Grant, the minister of Dundurcus, who advised Lord George Gordon (recently elected MP) to read up on the history of Parliament and English law before going down to Westminster – advice that the dangerously unbalanced Gordon may

¹¹⁵ Adv MS17.1.11, f127r; compare, James Elphinston, *Animadversions upon Elements of Criticism ...* (London, 1771), iii, 55, 51, 84-5, and 87. Others clearly resisted the anglicising efforts of Beattie, Elphinston, Sinclair and others, as we hinted in Chapter 1. John Ramsay of Ochtertyre, for example, was a staunch defender of the Scots vernacular, and ‘lamented the adoption of English accents and language’. The use of the Doric he considered unjustly ‘neglected by a fastidious generation who forgot that it is the language of pastoral poetry superior to anything ancient or modern’; *Ochtertyre*, xvii, 263.

¹¹⁶ See for example, K. O’Brien, ‘The History Market in Eighteenth-Century England’, I. Rivers (ed.), *Books and their Readers in Eighteenth-Century England: New Essays* (Leicester University Press, London, 2001), 105-6. P. Hicks argues that eighteenth-century notions of politeness still made history essential: ‘historical study was useful to the man of taste if it assisted in polishing his manners, cultivating his aesthetic capacity and educating him for public life’, *Neoclassical History and English Culture: Clarendon to Hume* (Basingstoke, 1996), 172.

have done well to follow.¹¹⁷ Others turned to history for more technical professional reasons: Rev. David Imrie consulted Kames' *Historical Law Tracts* in researching historical valuations of land in and around Dumfries (perhaps with a view to claiming that his own stipend should be enhanced), while many others compiled commonplace books of legal history, raiding such works as William Borthwick's *Inquiry into the Origins and Limitations of the Feudal Dignities in Scotland* (1775), Dalrymple's *Feudal Property*, Kames' *Historical Law Tracts*, William Ogilvie's *Essay on the Right of Property in Land* (1781), and Gilbert Stuart's *Historical Dissertation Concerning the Antiquity of the English Constitution* (1768) and his *Observations Concerning the Public Law and Constitutional History of Scotland* (1779) in the process.¹¹⁸

Perhaps the most striking vocational reader of history was David Murray (1727-1796), 2nd Earl of Mansfield, who as an aspiring diplomat in the 1750s had compiled a manuscript history of the development of the European states system since the treaty of Westphalia in 1648. By the time Murray came across Watson's *Philip II*, perhaps soon after its publication in 1777, he had already served as the British ambassador to Dresden, Warsaw, Vienna and Paris. As such, he was the leading British diplomat of his generation, had the ear of George III and was one of Scotland's sixteen representative peers. In Paris, he worked hard to delay the breakdown in diplomatic relations that led to war in 1778 as the French came to the assistance of the American colonial rebels, and when back in London served as *de facto* foreign secretary at a crucial juncture in the American War of Independence (October 1779-March 1782).¹¹⁹

Murray's conscientious notes from Watson's *Philip II* were clearly compiled with this potent context uppermost in his mind, allowing him to understand further the

¹¹⁷ NAS GD248/616/3/2, recommending Kames' *Sketches of the History of Man*. Lord George Gordon (1751-1793) entered Parliament in 1778 and as president of the Protestant Association in England gave his name to the anti-Catholic Gordon riots in 1780, see *ODNB*; *CU*, 194-5; R. K. Donovan, *No Popery and Radicalism: Opposition to Roman Catholic Relief in Scotland, 1778-1782* (New York, 1987).

¹¹⁸ Dumfries and Galloway Archives, GGD446/2, Accounts and Notes of David Imrie, Minister of St Mungo's; on Imrie, see *Fasti*. Other legal commonplace books include two compiled by the 2nd Earl of Mansfield, NRAS 776, vols. 804-5; and NAS GD248/535/8, Notebooks of John Grant of Grant.

¹¹⁹ *ODNB*. On Mansfield's contribution to British foreign policy, see H. M. Scott, *British Foreign Policy in the Age of the American Revolution* (Oxford, 1990).

controversies that had provoked the American Revolution. For instance, he highlighted the Duke of Alva's tyrannical stewardship of the Netherlands with British rule of the colonies clearly in mind: Dutch 'commerce was almost entirely ruined ... by [Alva's] neglecting to provide a naval force to oppose the exiles at sea', whereas the series of taxes imposed on the colonies by the British Parliament through the 1760s and early 1770s had been intended explicitly to finance their defence against French and native American aggressors.¹²⁰ Moreover, in transcribing Watson's account of the 'assistance in money given the states by Queen Elizabeth' in 1576, he underlined Elizabeth's insistence that they should 'not throw off their allegiance to their legal sovereign' – with the obvious implication that however unhappy the American colonists had been, they should not have thrown off their own constitutional relationship with Britain. Indeed, this particular note may even have been compiled by Murray with French military support for the colonists very much in mind – perhaps to be deployed in his diplomatic wranglings with the French.¹²¹ Meanwhile, Murray took direct issue with Watson's 'very inaccurate' portrayal of the Treaty of Utrecht as a prototype Declaration of Independence, perhaps taking aim at the historical antecedents cited in the American Declaration itself.¹²²

Given his ability to influence affairs of state, Murray was an ideal reader of *Philip II*: Watson's analysis of the moral deprivations brought upon Spain by the overreach of empire in the sixteenth century was only a thinly veiled warning for what might happen to the burgeoning British empire in the eighteenth, especially as events in America unfolded.¹²³ William Cameron also focused directly on Britain's colonies in North

¹²⁰ NRAS 776, Volume 811, Historical notes on the Reign of Philip II of Spain, 1-2; compare, Robert Watson, *The History of the Reign of Philip the Second, King of Spain* (London, 1777), I, 392. Mansfield extracted Watson's exact phrase, that Alva's government 'had thrown it [the Netherlands] into the most terrible combustion and kindled the flames of a destructive war'.

¹²¹ 'Historical notes on the Reign of Philip II', 4; compare, Watson, *Philip II*, II, 18.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 6. Murray's criticism was entered in the margin alongside his transcription of Watson's original argument that 'This union may justly be considered as the first foundation of the Republic of the United Provinces. It is still regarded as containing the fundamental laws of the constitution ... the Provinces tacitly assume to themselves the sovereign authority & lodge it partly in the general assembly of the states, & partly in the states of the several Provinces'; compare, Watson, *History of Philip II*, II, 66. See NAS GD18/5148, Miscellaneous Notes, C18, which may also have been taken from Watson. On Scottish Enlightenment responses to the American Revolution, see Berry, 107-9; *CU*, 262-76.

¹²³ Mansfield played 'an important part in Britain's foreign policy throughout the first half of the American War', Scott, *British Foreign Policy*, 236-7. On Watson, see David Allan, 'Anti-Hispanicism and the Construction of Late Eighteenth-century British Patriotism: Robert Watson's *History of the Reign of Philip*

America, this time working his way attentively through William Barron's *History of the Colonization of the Free States of Antiquity*. The St Andrews Professor had expressly marketed his latest work as a historical commentary on Britain's 'contest' with her American colonies, and Cameron endorsed his optimism that 'perhaps the Am: colonies may in time be more reconciled to a standing army, as Britain has been tho' formerly it thought it dangerous to liberty, when it was established in the last century at a time when the parliament was so jealous of the royal prerogative'.¹²⁴ A member of the Irvine family of Drum Castle, by contrast, used the history of ancient Rome to contextualise another massive event in European affairs in the 1790s: 'Internal commotion during the Roman republic proved the cause of foreign wars. The Patricians were glad to employ the attention of the plebeian in this way to secure their own authority – This principle of action exemplified in the French Revolution'.¹²⁵

Rev. Cameron later made use of another of Barron's works to guide his own thoughts on a second crucial point of friction in British imperial affairs, his *History of the Political Connection between England and Ireland* (1780). Barron's book was occasioned this time by contemporary proposals to extend free trade to Ireland, foreshadowing the Treaty of Union that would be imposed on Ireland in 1800-1. Cameron's notes took in the basic outline of Barron's account and thus gave him ample historical material to support the view that Ireland would be more thoroughly reconciled to civil society by a closer union with Britain. Where Henry VII 'restored ... peace to Ireland', Elizabeth I 'totally settled' her disorders, and James I 'greatly improved the state of I.', George III could himself be

the Second, *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 77 (2000), 423-449; *CU*, 317. The loss of her American colonies was taken by many Scottish moralists as a sign that 'excessive refinement and luxury and the concomitant effeminacy and dependence which it produced' were already evident in the British Empire; Dwyer, *VD*, 40.

¹²⁴ Commonplace Book of William Cameron, ff5v-7r, quote from f7r; the note quoted above derives from William Barron, *History of the Colonization of the Free States of Antiquity, applied to the Present Contest between Great Britain and her American Colonies* (London, 1777), around 140-2. Though undated by Cameron himself, internal evidence suggests his commonplace book was probably compiled between 1782 and the early 1790s; the position of these notes near the front of his commonplace book would therefore suggest they were made in the early 1780s, when the hope still persisted that Britain would be reconciled with her American colonies. On Barron, see *ODNB* and M. R. M. Towsey, 'St Andrews University in the Scottish Enlightenment: Disseminating the Project of Enlightenment in Provincial Scotland' (unpublished MLitt dissertation, University of St Andrews, 2003), 14, 19, 34-48.

¹²⁵ NRAS 1500/97, Notes on Ancient Rome, f1r; possibly the reader's own conclusion based on Abbé de Vertot, *The History of the Revolutions that happened in the Government of the Roman Republic* (London, 1720). The same comparison was drawn by Adam Ferguson; see *Correspondence of Adam Ferguson*, lxxxii-lxxxvii, 384-5.

relied upon to rescue Ireland once more from its ‘wretched situation’.¹²⁶ An unidentified member of the Clerk of Penicuik family took a rather different view of ‘English control over Ireland’, highlighting instead an independent streak in the Irish Parliament: under Charles I, for instance, our reader noted that the Irish Parliament joined in ‘an inclination to encroach on the prerogative’ that spread across the British Isles, perhaps revealing his more sympathetic reading of Irish relations with England.¹²⁷

The commonplace book of Andrew Douglas, meanwhile, takes us back to America. Douglas compiled a huge collection of notes from Robertson’s *History of America* which demonstrate that the annals of history did not simply provide readers with opinions on the major political upheavals of the eighteenth century, but also allowed them to understand more mundane features of their lives. Many of Robertson’s themes related very closely to Douglas’ own career as a paymaster in the navy, including such topics as the history of navigation and ship building, Robertson’s account of the European voyages of discovery and the role of colonisation in fostering commercial society.¹²⁸ Such notes were contextualised by others specifically on the history of the navy in England, including the encouragement given to the navy by major historical agents like Henry VIII and by Cromwell.¹²⁹

Douglas then followed through his interest in the relationship between maritime history and the development of commercial society with an intensive study of Gibson’s *History of Glasgow*. As was his custom, he first took down the basic starting blocks of Gibson’s enquiry, including details of Glasgow’s foundation and early history. He then transcribed a great deal of quantitative and qualitative data to demonstrate how the growth of Glasgow in terms both of its population and revenues had outstripped those of Edinburgh and smaller Scottish towns like Jedburgh in the eighteenth century, and explored how

¹²⁶ Ibid., ff57r-57v; compare, William Barron, *History of the Political Connection between England and Ireland, from the Reign of Henry II to the Present Time* (London, 1780), 2-3, 88, 127-8, 134, 200.

¹²⁷ NAS GD18/5133, Notes on English Control of Ireland; quote from f3v; possibly derived from Barron, *England and Ireland*, 154.

¹²⁸ NLS Adv. MS 17.1.10, ff56r-126r; compare Robertson, *History of America*.

¹²⁹ Ibid., f151v; the unattributed notes yield no matches on *ECCO*.

Glasgow's maritime commerce with the colonies had stimulated its triumphant rise.¹³⁰ He therefore linked together one of the most noteworthy features of Scottish history in his own lifetime with a vocational interest in British maritime development, highlighting the guiding hand of commerce, that great touchstone of eighteenth-century Scottish discourse.¹³¹

Of course, history was naturally suited to make a contribution to readers' more intimate assessments of where they had come from and what their place was in the modern commercial world.¹³² Many readers trawled such works as Hailes' *Annals of Scotland* and Robertson's *History of Scotland* for information relating to their ancestors.¹³³ One particularly engaging example was Walter Scott of Datchet (1750-1825), an illegitimate son of the 2nd Duke of Buccleuch. He compiled notes on Scotland's turbulent past from a range of sources, including Hume's *History*, Henry's *History* and Pinkerton's *History of Scotland*, always highlighting the contribution of the great houses of the border region. A note from James Pettit Andrews' *History of Great Britain* (1794) confirmed that 'Alexander Lord Hume was a powerful & turbulent baron. He had behaved so ill in his capacity as warden of the borders, that he was suspected of having assassinated James 4th to prevent an examination into his own misconduct. His retreat with the remaining troops at Flodden was looked on as scandalous'.¹³⁴ Scott was a major in the thirteenth regiment of foot, noted, for instance, for his contribution to the seizure and defence of Minorca, so notes on so resolutely a martial theme would naturally have enhanced his own concept of military valour. However, the specific attention he paid to the rise of his ancestor, Walter Scott of Buccleuch, 'the powerful border chieftain' who attempted in 1526 to rescue the

¹³⁰ Ibid., ff125r-126v; J. Gibson, *The History of Glasgow* (Glasgow, 1777).

¹³¹ On the growth of Glasgow, see T. M. Devine, *The Tobacco Lords: A Study of the Tobacco Merchants of Glasgow and their Trading Activities, c.1740-90* (Edinburgh, 1975); idem., 'The Colonial Trades and Industrial Investment in Scotland, c.1700-1815', in P. Emmer and F. Gaastra, *The Organisation of Interoceanic Trade in European Expansion, 1450-1800* (Aldershot, 1996); T. M. Devine and G. Jackson (eds.), *Glasgow: Volume 1, Beginnings to 1830* (Manchester, 1995).

¹³² Woolf, *Reading History*, 129.

¹³³ See for example NAS GD22/4/57, notes from Hailes' *Annals of Scotland* on famous Graham Earls of Menteith; NAS GD18/5148, Miscellaneous notes, 1801, notes on the Earl of Huntley's rebellion from Robertson's *History of Scotland*.

¹³⁴ NAS GD224/812/12, 1-2; compare James Pettit Andrews, *The History of Great Britain, Connected with the Chronology of Europe with notes etc.* (London, 1794), II, 221 n.134. Biographical information has been pieced together from correspondence and other material associated with Scott held in GD224.

teenage James V from the Earl of Angus, reflects his search through the annals of Scottish history for a sense of self – to help him understand where he had come from, and consolidate his own somewhat tarnished identification with the great house of Buccleuch. Doubtless he dreamt of emulating the heroism of his ancestor who in 1526 had been ‘forced to retire but not without the slaughter of many of his enemies’.¹³⁵

Many more treated Scottish history as a general mine of information to understand the nation to which they belonged. William Cameron reduced Robertson’s *History of Scotland* to three pages of concise notes on critical junctures in the nation’s past, especially its relations with England: ‘Ed: I of Eng: nearly reduced Scot’d but by the bravery of Bruce & Wallace was defeated ... Henry 8 first gain’d interest in Scotland – thought to make himself master of it by marrying his son to Mary queen of Scots’.¹³⁶ An anonymous law student from Dumfries collected notes from the early volumes of Henry’s *History* that homed in on Scottish affairs.¹³⁷ Of course, any reader of Scottish history even today cannot avoid its inevitable tendency to cast the English as the ‘other’ against which Scottish identity is usually constructed.¹³⁸ However, readers in post-Union Scotland, like Cameron, did nothing to avoid such sentiments, and indeed many seem to have basked in its implications – wallowing in material that celebrated Scotland’s historical independence.¹³⁹

Most indefatigable in this regard was a member of the Irvine family of Drum Castle, perhaps the art dealer James Irvine, who compiled a vast catalogue of notes on Scotland’s early and medieval past derived from a whole host of authorities – including besides standards like Robertson, Pinkerton, Maitland and Hailes, Nimmo’s *Stirlingshire*, Crawford’s *Renfrewshire*, Abercombie’s *Martial Achievements*, Goodall’s *Introduction to the History and Antiquities of Scotland*, Scott’s *Marmion* and even Sinclair’s

¹³⁵ GD224/812/12, 15; compare John Pinkerton, *The History of Scotland from the Accession of the House of Stuart to that of Mary* (London, 1797), II, 277-8.

¹³⁶ Commonplace book of William Cameron, 12r-13v; compare, Robertson, *History of Scotland*.

¹³⁷ Dumfries and Galloway Archives, RG3/6/2, Notebook and Diary of a law student from Dumfries.

¹³⁸ On the ‘other’ in constructing identity, see Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, 9.

¹³⁹ Such readings represent a nice counterpoint on the personal level to Linda Colley’s account of the harmonization of a British identity in England and Scotland after the Union, in L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven, CT, and London, 1992).

Statistical Account. He focused with pride on Scotland's ancient traditions, like 'the Scottish white rose, which ... appears to have had no connection whatever with the York rose, & to have been more ancient than it',¹⁴⁰ and especially on those associated with the now defunct Scottish Parliament.¹⁴¹ Irvine was also fascinated by tales of the great heroes and villains of Scottish history, usually relating their tales to sites or objects that could still be seen in modern Scotland: 'On Flodden Field, "an unhewn column" marks the spot where James IV fell (Marmion)';¹⁴² 'On the face of the hill of Kinnoul there is a cave in the steep part of the rock called the Dragon hole, in it Wallace is said to have hid himself (Stat. Ac.. XVIII, 560)';¹⁴³ 'Two miles NW of the village of Kincardine O'Neil, just by the parish church of Lumphanan, there is a valley where the vestiges of an ancient fortress are still to be discerned ... in this place we may conjecture that Macbeth sought an asylum'.¹⁴⁴ Reading Scottish history could therefore inform the way eighteenth-century Scots interpreted the physical landscape around them, allowing material traces of Scotland's proudly independent past to reinforce the persistence of a distinctly Scottish identity.

As John Grant, the minister of Dundurcus, noted in a letter to an unidentified recipient on the relative merits of historians, the 'history of our country is always an object of importance, as it informs us of the various revolutions of the state, the manners of our ancestors and their progress in civilisation'.¹⁴⁵ He wanted on this occasion especially to draw his friend's attention to the merits of a little known work by a fellow clergyman whose own reading notes we have already highlighted, Ridpath's *Border History*. Though 'not possessed of the political sagacity of an Hume, the pleasing arrangement of a Robertson, or the elegance & discerning research of Gibbon', Grant nevertheless recommended Ridpath for the 'plain & artless manner' by which he had presented 'a great variety of facts properly vouched, that throw considerable light on the Border transactions'.

¹⁴⁰ NRAS1500/85, Historical Anecdotes, f12r; possibly taken from Andrews, *History of Great Britain*, 428.

¹⁴¹ Historical Anecdotes, f3r; compare, Pinkerton, *History of Scotland*, I, 373.

¹⁴² NRAS1500/Bundle 874, Biographical Notes and Monuments, unpaginated; compare *The Poetical Works of Sir Walter Scott* (London, 1883), 584.

¹⁴³ Biographical Notes and Monuments; Irvine's reference is accurate, see *OSA*, XVIII, 560.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, f8r; possibly taken from *OSA*, VI, 388.

¹⁴⁵ NAS GD248/616/3/1.

Though for the most part little more than the ‘bickerings of bands of robbers’, Grant suggested that Ridpath’s forensic account of border history was most valuable when it informed ‘the more capital events in the Kingdoms they depended on’. In particular, Grant demonstrated how Ridpath’s ‘artless’ approach (explicitly contrasted to the narrative constructs of British history presented by Hume and Robertson) informs one of the crucial moments in the relationship between England and Scotland, an event that was still debated and argued over endlessly in the eighteenth century: ‘What particularly pleased me, & which I consider as the best detailed part of his book, is the account of Edward his acquiring the sovereignty of Scotland, & the manner that it was lost by Edward II. I shall give you an abridgement of this even in the authors words, & refer to the book itself for his account of it at large’.¹⁴⁶

Ridpath’s neutral presentation of evidence about the Scottish past ultimately empowered readers to judge the significance of this crucial episode for themselves, and was thus, according to Grant, eminently preferable to the narrative constructs of the Scottish past propagated by the more celebrated historians of the Edinburgh Enlightenment. Grant’s comments actually reflected an increasing feeling in provincial Scotland that Scots should take possession of their own history, resisting the efforts of anglophone historians in Edinburgh to neutralise the potent controversies that coloured relations between English and Scots.¹⁴⁷

The point was made explicitly by Grant himself in a letter to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland:

Each Scotsman is called on to advance the design, & contribute his share of materials & information to the society that under their penetrating eye, the antient history of our country may be rescued from the reveries of the theorist or the

¹⁴⁶ NAS GD248/616/3/1; Grant proceeded to transcribe material from George Ridpath, *The Border-History of England and Scotland, deduced from the earliest times to the union of the two crowns* (London, 1776), 224ff.

¹⁴⁷ See Ferguson, *Identity of the Scottish Nation*, 207; for the notion that Scots had inherited the history of England at the Union, see Hicks, *Neoclassical History*, 177.

dictates of national vanity, and as just information obtained as the state of facts & nature of the enquiry can admit.¹⁴⁸

According to David Allan, the Society, like its junior partner the Perth Literary and Antiquarian Society (founded in 1784), reflected the belief ‘that direct involvement in historical studies was a patriotic duty incumbent on gentlemen across the country, as well as an urgent moral necessity for the fate of Scotland’s culture’.¹⁴⁹ Accordingly, John Grant himself offered ‘a few copper pieces of antiquity that were some years ago found on a moss at Inchach three miles to the East of Nairn ... I also send a silver coin, that, with a number of other silver coins, was lately discovered in digging the foundation of a kirk at Dyke, two miles west of Forres.’¹⁵⁰ As another antiquary Rev. James Scott reported to the Earl of Buchan, Grant was by no means alone: ‘gentlemen of literature & of estates in the country shew an abundance of zeal’ in contributing to the Society, ‘although some of the town’s people are not so warmly affected as I could wish’.¹⁵¹

Ultimately, of course, such amateur antiquarianism also allowed provincial Scots to enter the republic of letters in their own right. Grant himself noted that the ‘few copper pieces of antiquity’ which he had discovered near Nairn ‘are the antiques which I mention in a preface to a collection relative to British antiquities that is now at Edinburgh, as a proof among others that the Romans had penetrated into Scotland, as far north as Inverness, & the cairns on Tarbetness in Ross’.¹⁵² Indeed, Grant seems constantly to have had potential publications on the go, including two large-scale proposals that never reached the press, a

¹⁴⁸ NAS GD248/616/3/2/11.

¹⁴⁹ D. Allan, ‘Provincial Readers and Book Culture in the Scottish Enlightenment: The Perth Library, 1784-c.1800’, *The Library*, 4 (2002), 385; idem., ‘The Scottish Enlightenment and the Politics of Provincial Culture: Perth Library and Antiquarian Society, c.1784-1790’, *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 27 (2003); S. Shapin, ‘Property, Patronage, and the Politics of Science: The Founding of the Royal Society of Edinburgh’, *The British Journal for the History of Science*, 7 (1974).

¹⁵⁰ NAS GD248/616/3/2/11.

¹⁵¹ Edinburgh University Library, La.II.588 D12, letter of James Scott to the Earl of Buchan, 31 March 1785; on Scott, see David Crawford Smith, ‘Rev. James Scott, 1733-1818, Antiquary, Historical Writer’, in his *Historians of Perth and other Local and Topographical Writers, up to the End of the Nineteenth Century* (Perth, 1906), 68-75.

¹⁵² NAS GD248/616/3/2/11; Grant’s analysis of the antiquities duly appeared as ‘Of the Roman Hasta and Pilum; of the Brass and Iron used by the Ancients, by the Rev. Mr. John Grant, Minister of Dundurcas’ in *Transactions of the Society of the Antiquaries of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1792), vol. 1 (of 1), 241.

set of chronological tables and a collection of classical passages on British antiquity.¹⁵³ And many other provincial Scots joined in, including another minister William Macgregor Stirling, who concluded his notes from reading Pinkerton's *Enquiry* and Innes' *Critical Essay* by noting that a critical edition of early Scottish sources might arise from their investigations:

Quere: Might not a translation of some at least of those curious remains form an appropriate portion of the Miscellanea Scotia? No translation, so far as is known, has ever been published. For the satisfaction of the more learned antiquary, the Latin might be given in a parallel column. A short introduction might be given, and some explanatory footnotes might be deemed not impertinent.¹⁵⁴

VI

Of course, antiquarian research was simply one avenue of patriotic endeavour that was provoked in provincial Scots by reading history. The conjectural tenor of Enlightenment historiography also stimulated readers' appreciation of the social and economic conditions of modern Scotland. William Lorimer, tenant of Moulinearn near Dunkeld, and tutor to the family of Sir James Grant of Grant, kept a commonplace book which located 'Highland customs, culture, families and etymology' on the line of the progress of civilisation that had been illuminated by the likes of Adam Ferguson, John Millar and Adam Smith.¹⁵⁵ Hence, Lorimer observed that:

The old highlanders cultivated very little ground, they lived on milk, cheese, a little flesh of sheep or goats, & on the blood of their cattle, & most of all on the plunder & booty they took from one another & from the Lowlanders, & lastly on shooting deer & roes.

¹⁵³ NAS GD248/615/4, British Antiqua; GD248/615/6, Chronological and Historical Tables.

¹⁵⁴ NRAS 2362/367; for William Macgregor Stirling's publishing profile, see *Fasti*; cf R. Sweet, *Antiquaries: The Discovery of the Past in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London, 2004).

¹⁵⁵ For the notion of progress in Scottish stadial history, see Broadie, *Scottish Enlightenment*, 64-77; Berry, especially chapters 5 and 6; D. Spadafora, *The Idea of Progress in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London, 1990); A. Bernstein, 'Adam Ferguson and the Idea of Progress', *The Eighteenth Century* 19 (1978), 99-118. John Home reflected on many aspects of Highland society noticed by Lorimer in his *The History of the Rebellion in the Year 1745* (London, 1802).

This was the life of a Scots Highlander, resembling the wild Scythians or Tartars in eating blood, which rendered them fierce, & more warlike, & like the modern Indians who will apply to no cultivation of lands, no trade but sit idle at home, sleeping, dosing & drinking, when they are not abroad hunting or fighting – The latter look on labour of any other kind as the work of slaves, in which they resemble the Germans, according to the account given of them by Tacitus.¹⁵⁶

This characteristically conjectural analysis of Highland culture demonstrated that for Lorimer, as for many of the Scottish Enlightenment's leading minds, Highland society in Scotland was not as advanced as Lowland society, though it was now beginning to improve. This realisation in turn influenced the way Lorimer described conditions in various other parts of Britain in a travel diary documenting his journey from London back to the Highlands. He reported, for instance, on the progress of manufactures in and around Glasgow since the 1730s which he clearly believed had helped hasten the progress of civilisation in the area. Accordingly, he advised his landowning employer to pursue the improvement of his estates through introducing manufactures and advanced agricultural methods.¹⁵⁷

In Lorimer's case, it is therefore evident that familiarity with Scottish conjectural history could encourage a provincial reader to become an active agent in the material improvement of Scotland. This, too, tended to be the effect of reading scientific works. To a certain extent, of course, science took its place alongside history and philosophy as a crucial part of a polite gentleman's basic education. The Irvine commonplacener made a series of notes on natural history that gave him a basic grounding in recognising features of the natural world, while he dutifully extracted Playfair's description of Huttonian geology.¹⁵⁸ Similarly, James Stirling transcribed notes from Mackenzie's *History of Health* relating to perspiration, the circulation of blood and, perhaps most pertinently to

¹⁵⁶ NAS GD248/37/4/3, Customs of the highlanders; Lorimer's notes may have derived from John Macpherson, *Critical Dissertations on the Origin, Antiquities, Language, Government, Manners and Religion of the Ancient Caledonians* (London, 1768), though they may represent his own ruminations on Highland culture.

¹⁵⁷ NAS GD248/37/4/4, Notes made by William Lorimer on Scottish agriculture and manufactories.

¹⁵⁸ NRAS 1500, bundle 17. Ramsay of Ochtertyre fulminated against Hutton's 'ridiculous ... theory of water, earth and fire dancing a reel for countless ages, and configuring earth and sea. ... Better resolve it into the fiat of omnipotence which spoke and it was done'; *Ochtertyre*, 166.

contemporary medical debates, inoculation.¹⁵⁹ In each case, the scientific notes were placed alongside much other miscellaneous material of a historical, literary, philosophical or personal nature, a constituent part of the basic pool of knowledge they compiled to understand the world around them.

Moreover, scientific reading could also have a vocational or professional use in the lives of eighteenth-century Scottish readers, most evidently for medical men eager to keep abreast of the latest research. William Thomson, an expatriate Scottish physician practising in and around Worcester, compiled a vast commonplace book in which he compared the circumstances of his own cases with what he had read in authors at the cutting edge of medical science, including William Cullen, Robert Whytt, James Lind and Sir John Pringle.¹⁶⁰ Other medical men annotated their copies of Scottish Enlightenment medical texts with notes from their own cases, or compiled their own lists of medical conditions and cures.¹⁶¹ Meanwhile, Ridpath's diary reminds us of the multifunctional role of Georgian clergymen, replete with excruciating anecdotes from a primitive autopsy performed on the corpse of his neighbour John Hall.¹⁶²

Meanwhile, a commonplace book compiled by a member of the Pierson family of Balmadies in Angus illustrates how reading could inform agricultural practice. Evidently a farmer himself, the Pierson commonplacener came across a copy of Francis Home's

¹⁵⁹ NRAS2362/40, Notes for a Commonplace Book, 1794, unpaginated; Stirling extracted material from James Mackenzie, *The History of Health, and the art of Preserving it...* (Edinburgh, 1758), 257, 349-53. A 'clear account of the commencement, progress, utility, and proper management of inoculating the small pox' was added in the greatly expanded third edition, published by William Gordon in Edinburgh, 1760, 426-448.

¹⁶⁰ Edinburgh University Library, Dc.1.48, William Thomson's Medical Commonplace Book; compare, for instance, notes on 4 with Sir John Pringle, *Observations on the Diseases of the Army, in Camp and Garrison* (London, 1752), 92-4; he was probably the same William Thomson who as an alumnus of the university bequeathed medical and mineralogical books to the university in 1808, cited in P. Freshwater, 'Books and Universities', in CHLB2 and J. R. Guild and A. Law (eds.), *Edinburgh University Library 1580-1980* (Edinburgh, 1982), 55-6. Compare with F. A. Macdonald, 'Reading Cleghorn the Clinician: The Clinical Case Records of Dr. Robert Cleghorn, 1785-1818', in C. W. J. Withers and P. Wood (eds.), *Science and Medicine in the Scottish Enlightenment* (East Linton, 2002).

¹⁶¹ For instance, such annotations appear in W. Buchan, *Domestic Medicine* (London, 1790), British Library copy 1509/1213; William Cullen, *First Lines of the Practice of Physic* (Edinburgh, 1777), private collection; and William Cullen, *A Treatise on Materia Medica*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1777), Folger Shakespeare Institute Library, copy 245-195q. In all cases, the provenance of the marginalia is unknown, demonstrating once more a major problem in the use of such sources.

¹⁶² *Ridpath*, 111; 56, 61; 58, 385-6.

Principles of Agriculture and Vegetation (1756) when he was laid low by a period of illness, and was ‘more delighted’ by it ‘than with any other I have yet read’. He was especially impressed by Home’s ‘observations on the different manures – with the distinctions he makes – betwixt clay marle and our shell marle which he observes is an animal substance’, and clearly approved Home’s staunchly empirical approach. However, one thing troubled Pierson: ‘Mr Hume p.79 seems to think that animals inhabiting their shells are rarely to be found – and says “it must have been once a very common creature in this country, and appears to have been destroyed in most countries at once by some general disaster which afflicted it the natural deposition of soil from these waters has buried it so deep”’. Pierson took issue with Home’s conclusion in this regard, observing that ‘this does not at all appear from my marle moss, for in parts that have been cut for peatts when the water is drain’d off we find multitudes of these bukies full of animals resembling a welk, but very small and the shells of a blackish colour’.¹⁶³

Pierson followed up his reading with his own investigations into the curious phenomenon he had noticed with the express purpose of understanding marle, a significant type of manure which he used on his own farm. There is even the suggestion that he planned to send samples to other interested parties, perhaps even the Society of Antiquaries, which at the Earl of Buchan’s instigation ‘sought to reclaim aspects of natural history’ from the institutional Edinburgh Enlightenment as part of his vision of ‘broadly-based cultural activity’.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ Angus Local Studies Centre, MS 324, Pierson of Balmadies Farm Commonplace Book, 158-9; Pierson’s reference was accurate, see Francis Home, *The Principles of Agriculture and Vegetation* (Edinburgh, 1756), 79. On Scottish works on agriculture, see D. Allan, *Scotland in the Eighteenth Century: Union and Enlightenment* (London, 2002), 85-96, 197; Wood, ‘Science and the Aberdeen Enlightenment’, in P. Jones (ed.), *Philosophy and Science in the Scottish Enlightenment* (Edinburgh, 1988), 53-4; C. W. J. Withers, ‘Improvement and Enlightenment: Agriculture and Natural History in the Works of the Rev. Dr. John Walker (1737-1803)’, in P. Jones (ed.), *Philosophy and Science in the Scottish Enlightenment* (Edinburgh, 1988). On the implementation of agriculture improvement, see R. H. Campbell, ‘The Landed Classes’, in *PS*; T. M. Devine, *The Transformation of Rural Society: Social Change and the Agrarian Economy, 1660-1815* (Edinburgh, 1994); J. E. Handley, *Scottish Farming in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1953); J. E. Handley, *The Agricultural Revolution in Scotland* (London, 1963); a contrasting view can be found in I. D. Whyte, ‘Before the Improvers: Agricultural and Landscape Change in Lowland Scotland, c.1660-c.1750’, *Scottish Archives*, 1 (1995), 31-42.

¹⁶⁴ Allan, ‘Provincial Culture’, 12.

Many others approached agricultural books with the same pragmatic motives in mind: as Pierson himself wrote, ‘tho practise and experience are the best directors – yet one can pick up several beneficent observations from reading’.¹⁶⁵ Ridpath noted researching the optimal methods for arranging and maintaining his glebe in books like Miller’s *Gardeners’ Dictionary*.¹⁶⁶ Douglas took voluminous notes on husbandry from George Fordyce’s *Elements of Agriculture and Vegetation* (1771) amongst many other sources, giving him a basic grounding in the practical skills involved in cultivating land, while the Irvine commonplacer read up on James Anderson’s tactics in overcoming the local harvest failure in Aberdeenshire in 1782.¹⁶⁷

Although hard evidence for scientific reading experiences is actually quite scarce, this intensely pragmatic reading inevitably fed into the way some contemporary Scots saw the world in which they lived. James Stirling, son of Rev. Macgregor Stirling, filled his commonplace book with a travel diary of a trip from Leadhills to London. Like Lorimer, he noted key features of the increasingly industrial landscape he traversed, but he was more struck by ‘how much England has gained the ascendancy over Scotland in many points of view, and in nothing more than their exquisite taste in uniting beauty with magnificence to their seats ... The neatness and taste displayed in laying out their fields & pleasure-grounds is quite beyond the conception of a poor Scotchman’. However, most significantly, he commented mournfully on Scotland’s natural disadvantages, especially the better English climate which allowed ‘the grass in the meadows [to be in March] in a more vigorous state of vegetation, than we ever experience in Scotland sooner than the month of May’. Ultimately, he decided, such disadvantages ‘may always be the means of retarding various improvements in our country ...: “Scotland comes after like an unripe fair / who sighs with anguish at her sister’s air”’.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁵ Pierson Commonplace Book, 158.

¹⁶⁶ *Ridpath*, 235.

¹⁶⁷ Adv.17.1.11, f95v, compare G. Fordyce, *Elements of Agriculture and Vegetation* (London, 1771); NRAS 1500/84, f146r, compare J. Anderson, *General View of the agriculture and rural economy of the county of Aberdeen with observations on the means of its improvement* (Edinburgh, 1794).

¹⁶⁸ NRAS 2362/40, Notes for a Commonplace Book, 1794; the poetic verse by Aaron Hill may have been taken from Thomas Pennant, *A Tour in Scotland* (4th edition, Dublin, 1775), vol.1, 246; it also appears in Charles Ross of Greenlaw, *The Traveller’s Guide to Lochlomond, and its environs* (Paisley, 1792), 85. Some phrases in Stirling’s travel notes resemble passages of W. Guthrie, *A New System of Modern Geography or a Geographical Historical and Commercial Grammar...* (3rd edition, London, 1786), 231.

VII

The scarcity of surviving scientific reading notes serves as a salient reminder of the methodological limitations of such sources. However many reports we might find of individual reading in letters, diaries, marginalia and commonplace books (the kind of material one recent contributor to the history of reading in Britain has decried as ‘anecdotal information’), they will only ever represent a tiny sample of historical reading experiences.¹⁶⁹ Innumerable more acts of reading have taken place in the past which were not even committed to paper, not to mention the written responses to books that have been lost or that still lie undiscovered in the closed collections of private libraries. We must therefore be wary of reading too much into the wider applicability of our reading experiences, eloquent though they are in illuminating the world of the reader. Nevertheless, while catalogues and borrowing records of all kinds of libraries show that the particular books we are interested in were widely encountered; close study of the surviving evidence of reading experiences illustrates the ways in which they were imbued with meaning by individual readers.

As we have seen, books taught readers how to read, showed them how to behave, informed their political views, prepared them for professional careers, and allowed them to come to terms with upheavals in the world around them. Above all, people read to construct and consolidate their own image of themselves – as demonstrated dramatically by the bastard Major Walter Scott who read up on his ancestors to consolidate his own identification with the house of Buccleuch, or the many Scots who attempted to change the way they spoke through reading works designed to eliminate Scotisms. Moreover, books often stung readers into action, compelling them to become personally engaged in the patriotic task of improving Scotland – whether in the improvement of their lands, or in wresting possession of her historical identity away from the grip of Enlightenment Edinburgh’s anglophone historians. With the power of books to change people’s lives

¹⁶⁹ St Clair, 5; 394-412. Rose ignores them for precisely this reason, proposing best-seller lists, reader surveys and autobiographies as the only way to recover ‘the responses of the actual ordinary reader in history’, ‘How Historians Study Reader Response’, 209; see the discussion in Jackson, *Marginalia*, 253.

thus firmly in mind, we turn finally to explore how one of the most illustrious minds of the eighteenth century, David Hume, became the 'other' against which Scottish readers tended to define themselves.

CHAPTER SIX

‘Of Vast Reading but no Taste’ Readers Respond to David Hume

On 5th February 1762, the Duchess of Atholl wrote to her son from Dunkeld about a book that she was eager to start reading – the latest volumes of ‘Mr Hume’s History of Britain’. She admitted being ‘very well entertained’ by what she had ‘already read of his historical writings’, and added that the latest releases had been ‘very well spoke of’ in the critical press.¹ She was not to be disappointed, reporting back to her son on the 2nd March:

I am just now reading Mr. Hume’s History of England [note her recognition of the important change in Hume’s title], and am more entertained and more instructed (that is to say, I can form more distinct notions, and retain them better in my memory of what were the transactions, laws and customs of the earliest times of this island) than I ever was by any history of England I have read formerly; were you to read it, I’m persuaded you would think your time very well bestowed.²

The Duchess’ comments reveal a great deal about what David Hume could mean to Scottish readers. He was not just to be admired for his ‘very pretty style and fine language’, but he was also regarded as an edifying authority in the Atholl household, held in high enough trust by the matriarch of the family to be cautiously recommended to the son that was destined to inherit one of the greatest positions in Scotland.³ Even so, there was an important note of caution in her commendation of Hume, for though she admired ‘his style’ greatly, she maintained she ‘should be still fonder of him, did he not show so

¹ NRAS 234/Box 49/I/32; 5 February 1762. On critical responses to Hume’s *History* in print, see P. Hicks, *Neoclassical History and English Culture: Clarendon to Hume* (Basingstoke, 1996), 194–202; J. Fieser, ‘The Eighteenth-Century British Reviews of Hume’s Writings’, *JHI*, 57 (1996); S. Tweyman (ed.), *David Hume: Critical Assessments* 6 vols. (London and New York, 1995); and Spencer, *HR*.

² NRAS 234/Box 49/I/56; 2 March 1762.

³ NRAS 234/Box 65/II/8; 7 January 1776; *ODNB*.

strong an inclination upon all occasions to have a fling at the clergy, be their profession what it will.’⁴

Hume was a ubiquitous presence in libraries throughout Scotland, as Chapters 1 through 4 make abundantly clear. His *History* was the most widely distributed title of any eighteenth-century work by a Scottish author and performed consistently well at every library for which borrowing records survive. Meanwhile, the *Essays and Treatises* were amongst the most readily available philosophical books in the country, offering readers a digest of his most significant writing on moral philosophy, literature, politics and religion – so that in spite of the notoriously poor performance of the *Treatise of Human Nature*, most Scottish readers who were willing to do so could cast judgement on his controversial views for themselves.⁵ However, it is only through surviving evidence of their reading experiences that we can tell for sure whether they really did take advantage of this publishing strategy and engage with Hume’s philosophy on their own terms. Moreover, commonplace books, marginalia, journals, personal correspondence and the like also demonstrate what Hume meant to readers, why his writings were considered a good use of time by many less affluent readers than the Duchess of Atholl, and how they could be deployed in the construction of the self. Ultimately, though, Hume’s perceived attack on the fundamental bases of religious faith, which evidently marred even the Duchess’ otherwise sympathetic encounter with the *History*, meant that he was often expelled to the margins of readers’ experiences – a force for evil and corruption in the world, the butt of readers’ jokes, a figure of nonsense and ridicule, the ‘other’ against which they defined their core identities.

I

Perhaps the best illustration of how Hume’s works could play a part in the self-fashioning of individual readers can be found in the reading notes of the youth of Scotland – readers like John Murray, the young man who was the recipient of the Duchess of Atholl’s

⁴ NRAS 234/Box 49/1/32; 5 February 1762.

⁵ EB; Spencer, *Hume*.

letters, soon to succeed as the 3rd Duke of Atholl. Sadly, no evidence of Atholl's reading survives to illuminate why he might have considered his time 'well bestowed' in reading the *History*. However, it is possible that his reading might have resembled in important respects the reading of the same landmark work by David Boyle of Sherralton (1772-1853), who eventually filled another of Scotland's leading positions as Lord President of the Court of Session.⁶

Boyle read Hume's *History* when still a teenager over the autumn and winter of 1788/9, with his notes restricted exclusively to the Stuart volumes.⁷ It may be that he kept notes on the earlier volumes in separate notebooks, though we have no evidence that he actually read any period before the succession of 'James the sixth of Scotland and first of England' in 1603. It is equally conceivable that his focus on the Stuarts was deliberately intended as a personal commemoration of the momentous Revolution of 1688-9, whose centenary coincided so neatly with his reading of Hume and whose Whiggish sentiments he whole heartedly condoned. However, his reading of Hume might just as easily have been determined by more mundane circumstances beyond his control: perhaps he did not own a copy of the *History* in his own right or was refused access to the library of a relative who did.⁸ He might have borrowed the Stuart volumes from the University Library at Glasgow or St Andrews,⁹ or from a circulating or subscription library near his home in Irvine – perhaps the circulating library of William White in Irvine itself, who stocked Hume's *History*.¹⁰ His notes from Hume might therefore reflect less a self-conscious effort to educate himself than a race against time to transcribe the key points of

⁶ ODNB.

⁷ GUL MS Murray 170, Notebook of David Boyle of Sherralton.

⁸ Boyle was a grandson of the 2nd Earl of Glasgow, who owned a substantial collection of books, and his father Patrick Boyle of Sherralton (1717-1798) was also likely to have had his own library as an army chaplain and landowner.

⁹ Boyle was listed in Professor Barron's class at St Andrews in 1786 (*Matric. St A.*), and matriculated at Glasgow in 1789 (matriculand 5014, *Matric. Glas.*). The University of St Andrews Library Receipt Books only extend to 1782, although Hume's *History* was certainly amongst the most popular titles up until then; M. Simpson, 'St Andrews University Library in the Eighteenth Century: Scottish education and print-culture' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of St Andrews, 1999), 289-398.

¹⁰ *Sale and Circulating Catalogue of Books ... to be had of William White at his Shops in Irvine and Beith (n.p., 1780)*; Alston. The Boyles do not appear in membership lists of libraries at Ayr, Kilmarnock, Maybole, Hamilton or Kilbirnie.

Hume's great work before the book needed to be returned,¹¹ or even a student exercise sanctioned explicitly by one of his professors.

David Boyle's commonplace book reveals first and foremost how Hume's *History* functioned as a comprehensive guide to English history for a young man on the make, giving him a directory of basic facts which he could later deploy in an eminent career in the Scottish law courts, or simply in polite conversation. Boyle would no doubt have been familiar with the vast literature on reading history, and followed the advice of writers like Thomas Sheridan, who recommended that young readers of history made an 'abstract of each reign ... taking notice only of the most material facts, without entering into the spirit of the parties, politics, or intrigues of the times'. This method, Sheridan argued, was best suited to render history 'useful ... to all who are to be legislators, or concerned in the management of public affairs'.¹² Accordingly, Boyle only rarely chose to quote his source directly, preferring instead to note in sequential order summaries of Hume's text. From the third chapter of Hume's account of the reign of Charles I, Boyle noted

Peace with France and Spain ... Sir Charles Wentworth, a Puritan, became the King's chief favourite and was created Earl of Strafford. The superstitious ceremonies which Laud Bishop of London wished to introduce approached very near to those of Rome. Violent and illegal exactions of the crown, without the authority of any Parliament. Journey of Charles into Scotland 1633. Pretended affection to him in all his subjects. A Parliament held in Scotland. Ship money levied. Violent prosecutions and sentences of the star chamber. The Puritans restrained in England emigrated to America.¹³

In this manner, Boyle gave himself a basic, though fairly detailed abridgement of Hume's original narrative which he could consult time and again. At particularly critical junctures

¹¹ Such circumstances certainly constrained the reading practices of George Ridpath at times; for example, see *Ridpath*. 59.

¹² Thomas Sheridan, *A Plan of Education for the Young Nobility and Gentry of Great Britain* (London, 1769), 98, 122. Joseph Priestly suggested readers compile 'a common-place-book of English history' in which, 'as everything is classed under its proper head, it is seen, in a moment, what was the state of any article we are enquiring about in any particular reign'; *An Essay on a Course of Liberal Education for Civil and Active Life* (London, 1765), 77-8.

¹³ Notebook, 21-2; compare Hume, *History*, 217-241. Note that Boyle has called Sir Thomas Wentworth 'Sir Charles Wentworth' in error.

in Whig historiography (such as the Scottish Covenant, Stafford's trial and Charles I's notorious raid on the house of Commons), Boyle elaborated further to quote or summarise at much more length Hume's interpretation of affairs. However, very rarely did he impose his own value judgements on events, and he was generally happy to take Hume's interpretation of matters on trust. This compliant treatment of Hume's complex and often controversial text also extended to elements that had little relevance for Boyle's understanding of British and European politics in his own day, including Hume's extended commentaries on developments in English literature, agriculture and industry – confirming that Boyle's objective was educative. A note on Hume's appendix to the reign of James I explained that there had been 'Improvement in the art of Agriculture during this reign – a bad taste in learning prevailed in England, of which James himself was by no means free. Shakespeare died, in 1617 [sic] aged 53 years. He undoubtedly possessed a fine genius, but wanted the polish of the finer arts'.¹⁴ Boyle thus used Hume's *History* to understand where modern Britain had come from, entirely in line with contemporary advice that history should be read to inform students' understanding of modern society,¹⁵ and this included alongside modern party politics and the diplomatic and political map of Europe an understanding of the bases of British letters in the Age of Enlightenment.

In this process, Boyle also used Hume's *History* to rationalise momentous events in the modern world, in the same way that many readers discussed in Chapter 5 used history to help inform their reading of current affairs. Following a note that Strafford 'defends himself with ability innocent of high treason', for instance, Boyle (apparently already considering his prospective legal career) commented in brackets that 'the commons proceeded against him in the same way as they are now managing Hastings trial'.¹⁶ Boyle also joined the throng who sought to find explanations for the separatism of

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 9; compare Hume, *History*, 148-151. Boyle was not the only contemporary reader to copy down inaccurately the date of Shakespeare's death, given by Hume correctly as 1616; compare with the commonplace book of William Constable, discussed in *Making British Culture*, Ch7, 43.

¹⁵ Priestley argued that 'it is only a knowledge of how things were actually brought to the state in which they now are, that can enable us to judge how they may be improved'; *Essay*, 71.

¹⁶ Notebook, 17; compare Hume, *History*, 314; George Riddy, 'Warren Hastings: Scotland's Benefactor?', in G. Carnall and C. Nicholson (eds.), *The Impeachment of Warren Hastings* (Edinburgh, 1989); *ODNB*. Boyle studied law under John Millar at Glasgow, and was called to the Scottish bar on 14 December 1793; *ODNB*.

Britain's North American colonies in the annals of history. Boyle himself seized on Hume's account of the formalisation of the colonies in the reign of James I, and highlighted Hume's comment that 'doubts arose to some men in those days that these colonies would in future periods shake off the yoke of the mother country and establish their own independency'. For Boyle, this provided a teleological explanation for the actions of the American colonies in recent years: 'although Mr Hume did not live to see that period, yet the event has truly verified the opinions of those men'.¹⁷ Boyle was too young to have followed the political and diplomatic intricacies of events in the 1760s and 1770s, and may have identified in such seventeenth-century prophecies a neat way of rationalising what was already a fact of life. Hume, our reader tacitly acknowledged, had been wrong in concluding in the 1750s that 'time has shewn, that the views, entertained by those who encouraged such generous undertakings, were more just and solid. A mild government and great naval force have preserved, and may still preserve during some time, the dominion of England over her colonies.'¹⁸

The controversial politics of Hume's account of the Stuarts may also have served to consolidate Boyle's nascent Whiggish instincts, even though Hume had apparently intended to break down the traditional behemoths of British party ideology.¹⁹ That much is clear in his final summing up of Hume's historiographical achievements, as Boyle thought that Hume had been 'unable altogether to conceal his partiality for the Royal cause, which ... ought to be guarded against by every honest and candid historian'. This Whig reading of Hume's political agenda, carefully considered over a six-month period, and reflecting widespread disaffection amongst readers generally over Hume's partiality as a historian, was further reflected at critical points in Boyle's note-taking.²⁰ For instance, when annotating Hume's account of the 'very small' supply to Charles I by

¹⁷ Ibid., 9; the emphasis is Boyle's own, probably to denote his own phraseology.

¹⁸ Hume, *History*, 148.

¹⁹ Hicks, *Neoclassical History*, 171, 173, 191; N. Phillipson, *Hume* (London, 1989); D. Forbes, *Hume's Philosophical Politics* (Cambridge, 1975); K. O'Brien, *Narratives of Enlightenment: Cosmopolitan History from Voltaire to Gibbon* (Cambridge, 1997); C. Kidd, *Subverting Scotland's Past: Scottish Whig Historians and the Creation of an Anglo-British Identity, 1689-c.1830* (Cambridge, 1993); V. G. Wexler, *David Hume and the History of England* (Philadelphia, 1979).

²⁰ For other partisan readings of Hume's *History*, see D. Allan, 'Some Methods and Problems in the History of Reading: Georgian England and the Scottish Enlightenment', *Journal of the Historical Society*, 3 (2003), 13-6; *Making British Culture*, Ch7, 42; Hicks *Neoclassical History*, 193-4.

Parliament in 1625, he added his own gloss that took issue with Hume's original: 'How far this conduct of Parliament ... considering the necessities of the state was either kind or dutiful to their sovereign I shall not pretend to affirm. But it certainly is owing to their method of proceeding and other circumstances, that we now enjoy this state of civil liberty'.²¹ Given his tender age and youthful regard for Hume, it is likely that in formulating such responses to Hume Boyle had consolidated his own inclination towards the Whig party – regardless of whether Hume would have approved of such an approach.

Though Boyle disagreed fundamentally with Hume's presentation of critical aspects of seventeenth-century England's political legacy, he was nevertheless sufficiently able to detach himself from his burgeoning Whiggish sensibilities to judge Hume's narrative on its own merits – striving hard to adopt the critical disposition that we have seen was so strongly encouraged in eighteenth-century readers. Indeed, even in his concluding comments on finishing Hume's account of the Stuarts, Boyle made this point abundantly clear. Though Hume was to be castigated for what Boyle perceived to be his undue partiality for the Royalist cause, he insisted that 'Upon the whole ... Mr Hume has maintained all the requisite dignity of an historian', and refused to let Hume's politics sour his reading experience of the *History*. He felt 'Mr Hume gives a very just and striking tho dreadful account' of the Irish rebellion in 1641, for example, and praised Hume's 'great character' of Charles I – the mortal enemy of the Whig party. Indeed, Boyle even seems to have sided with Hume in condemning Parliament for taking up the 'gross insinuation' that Charles had been complicit with the Irish rebels.²²

Even on the critical problem of party politics, Hume seems to have been relatively successful, notwithstanding Boyle's censure of his *History* on party grounds. Boyle acknowledged that Hume's narrative illuminated the 'wonderful degree of party spirit displayed on both sides' and condemned 'that pretended sanctity under the veil of the

²¹ Notebook, 10; compare, Hume, *History*, 156-165. In refusing to endorse the patriotic theme of English liberty, Hume 'played upon and subverted reader expectations for a work of this type'; K. O'Brien, 'The History Market in Eighteenth-Century England', in I. Rivers (ed.), *Books and their Readers in Eighteenth-Century England: New Essays* (London, 2001), 112.

²² *Ibid.*, 18, 13, 19; Hume, *History*, 338-347, 349. Boyle writes that 'Mr Hume vindicates Charles from any knowledge of concurrence in the Irish insurrections'.

deepest hypocrisy' which influenced men of all parties under the Stuarts, further reflecting that it 'is most astonishing how easily were the people in those days deluded by the most glaring absurdities'. Ultimately, Boyle concluded of Hume's *History* on 13th January 1789 that 'the greatest of men have had their faults': Hume had let his politics get the better of him on occasion, but this was merely a reflection of mankind's imperfection.²³ In this, he reflected the vast weight of fair-minded critical opinion which rated Hume's *History* 'as a literary achievement [and] as a source of national honour for having solved the chronic problem in English historiography'.²⁴

II

A more mature reader who treated Hume as a source for classical *sententiae* was the anonymous compiler of a commonplace book now held in the Innes of Stowe collection in the National Archives of Scotland.²⁵ Given its provenance, it is probable that the reader was a relative of the fabulously wealthy banker Gilbert Innes, perhaps even Innes himself, and the notes appear to have been compiled in the 1790s when Innes was in his late 40s. The approach is nothing if not conventional: using Bell's 1770 edition of Locke's printed commonplace book, Innes compiled notes from many different books under a wide range of subject headings, including standard topics of eighteenth-century moral philosophy like 'virtue', 'courage', 'liberty' and 'reason' – with those philosophical heads determining their arrangement, in the manner recommended by Locke, Stewart and others. At the same time, as was the fashion, he dutifully filled out a manuscript index to navigate between entries allowing him to return to them again and again. As is so often the case with such sources, however, Innes' responses to Hume were actually highly constrained by the generic elements of commonplacing, and rather than offering a real sense of how he regarded Hume, his notes were driven more by a search for pithy phrases and memorable aphorisms.

²³ Ibid., 78

²⁴ Hicks, *Neoclassical History*, 208-9. James Forbes, an expatriate Scot in India, also highlighted Hume's alleged Toryism but grudgingly admitted that 'the work afforded me a very high pleasure and much improvement in the perusal'; YUL Osborn Bound MS Fc132, Commonplace Book of James Forbes, 1766-c.1800.

²⁵ NAS GD113/1/475, *Bell's Commonplace Book*.

Indeed, there are some notes whose significance is entirely irrecoverable – and they may simply have been included in his commonplace books because they amused or entertained him. This must surely be the context of a note on ‘the English’, which appends an anecdote from Addison’s *Freeholder* confirming their fondness for puddings: ‘David Hume relating the manner in which Henry the 8th gifted the revenues of the convents says, “he was so profuse in these liberalities that he is said to have given a woman the whole revenue of a convent, as a reward for making a pudding which happened to gratify his palate”’.²⁶

Other notes can be more easily interpreted as reflecting an interest in current affairs. A note on the ‘Irish’, for instance, was probably taken down to inform relations between England and Ireland in the run up to the union of 1800: ‘So great is the ascendance, which, from a long course of success, the English have acquired over the Irish nation that ... they have never in this own country been able to make any vigorous effort for the defence or recovery of their libertys’. Many more notes were probably copied down for their applicability to events in France in the 1790s. For instance, Innes compiled a collection of maxims on ‘change’ from at least four separate volumes of the *History* whose current relevance an attentive reader could scarcely have missed. An early note reflected the optimism with which the French Revolution was first received in Britain, that ‘in the beginnings of reformation ... the benefit resulting from the change is slow effect of time, and is seldom perceived by the bulk of the nation’. Innes’ assessment of events in France may quickly have been reversed, however, since other notes highlighted the negative effects of revolution – ‘a violent revolution, however necessary, can never be effected without great discontents’; ‘Tis seldom that the people gain anything by revolutions in government; because the new settlement, jealous and insecure, must consequently be supported with more expence and severity than the old’.²⁷ All these were easily memorable phrases which Innes probably noted down so that he could later recycle them in polite conversation as evidence of his own wide reading and sound judgement.

²⁶ *Bell’s Commonplace Book*, 20.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 176; 83. On Scottish responses to the French Revolution, see E. Vincent, ‘The Responses of Scottish Churchmen to the French Revolution, 1789-1802’, *SHR*, 73 (1994), 191-215.

Religion also features prominently throughout the Innes commonplace book. An extensive passage on ‘saints’ in which Hume ridiculed the ignorance of the Scottish reformers may have been included for its entertaining punch line, while another on ‘women’ might have served as a suitably sardonic instance of Hume’s notorious disrespect for organised religion: ‘DH tells us that the fair sex have had the merit of introducing the Christian doctrine into all the most considerable kingdoms of the saxon heptarchy’. Nevertheless, occasional notes on the deleterious effects of religious extremism (which in the hands of more religious readers usually met with howls of protest) probably reflected a serious effort by Innes to embrace the principle of religious toleration that so characterised the Enlightenment period – or at least ensured that his conversation reflected such sentiments with apparent effortlessness.²⁸ Under the heading ‘disputes’, he noted the glib soundbite that ‘the more affinity there is between theological parties, the greater commonly is their animosity’, while a much longer extract aptly demonstrated the potential impact of such ‘disputes’:

David Hume discussing the reigns of Philip & Mary says, it is needless to be particular in enumerating all the horrid cruelties practiced in England during the course of three years that these persecution lasted: the savage barbarity on the one hand, & the patient constancy on the other are so similar in all these martyrdoms that the narration, very little agreeable in itself would never be relieved by any variety. Human nature appears not, on any occasion so detestable, and at the same time so absurd, as in these religious persecutions, which sink men below infernal spirits in wickedness, & below the beast in folly. A few instances only may be worth preserving in order if possible to warn zeal bigots forever to avoid such odious & such fruitless barbarity.²⁹

In fact, Hume provided Innes with a complete collection of maxims for him to learn and repeat. Soundbites on ‘faction’ helped Innes make sense of (or talk sensibly about) a live political problem that had long been a preoccupation of rhetoricians and political theorists and that, as we have noted already, had been given fresh impetus by Hume in his

²⁸ On the relationship between toleration and established religion in the Enlightenment, see O. Grell, J. Israel and N. Tyacke, *From Persecution to Toleration: the Glorious Revolution and Religion in England* (Oxford, 1991); O. Grell and R. Porter (eds.), *Toleration and Enlightenment in Europe* (Cambridge, 2000).

²⁹ *Bell’s Commonplace Book*, 36; 38; 144; 65.

treatment of parties: ‘the spirit of faction when it becomes inveterate is very difficult for any man entirely to shake off’; ‘It is no wonder that faction is so productive of vices of all kinds; for, besides that it inflames all the passions, it tends much to remove those great restraints, honour & shame; when men find, that no iniquity can lose them the applause of their own party, & no innocence secure them against the calumny of the opposite’. A note on ‘pensions’, meanwhile, got to the heart of the corruption many perceived in British government, and probably informed Innes’ view of the reform agenda gathering pace in late eighteenth-century Edinburgh: ‘pensions and bribes, tho’ it be difficult entirely to exclude them, are dangerous expedients for government; and cannot be too vehemently decried by everyone who has a regard to the virtue and liberty of a nation’.³⁰

Other memorable phrases taken down by Innes were a great deal more personal, compiled presumably to help him become a better person – or at least to make him sound impressive in polite conversation. He took down the instantly memorable aphorism that ‘words are often more offensive than actions’, for instance, while under the head ‘advice’ Innes noted, ‘where great evils lie on all sides, it is very difficult to follow the best counsel’. Innes seems to have been particularly wary of the threat to personal virtue posed by ‘ambition’: ‘Where ambition can be so happy as to cover its attempts even to the person himself under the appearance of principle, it is the most incurable and inflexible of all human passions’; ‘the unhappy prepossession which men commonly entertain in favour of ambition, courage, enterprise and other warlike virtues, engage generous nature, who always love fame, into such pursuits as destroy their own peace, and that of the rest of mankind’.³¹

III

Given his style of commonplacing, it is doubtful how far Innes truly subscribed to such sentiments. A far more thoughtful approach to Hume was taken by the minister of Kirknewton who we met in Chapter 5, William Cameron. Cameron had studied under

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 1; 64.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 124; 55; 19.

Hume's bitter opponent James Beattie at Marischal College, Aberdeen, and continued to correspond with him after his presentation to the parish of Kirknewton, outside Edinburgh, in August 1786.³² As such, one might expect Cameron to have made a belligerent and unresponsive reader of Hume, perhaps indoctrinated by his mentor against Hume's scepticism.³³ On the contrary, Cameron's commonplace book actually represents the most intensive reading experience of Hume's philosophy uncovered in the process of this enquiry, in which the Great Infidel was treated with as much decorum and respect as such conventional authorities as Gerard, Blair, and Stewart.³⁴

Cameron proceeds sequentially through a posthumous edition of Hume's *Essays and Treatises* commenting on nearly every essay in Volumes 1 and 4, summarising the nub of Hume's argument, accurately in most instances, and occasionally quoting directly. Moreover, by close comparison of Cameron's notes and the original text, it is evident that he reflected seriously and independently on many of the issues raised by Hume in extemporaneous discussion and critical comment. In this sense, though his notes are sequential (implying less familiarity than Innes' highly selective process), they actually reflect far more independent thought than is demonstrable in Innes' commonplace book, with Cameron engaging directly with the author on many contentious issues.

In light of his earlier notes on the concept of good taste (discussed above, Chapter 5) Cameron was especially interested in Hume's discussion of 'the Delicacy of Taste and Passion' – further reiterating his sensitivity to well-known advice on reading.³⁵ He first summarised Hume's key terms to establish the parameters of the argument: 'Delicacy of Taste is a desirable accomplishment & production of refined and exquisite pleasure. Delicacy of passion is a misfortune & production of more pain than pleasure as the more common incidents of life are too gross & unsatisfactory to yield pure delight'. He then noted down in his own words Hume's prescription for the 'man of refined taste', abridging Hume's discussion into just a few lines of text: 'a man of refined taste & improved

³² *Fasti*; ODNB.

³³ J. Somerville, *The Enigmatic Parting Shot: What was Hume's 'Compleat Answer to Dr Reid and to That Bigotted Silly Fellow, Beattie'?* (Aldershot, 1995).

³⁴ NAS CH1/15/3, commonplace book of William Cameron, minister of Kirkliston.

³⁵ Hume's views on taste are discussed in Engell, *CM*, Ch4.

understanding must lay his account with meeting few persons & few incidents in life that can yield him pleasure without a mixture of base alloy. This will serve to guard him against the pain of disappointment & to blunt his too refin'd delicacy of passions so as to make him more indifferent with regard to such objects'. On the related topic of the 'Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences', Cameron quoted Hume nearly word for word: 'when the arts & sciences arrive at perfection in any state they naturally & necessarily that moment begin to decline & never can again revive in the same nation'. He clearly agreed with Hume on this point, following up with his own additional proof that 'the arts & sciences require a fresh soil to revive in ... Newton checked the progress of mathematical learning in Britain by his supreme excellence which extinguished emulation'.³⁶

Hume also provided thought-provoking advice on one of a parish minister's key responsibilities, the delivery of sermons, making his notes akin to vocational readings explored in the previous chapter. That much is evident from the sheer extent of his notes on the essay 'Of Eloquence', which are by far his longest and most detailed notes from Hume. Of course, by the time Cameron read Hume's *Essays* in the late 1790s, he had already been an ordained minister for over a decade, and so brought a wealth of experience to Hume's discussion of oratory. Thus he was in an ideal position to approve Hume's suggestion, for instance, that 'plain sense & logical argument properly expressed ... is not suited to a popular audience' – however much contemporary rhetoricians praised propriety, perspicuity and economy of expression over 'the passion ... used by ancient orators'.³⁷

Cameron's own experience no doubt had taught him that 'good sense, a lively imagination, self-command, an ardent zeal with the natural expression of an expert speaker tho' not the most correct qualify much better for addressing a promiscuous multitude'. Moreover, to Hume's reasoning that 'tho a laboured style of language in

³⁶ Commonplace Book of William Cameron, f72v; f75v.

³⁷ Ibid., f75r. Compare Hume, *Essays*, 98. On Hume's Essay 'Of Eloquence', see Adam Potkay, 'David Hume (1711-1776)', in M. G. Moran (ed.), *Eighteenth-century British and American Rhetorics and Rhetoricians* (Westport CT and London, 1994), 124-7; *CU*, 168-74, 108-9.

oratory is not to be too minutely studied, yet method & order in argument is to be attended to as of essential importance', Cameron added his own reflection that 'If the memory cannot command this exactly it may be assisted by a few notes which will relieve fear & anxiety which tend so fatally to damp the spirit of the orator'. Indeed, Cameron seemed particularly eager to prove himself a critical reader on this point, adding the further note based on his own years of experience that 'almost daily practice in his art is necessary to finish the orator & it requires him to speak some considerable time before he can reach the proper pitch & key of true eloquence'.³⁸

Though Cameron therefore treated Hume with utmost respect the majority of the time, occasionally enhancing the original text with reflections based on his own experience, there was one crucial feature of the *Essays and Treatises* that marred his reading experience – Hume's treatment of organised religion. To be sure, Cameron avoided censuring Hume directly, perhaps in deference to contemporary standards of politeness to which he evidently subscribed.³⁹ Yet his tacit disapproval of Hume's irreligion is nonetheless evident in places where his note-taking rejects utterly the tenor of the text in front of him. In one instance, Cameron applied his own proof to Hume's maxim that 'Religion is commonly a very intractable princ'le':⁴⁰ according to Cameron, this is evident in the failure of 'all the attempts of the Dynasty of Stewart to establish popish & arbitrary dominion in Britain', though this is never an allusion drawn by Hume. More explicitly, Cameron inserted a snide aside about 'the tendency of sceptical philosophy to destroy the power of both' on reading Hume's argument that 'superstition [will]... promote the due fear of both civil & rel: authority'. Most dramatically of all, Cameron reacted angrily to Hume's views on the role of faction in early Christianity:

Hume says here that the persecution raised against the first Christians was owing to the violence instilled into their followers – but this violence if it was so is not the spirit of true Christianity but the reverse owing to the abuse of it. Christianity neither provokes nor inculcates in the least degree the spirit of persecution. It was the rage of system & disputation borrow'd from phil'y that corrupted Chr'y &

³⁸ Ibid., f75r-75v.

³⁹ *EB*, 146.

⁴⁰ Commonplace Book of William Cameron, f73v; Hume, *Essays*, 40.

raised party-spirit & the violence of faction in the church. The controversial writings of Paul in his Epistles have occasioned much division of opinion by misstating his doctrines & misconceiving his design. Such are his doctrines of Faith & Works etc.⁴¹

It is clear, in this instance and others, that Cameron treated Hume as a respected, uncontroversial authority until Hume touches on the subject of religion, at which point he immediately sprang to the defence of Christianity. Here, he seized on Hume's own argument that 'as philosophy was widely spread over the world, at the time when Christianity arose, the teachers of the new sect were obliged to form a system of speculative opinions' to refute him, and in the process, perhaps, alluded to the destructive power of Hume's own philosophy.⁴²

Putting Cameron's reception of Hume into the context of his wider reading, it is remarkable that he was not more scandalised by Hume's notorious views on Christianity. His notes on Hume were immediately preceded by passages on 'heresies of the first century' and on 'the proofs of the divinity of the Scripture', as well as notes from 'Barclay's Apology' and 'Neiker's Religious Opinions'. Moreover, Cameron interrupted his notes on Hume to record a page of 'Scriptural Expressions', perhaps as an antidote to readings like the one quoted above, a vital reminder of the devotional bases of his faith to anchor his progress through the dangerous realm of Hume's scepticism.⁴³ Nevertheless, Cameron apparently lacked the stomach for the more controversial elements of Hume's philosophy which were smuggled into the best-selling *Essays and Treatises* by his enterprising publishers. Cameron's notes covered Volume 1 (containing the *Essays, Moral and Political*) and Volume 4 (his *Political Discourses*) comprehensively, but if he did have access to the second and third volumes, he certainly did not chose to extract notes from the more insidious works they reproduced, namely the *Philosophical Essays*

⁴¹ Ibid., f73v; f75r; f74v; Hume, *Essays*, 62.

⁴² Hume, *Essays*, 62.

⁴³ Commonplace Book of William Cameron, f65r; f67r; ff71v-72r; f69r.

concerning Human Understanding and *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*.⁴⁴

IV

In fact, Cameron's responses to Hume's *Essays* were probably conditioned, however subconsciously, by critical assessments widely disseminated in the public domain. As we have already noted, Hume was generally held in very high esteem by professional reviewers who patrolled standards of taste in eighteenth-century Britain. One of the *Monthly Review*'s most prolific reviewers, William Rose, was typical in arguing that 'if we consider them [the works of Hume] in one view, as sprightly and ingenious compositions, ... there is a delicacy of sentiment, an original turn of thought, a perspicuity, and often an elegance, of language, that cannot but recommend his writings to every Reader of taste'.⁴⁵ Such sentiments encouraged aspiring readers like Cameron to set aside their concerns about what another reviewer called Hume's 'singular ... notions of religion' to appreciate his wider achievements in polite letters.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, some reviewers became increasingly wary of the tendency of Hume's treatment of religion, particularly in its impact on his tremendously popular *History*. R. Flexman, again writing in the *Monthly Review*, went so far as to warn that Hume's 'treatment ... of every denomination of Christians [in the first volume, reviewed in March 1755] ... is far from being such as becomes a gentleman, and may, we apprehend, prejudice his reputation *even as a historian*, in the opinion of many intelligent and considerate readers'.⁴⁷ While reviewers of subsequent volumes tended to be 'most flattering' in their praise for Hume's *History*,⁴⁸ some readers could not get beyond Hume's reputation as the great sceptic of

⁴⁴ *EB*, 45-50: the *Essays and Treatises* were 'a vehicle for propagating Hume's most skeptical philosophical essays, which benefited from being placed between the more accessible essays that framed them in volumes 1 and 4', 45; see also Spencer, *Hume*.

⁴⁵ Quoted from Rose's review of the *Four Dissertation* by Fieser, 'British Reviews of Hume', 648-9.

⁴⁶ The phrase appears in R. Flexman's review of Hume's *History* in the *Monthly Review* for March 1755, quoted by J. V. Price, 'Introduction' in D. MacQueen, *Letters on Mr Hume's History of Great Britain* (Edinburgh, 1756; 1990), vi.

⁴⁷ Quoted by Price, 'Introduction', vii.

⁴⁸ Fieser, 'British Reviews of Hume', 650.

modern British literature and took immediate offence to his apparent lack of respect for their most inner-held beliefs.

The most exceptional reading experiences in this regard so far uncovered are the ‘reflections’ on Hume’s *History* that pepper a series of commonplace books entitled ‘Amusements in Solitude’ apparently written by a member of the Stuart Stevenson families of Castlemilk and Torrance.⁴⁹ The notes are anonymous, and identification of their compiler has so far proved illusive. However, the compiler was certainly a mature reader, often reporting conversations with younger friends with an air of self-confident condescension, and at one point transcribing their own letter to ‘My dear young souldiers – To my Beloved Nephews’. Moreover, the tone of this letter, along with the handwriting and a number of textual clues, strongly suggests that the compiler was a woman.⁵⁰

Whoever the compiler was, her strength of religious feeling shines throughout the three commonplace books that have survived. Her pious response to returning to church after a long absence in April 1779 was typical (‘we forget that this world is not our Home – that we are only passing thro it to an eternal state’) and deeply devotional outbursts litter her reading notes. Moreover, the reader repeatedly contrasts her own piety with the ‘pride and vanity’ of modern philosophy, especially in her initial reaction to an unnamed book which she ‘thought a wild goose chase in quest of the origin of evil thro the mazes of philosophic reasoning; where pride and vanity often lurks; and dazzles the mental eye, with a false, flare of light; was but a fruitless pastime at my time of life’.⁵¹ Nevertheless, one particularly offensive modern philosopher – namely Hume – dominates her commonplace books.

The signs were initially propitious. Our anonymous reader praised the utility of history ‘as one of the most usefull Entertainments of a rational Mind’. However, her view of

⁴⁹ NLS MSS 8238-40, Amusements in Solitude.

⁵⁰ MS 8238, f16v. Most convincingly, the writer had recently endured a period of confinement under ‘a gentle distress’, a term typical of the euphemisms often used for childbirth in this period; see Vickery, ch3.

⁵¹ Ibid., f3v; f5v.

history quickly diverged from Hume's own 'Of the Study of History' in fundamental terms:

It is not a Knowledge of facts merely, that affords me Delight. It's the arrangements of facts in such order, as enables me to Trace out the great Sovereign Lord of the universe ruleing [sic] amongst the Kingdoms of Men; as the Moral Governour [sic] of Rational Creatures: amongst whom he both Established a Decree, that Righteousness Exalteth a Nation, but vice, & wickedness, is the ruin of any people. With this view I read History, and if I don't find my mind improv'd [sic] in the Knowledge of right & wrong, - my Heart warm'd with the Love of Moral Excellence, inspiring Sentiments of rational piety & virtue; the History affords me no Entertainment.⁵²

Clearly, Hume's *History* did not meet the mark: 'that celebrated author appears to me the most detestable – & contemptible Historian I ever Read ... Thro. two Quarto vol: in which is contain'd His History of the ancient Britons, – the Conquest of them by the Romans – Saxons – Danes – & Normans; there is not one anecdote to give the Mind Delight, or Lead to Rational Reflection'. In particular in this early period of English history, our reader found it astonishing that the historian could not find a better explanation for the development of organised religion, as sponsored and supported by secular rulers. Her extended commentary on this topic exemplifies her sarcastic tone, as well as her note-taking style, recording her opinions on Hume rather than transcribing material directly from his original text:

The original Cause he assigns, for a Legal Establishment of Clergy, is so outrage even in him, that it surprised me. I expected the common place Kinds, finely wrought up – viz. that Religion was a Necessary Tool for governing the vulgar, a Bridle for managing & leading them in Submission to the civil magistrate. But as this would have been a tacit Confession that Religion was useful & necessary to society, and a well regulated state, Hume considers it as not only useless, but dangerous. He observes, some arts & trades are supported & encouraged because they are useful; but cannot supply the necessaries of Life; others are encouraged, to render them more active & vigorous till they come to perfection; but the encouragement of Legal establishments to the Clergy is to make their activity

⁵² Ibid., f19r; compare Hume, *Essays*, 563ff. The notion that 'history tends to strengthen the sentiments of virtue by the variety of views in which it exhibits the conduct of Divine Providence' was forcefully advanced by Joseph Priestley, amongst others; *Essay*, 41.

needless – its to engage them to sink into indolence & ease, careless inattention in their business; for the less they do the better – is not this a very fine sensible account of the Reasons of state for a Legal Establishment of Clergy? And their appointing proper support for them? – Would it not have been more becoming wise Rulers & Legislators never to have established them; but rather Banished them, whenever they appeared amongst them. Since the exercise of their business is so pernicious that they saw it necessary to Hyre [sic] them, to do nothing – and bribes them to hold their Tongue.⁵³

Hume's account of the Reformation proved even more vexing, as an event our reader considered 'one of the greatest event of History, the most usefull & salutary to mankind, introducing Truth, Liberty, with all the liberal arts & sciences, dispelling all the clouds of ignorance, error, superstition, moral and civil slavery':

Nothing can be more shocking than what he expresses with regard to the Reformation. He owns it to be one of the greatest events in History; yet asserts reason had no share in it – for the philosophy had then made no way in Europe – what was this great Event owing to? – Reason is not allowed to have any share. A Divine interposition never comes within the limits of his plan – Fortune – chance – & nature – venerable names! – oft without meaning, are frequently found with him – But still, this great Event appears an Effect without a Cause; did not the passions, follies, & vices of mankind come to our authors assistance & finish the work.

Can anything be more absurd than this account? – Expressive of the most impious sentiments – devoid of common sense⁵⁴

By all means, our reader frequently acknowledged Hume's reputation for literary excellence, as we have seen. 'His extraordinary talents for History, I'm told, has enabled him to collect facts with the greatest accuracies & acuteness; to give them all the Grace of Eligant [sic] Language, adorn'd with the finest Diction – It may be so'. But she begs to differ with the literary critics on the true role of Hume's literary skills.⁵⁵ Rather than being his best feature, standard marks of esteem for Hume's elegant style consistently

⁵³ Ibid., f19r; ff17r-17v.

⁵⁴ Ibid., f19v. William Rose in the *Monthly Review* granted that many readers would not be pleased with what Hume 'has advanced in regard to Religion, the Genius of the Protestant Faith and the characters of the first Reformers'; quoted by Price, 'Introduction', viii.

⁵⁵ Summarised in Fieser, 'British Reviews of Hume'; Tweyman, *Hume*.

give way here to suspicion that Hume was hiding pernicious lies behind the veneer of ‘wit and elegance’ – such sentiments usually accompanied by sarcastic allusions to his ill-gotten celebrity. In the example quoted above on the establishment of clergy, for instance, she concludes ‘But strong is truth & it will prevail; in spite of such unphilosophic nonsenscs, tho’ adorn’d with all the Elegance of Mr Hume’s acute wit and Elegant Language ... Religion is that Divine Establishment by which we are taught to know & acknowledge our adorable Creator, the invisible God! ... Clergy are the Established Teachers of piety & virtue’. Hume’s ‘Elegance’ actually constitutes a horrifying betrayal in the eyes of our devout reader, causing pain akin to the rape of the heart, mind and soul: ‘Alas! ... the mind is not only starved by this Celebrated author; but the Heart is Hurt in all Her delicate feelings. The exercise of all her rational powers perverted’.⁵⁶

Many of the reflections on Hume recorded in ‘Amusements in Solitude’ appear to have been precipitated by a dispute with a young friend who had stood up for the great sceptic, pointing out, quite reasonably to the modern reader, that ‘Mr Hume was not writing Divinity. History was his province’. This response gets to the heart of the problem, and precipitates an immediate and passionate retort from our anonymous reader:

But the History of Rational, intelligent, immortal Creatures; the subjects of God – the great, the divine, moral governour [sic] of the universe can never be given with propriety, without a proper attention pay’d to religion. For religion is the distinguishing characteristic of Man; ... Cut man of[f] from God, the Centre of Souls! What is he more than other Brutes that perish? – more wretched – more contemptible. This makes it Evident to me, that there is no being a Good Historian, without being so far a divine, as to have a Regard for Religion. And the juster his apprehensions of Sacred Truths are, the better he is accomplished for this office.⁵⁷

It is in this crucial regard that ‘the Celebrated Hume has failed’, for without acknowledging ‘the Divine Governour [sic] of the universe Directing this great Event

⁵⁶ Ibid., f19r; f17v; f19v; f17r.

⁵⁷ Ibid., f17r.

making the wrath and folly of man to praise him; & their stormy passions fulfil his Councils', he reduces the history of mankind to the history of the beasts. 'The war of the Cranes – or the Battle of the frogs is more instructive by far. The History of Tigers – Bares [sic] – wolfs & foxes; making wars upon herds of tamer Cattle & flocks of sheep; would make as good a figure & as improving an History in Mr Hume's Hand, as the History of England – indeed I imagine it would be a fitter subject for that author'. The result, inevitably, is that his secular historiography has no inherent improving value: 'The sentiments he inspires, is a contempt for Human nature – indignation – rancour - & painful feelings of Heart, without one Ray or balancing Hope, or Sublime consolation... His mind is incapable of Distinguishing or relishing the true Sublime'.⁵⁸

The contrast with this reader's response to Robertson's *History of America* could not have been sharper: 'Dr Robertson's History of America has greatly entertained me. He has indeed unfolded a new world to my view – and tho' we cannot discover the place where – the time when – or the manner how, this new world has been peopled; yet we find by certain marks they bare that they are our Brethren'. By ruminating on Robertson's famous account of the peopling of the Americas, she pinpointed a crucial distinction between Hume and his clerical associate. Whereas Hume had consistently caused offence, Robertson immediately engaged her interest and sympathy: 'increases & strengthens my faith in Moses account of creation, & the history he gives of man, before & after the fall – confirms my belief of the necessity of a divine revelation, to restore human nature to purity & happiness; and the excellency of the Christian Religion for accomplishing that Glorious purpose'.⁵⁹

This was much more like what she expected to get out of history: 'In America, we find mankind in that state of nature, into which man sunk & was reduced by his disobedience of the divine law ... unenlightened by divine revelation, uncultivated & unimproved by human civilization ... the Dust returns to the Dust'. This was not the state of nature argued over by so many of eighteenth-century Europe's greatest minds ('of which we

⁵⁸ Ibid., f19r-v.

⁵⁹ MS 8239, ff16r-16v; compare Robertson, *America*, 264ff.

have heard so many fine things said by our philosophic geniuses'), but a state of nature that apparently corroborated the biblical account of man's fall. The prospect thrilled her: 'I attended Columbus thro' the whole voyage with ardour. Hope & fear alternate rose – but when I heard the cry, land – Land! – my heart leap'd – tumultuous Joy roused every power – when we struck the shore of that new – that unknown world ... My soul took wing to the eternal world – the amazement of the sailors, seem'd to me a lively picture of our own souls'.⁶⁰

The 'fallen' state of the native population of America may therefore have consolidated our reader's faith in the story contained in the Old Testament, but Robertson's subsequent portrayal of the 'depravity' of the Spanish conquest of America also had important implications for the way she saw the modern world: 'The highest refinement of philosophic vanity – arts – science – government – wealth – liberty – peace – learning & luxury' may 'polish and improve the human mind & manners, smoothing the boars skin', she conceded. 'But alas! The seeds of vice springs up amidst the finest culture – this is woefully exemplified in the discoverers – conquerors & late possesours [sic] of this new world'. Though man has fallen into sin, he still has the rational powers at his disposal to allow him to reclaim his original condition – but

It is god alone that can create us again unto good works; ... if left entirely to himself, how wretched – how base – how little above the brute creature? Pride was not made for man! ... The state of the Americas affords a proof in fact of the necessity of a divine revelation; to introduce civilization amongst mankind, and the constant influence of a divine energy is what alone can carry it on to perfection. If we resist this grace, it will fly from us. If we neglect & despise the heavenly call of the father of lights! – he will forsake us, & leave us to ourselves – then woe must be our lot.⁶¹

Naturally enough, the compiler of 'Amusements in Solitude' could not help drawing the comparison between Robertson and Hume: 'Ah! Thought I – How amazed would the fine genius of D: H—e be to find all the sublime truths of Christianity; which he doubted of –

⁶⁰ Ibid., ff16v-17r; compare Robertson, *America*, 146, 90.

⁶¹ Ibid., ff16v-17r.

despised, & neglected, as below the regard of philosophy'. But it was not just her positive experience of other historians that made her berate Hume. His literary crimes weighed so heavily that she frequently returned to him, interspersing her comments on other books with further bitter reflections on Hume. The most apposite came in response to her reading of 'Dr Owen on the Christian Doctrine', whom she found a great deal more edifying than Hume: 'What could induce the virtuous Mr Hume to reflect the Holy Jesus as a Divine Teacher?'⁶²

V

It is probably a good thing that the compiler of 'Amusements in Solitude' never forced herself to endure Hume's philosophy more directly – at least as far as we can tell. The case of George Ridpath, shows that Hume's sceptical philosophy could compromise contemporary responses to the *History* even for the most enlightened of provincial readers. As we have seen, Ridpath supported the *literati* on many of the key issues of the day, including their opposition to the motion to have Hume excommunicated from the Church of Scotland for his alleged atheism. He had once breakfasted with Hume, and wrote reverentially in his diary of the occasion when his friend 'David' had treated him to a tour of the Advocates' Library, drawing his attention to 'the collection of Medals, Ancient and Modern, and the Mummy'.⁶³

Even so, Ridpath could not condone Hume's views in the privacy of his own journal. Admittedly, he welcomed uncontroversial essays on Taste and Tragedy which he described succinctly as 'good philosophical criticism'. However, his view of the essay on Trade that 'in this, as usual, he finds all the world mistaken but himself' was much more consistent with his wider take on Hume. The *Natural History of Religion* he considered 'entertaining and has curious things in it, but its tendency is very bad', while he reported scandalously that 'David Hume has got printed at London a Collection of Atheism which his bookseller Andrew Millar dares not sell'. Most importantly, he was able correctly to

⁶² Ibid., f17r; MS8238, f18v.

⁶³ *Ridpath*, 19, 250, 143.

diagnose the *Enquiry on the Passions* as ‘an attempt to elucidate and popularize part of the *Treatise of Human Nature*’, but he nevertheless considered it ‘both very useless and still ... very obscure’.⁶⁴

Ridpath’s concern for Hume’s dangerous association with atheism clearly impacted on his subsequent reading of Hume’s *History* – as was frequently the case with many of the critics Ridpath enjoyed reading.⁶⁵ ‘There are always entertaining things in him but not without a great mixture both of trifling and blundering’ was Ridpath’s characteristically pithy judgement immediately on borrowing the first two volumes from the Kelso Subscription Library. A more carefully considered assessment followed, in which Ridpath pinpointed exactly what it was about Hume’s *History* that so unsettled him – in spite of its ‘entertaining’ literary style: ‘His account of James [II]’s reign and of the [Glorious] revolution is, in general, fair and candid, but the detail is often wanting that is sufficient to enable a man to judge for himself’. In other words, Ridpath wrote explicitly that Hume was the kind of author against whom the reader must always be on his guard – that the reader should try to ‘judge for himself’ on the issues Hume discusses, rather than accept Hume’s prognosis at face value.⁶⁶

Ridpath’s reticence to take Hume’s *History* at face value is particularly important given recent historians’ assessments of Hume’s avowedly ‘impartial’ approach to history, which most now agree was a thorough-going attempt to deconstruct the great myths of English political history – amongst which, of course, Whiggish accounts of the Glorious Revolution of 1688-9 loomed large.⁶⁷ Moreover, such obvious distrust of Hume’s writings spilled over the pages of Ridpath’s diary into sociable encounters with friends, drinking companions and fellow members of the Kelso Library. On one occasion, when another clergyman mentioned that he had been reading Hume’s *History*, it became a topic of ‘much disputation’ over dinner after a meeting at the Library. On another, he reported

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 131, 319, 73, 118.

⁶⁵ Price, ‘Introduction’; *Directions* advised that Hume’s ‘visible disesteem for religion, and his carelessness in some facts, make [the *History*] not so valuable a work as so capable an author might have rendered’, 12.

⁶⁶ *Ridpath*, 262, 264.

⁶⁷ Phillipson, *Hume*, puts the *History* in the wider context of Hume’s intellectual biography. On Hume’s treatment of his sources, see Hicks, *Neoclassical History*, 189-91; M. S. Phillips, *Society and Sentiment: Genres of Historical Writing in Britain 1740-1820* (Princeton, 2000), 62-5.

a discussion of a critical review of Hume in which the ensemble agreed 'he is treated severely enough, yet not more than he deserves'.⁶⁸

The conclusion reached by Ridpath and shared by his fellow readers in Kelso that Hume was an untrustworthy historian was repeated in much more urgent terms by Hanna Hume (no relation), who was desperate to convert a daughter living in London away from her youthful enthusiasm for the *History*.⁶⁹ She first outlined the ways in which Hume's *History* was perceived to distort the political truths in entirely conventional terms: 'what is called his history is allowed to be an apology for the family of the Stuarts & written for that purpose only. The great deceit in his book is that he does not distinguish between the constitution & administration & so supposes that whatever is done by the most wicked kings or ministers is constitution'. Robertson was again cited to help demonstrate in quite detailed terms 'the falsity' of this position:

It is certain that most of the kings before the Stuarts were as tyrannical as they but you who have read Robertson will easily account for their being so. When the king acted contrary to law, the people being little more than vassals were not able to oppose him & the barons supported him for the sake of supporting their own tyranny, but when he quarrelled with any of the powerful barons they pointed out his arbitrary proceedings & opposed him with arms & between them the people were constantly oppressed for the barons no more considered their good than the kings did. Notwithstanding this, the constitution was all the time quite free as appears not only from history & law books, most clearly but from express acts of Parliament then in force & repeatedly renewed in support of liberty & against arbitrary powers: laws could avail little against force. Thus things continued till by the civil wars most of the powerful barons were destroyed or had forfeited their estates[.] Liberty of selling their estates was then given them by using that & by other causes they lost their power which with their property fell into the hands of the people who became considerable enough to oppose tyranny. How does it follow that because the kings were tyrants before the Stuarts tho in defiance of the most plain & express laws that the Stuarts are justifiable in following their example. If the Stuarts had not been as ill judging as tyrannical they would have found out that they had no powerful barons to support them.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ *Ridpath*, 130, 6.

⁶⁹ YUL Osborn MS7733, Letter of Hanna (Frederick) Hume discussing David Hume.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

Like Ridpath, Hanna Hume thought that Hume had not been entirely honest in his treatment of the Stuarts, and advised her daughter to chase up Robertson's *History of Scotland* for a more impartial picture of the events Hume described. As she put it, 'Mr Hume is charged with want of veracity in not telling the whole truth but only as much as serves his purpose by which an action may be represented quite contrary to what in reality it would appear if the whole truth was told'.

More intriguingly still, she also warns her daughter that the *History* cannot be considered independently of Hume's 'diabolical' philosophy, reassuring her that she will 'detest him as a philosopher' for endeavouring 'to overturn natural & revealed religion & all morality & to establish atheism':

His favourite doctrine is that we have no knowledge of anything not even from the evidence of our sense. We are mistaken when we fancy that we see, hear, feel etc. He says if you pretend to know or believe anything you are fools & then adds as impudently as absurdly that he knows with the utmost certainty that his own opinions are true. You will doubt whether he is mad or wicked.⁷¹

There are a number of layers of reading experience here. The recipient of the letter had evidently informed her parents of her admiration for Hume after reading one of the early volumes, so on one level the letter is an attempt to reform her view of Hume – itself apparently formed with the help of her Tory husband. Hume's scandalous philosophical views were highlighted in order to effect a change in her initial judgment, her parents attempting to safeguard her piety from the danger his ideas posed.

On another level, the letter is clearly the result of a reading experience shared by the recipient's parents. Their response to their daughter's dangerous misreading of Hume was not simply intended to break down the trust she placed in his *History*, it was also a re-affirmation of their own unified response. Moreover, the parents' perception of Hume was itself contingent on the dialogue between Hume and more orthodox members of the Scottish *literati*, namely Robertson and Beattie. Indeed, their belligerent reading of

⁷¹ Ibid.

Hume's philosophy was itself entirely dependent on Beattie's exposition of his ideas in the 'essay on truth & immutability' (which, they say, their daughter will be able to borrow 'from a circulating library in London'). The mother admitted as much, conceding that 'I did not compare the quotations with the original because I could not suppose any man so foolish as to quote the words of a living author & refer you to the page where they are to be found if the quotations were not true. He does not quote the meaning of Mr Hume's words but the words themselves'. At no stage is there any suggestion that the correspondents had actually read any of Hume's philosophical works, and, indeed, the recipient of the letter was expressly forbidden from doing so – being allowed instead to read 'five or six pages' only of Beattie's safely orthodox account.

VI

Despite the widespread distribution of Hume's *Essays* in contemporary Scottish libraries, Hanna Hume was actually typical of many Scots' approach to Hume's philosophy. Direct readings of his philosophical works were, as we have already mentioned, extraordinarily rare in Scottish commonplace books of this period. Cameron's measured engagement aside, no sympathetic accounts of Hume's philosophical works appear to have survived – and even Cameron ignored the two *Enquiries* as they appeared in Volumes 2 and 3 of the *Essays and Treatises*. In fact, Hume's philosophy featured far more frequently in contemporary reading experiences when mediated through the hostile commentary of his philosophical antagonists, including Priestley, Reid, Oswald, Campbell and, of course, Beattie.⁷² At the same time, Scottish readers thereby reflected with remarkable consistency their enthusiastic reception of another important facet of the Scottish Enlightenment's philosophical legacy, in effect using the Common Sense philosophers' defence of orthodoxy to validate their own deeply held beliefs and values.

The compiler of 'Amusements in Solitude' was a case in point. Faced with the effrontery of Hume's 'cock and bull' *History*, she turned to authorities who could reinforce her faith

⁷² For this group, see *Scottish Common Sense Philosophy: Sources and Origins*, 5 vols., ed. James Fieser (Bristol, 2000).

in the influence of divine revelation. These included well-known divines like Owen, Harvey, Marshall and Law, as well as the Moderate principal of Glasgow University, William Leechman. Hugh Blair also contributed to what was a systematic defence of the mental world she believed Hume had attempted to subvert:

Its [sic] beautifully observed by Dr Blair – that the manner in which these divine communications are convey'd by God to the Heart, we may be at a loss to explain; but no argument can be thence drawn against the credibility of the fact – the operations which the power of God carries on in the natural world are no less mysterious than those we are taught to believe that the spirit performs in the moral world.⁷³

More unusually, she also enlisted Hutcheson to bolster her own deeply devotional world view, but was at pains to clarify how his notion of the 'moral sense' could be reconciled with divine revelation. As she put it, 'Without a divine revelation, or instruction founded upon it – it [Hutcheson's moral sense] can neither discern objects nor direct our steps, like the eye in the back – tho' it has the power of vision amidst the thickest gloom'.⁷⁴ And even in reading Blair's eminently orthodox and reassuring *Sermons*, she still found room for improvement:

Dr. Blair beautifully observes, that the sentiments of human nature, expressed by the conduct of mankind both in religious & civil government, established amongst all nations; surprisingly harmonise with the peculiar doctrines of Christianity. But what he seems to think is the mere effect of the Light of Nature, & the Exercise of our Rational powers only; appears to me to flow originally from Divine Revelation, handed about by Tradition ill preserved & woefully intermix'd with superstition.⁷⁵

A more conventional source for the rebuttal of Hume's scepticism was the Principal of Marischal College, Rev. George Campbell, whose *Dissertation on Miracles* (1762) took

⁷³ MS8240, ff14v, 24v; compare H. Blair, *Sermons*, 5 vols. (Edinburgh, 1777-1801), II, 138, 51.

⁷⁴ MS8239, f11r; compare Francis Hutcheson, *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections...* (London, 1728). Hutcheson's apparent heterodoxy actually led to accusations by the presbytery of Glasgow that he had flouted the Westminster Confession; Berry, 166, 183.

⁷⁵ MS8240, f28v; compare Blair, *Sermons*, I, 380-1; II, 86.

deliberate aim at some of Hume's most exceptionable ideas. Nurseryman William Drummond, for example, eagerly entered an account of Campbell's efforts 'to refute Hume and defend our holy religion' into his commonplace book on 30th November 1814.⁷⁶ Drummond enthused that Campbell proved 'Hume's favourite argument is founded on a false Hypothesis', and added his own somewhat confused gloss that 'The plain conclusion from his [Hume's] argument is that no testimony should receive our assent unless supported such an extensive experience as had we not had a previous and independent faith in testimony could never have been acquired – such absurdity!!!' Of course, Drummond never seems to have read Hume in the original, and took Hume's antagonist entirely on trust because he had so confidently reaffirmed Drummond's own most deeply held beliefs. Having listed many of Campbell's 'collateral arguments' in favour of miracles, Drummond concluded with the same sense of triumph over the beguiling eloquence of Hume that characterised 'Amusements in Solitude': 'he completely silences Hume notwithstanding all his arts and ingenuity'.⁷⁷

The patriotic amateur antiquary, Rev. John Grant, was another to find relief and consolation in Campbell's defence of one of the most dearly-held tenets of Christian faith. He noted Hume's intention 'to prove that miracles which have not been the immediate object of our senses, can not reasonably be believed on the testimony of others', and accurately quoted Hume's argument that 'a miracle is a violation of the laws of nature, and as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws the proof against a miracle from the very nature of the fact, is as complete as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined'.⁷⁸

In Grant's case, however, Hume was not simply mediated through Campbell alone, but was further filtered through the editorial processes of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, his notes clearly based on an entry which reproduced key extracts from the debate between

⁷⁶ NLS Acc.5699, Commonplace Book of William Drummond. On Campbell's arguments, see Berry, 173-4; Hume held Campbell's response in such high regard that he defended himself in a letter to Blair, J. Grieg (ed.), *The Letters of David Hume* (Oxford, 1932), 348-51; H. Sefton, 'David Hume and Principal Campbell', in J. J. Carter and J. H. Pittock (eds.), *Aberdeen and the Enlightenment* (Aberdeen, 1987).

⁷⁷ Drummond, ff50v-51v.

⁷⁸ See NAS GD248/614/1, unpaginated compare *Encyclopaedia Britannica...* (2nd edition, Edinburgh, 1778-83), I, 22.

Hume and Campbell on miracles.⁷⁹ Though Grant's notes accurately reflected Hume's arguments against miracles, we can therefore be pretty certain that he had never actually read them in the original. Moreover, whilst he was willing to cover Hume's side of the debate in his commonplace book, he remained convinced that 'Dr Campbell successfully shows the fallacy of this argument by another single one' and spent even longer clarifying Campbell's proof – again, exactly as it appeared in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

Meanwhile, nurseryman Drummond demonstrates how another major philosopher of the Scottish Enlightenment could be deployed by contemporary readers as a bulwark for the most basic elements of their mental world. Drummond was evidently horrified by Hume's attempt 'to prove by the evidence of reason that there was no evidence in reasoning', this time filtered through the arguments of Hume's most eminent opponent Thomas Reid. 'Mr Hume's argument is this; judgement and reasoning resolve themselves into conception, or the mere formation of arbitrary and fanciful ideas. And to make the matter very clear, he tells us in treatise of human nature, that an opinion or belief may most accurately be defined a lively idea related to or associated to a present impression'. This Drummond utterly dismissed as 'nothing but unintelligible explanations and self contradictory assertions', adding that 'scepticism takes its origin from a complete misapprehension of the nature of reasoning; which of necessity must rest upon some foundation something must be taken for granted which is called a first principle or an intuitive truth'. Reid's response was instantly comforting:

Dr Reid establishes the authority of the five senses very successfully
The means according to Reid by which we may know first principles to be true or false are 1st To shew that a first principle stands upon the same footing of others which we implicitly admit. 2nd The proof ad absurdum by shewing the inconsistencies that would result from rejecting it. 3rd Proving that the principle in question has had the consent of all ages and nations. 4th Shewing that it has had a place in the human mind from the earliest infancy. 5th That it influences our practise.

⁷⁹ On the relationship between commonplacing and the new encyclopedias, R. Yeo, 'Ephraim Chambers' *Cyclopaedia* (1728) and the Tradition of the Commonplaces', *JHI*, 57 (1996), 157-75.

He divides them into ne[ce]ssary and contingent, the ne[ce]ssary are those which have been generally demonstrated axioms, the contingent are those which depends upon the present constitutions of things – viz the evidence of consciousness, of memory, of the senses, of our existence that we have some power over our actions which is volition that there is a certain regard due to human testimony etc.

All these he adds are the dictates of common sense we ascribe to reason two offices the first is to judge of things self evident, the second to draw conclusions that are not self evident from them, the first of these is the province of common sense the second properly that of Reason.⁸⁰

Paymaster Andrew Douglas also focused on the issue of human perception in a list of ‘Propositions contest by Dr Beattie’. Having already dispatched Des Cartes, Malbranche, Locke and Berkeley, Douglas turned in much more detail to Beattie’s treatment of Hume. The basic argument that ‘All our perceptions are from Impressions, and Ideas copied from Impressions’ was easily enough dealt with. Having conceded with Beattie that this was ‘true in general’, Douglas eagerly followed ‘how in the Anatomy of the human mind [it] is a secondary consideration: Previous is the desire which prompts the infant to search for the mothers [sic] breast ...: there nature has implanted a craving instinct prior to external impressions or ideas’. Douglas noted Beattie’s demolition of each succeeding proposition with increasing enthusiasm, drawn in by the scathing sarcasm of his arguments. On Hume’s proposition ‘That an idea differs only from its corresponding impression in being weaker, but in other respects is not only similar but the same’, Douglas notes ‘My Idea of an Ass does not confound my hearing – the near bray of an ass might’. In response to Hume’s suggestion that ‘All Ideas of solid objects are equal in magnitude & solidity to the Objects themselves’, he gleefully retorted ‘when he can prove he may pay the national debt with a guinea, ... he from being a lucky chargees des affair may be beneficially promoted to be first Lord of the Treasury’.

In riposte to Hume’s controversial view of the self, Douglas poses the question ‘is not this more like the language of a big infant than of a philosopher’, and he concludes his account of Beattie’s duel with the sceptics with one final proposition of Hume’s:

⁸⁰ Drummond, ff15r-17r; compare, Reid, *Active Powers*, 6; *Intellectual Powers*, 550. Many English readers filleted Reid for similar purposes; see *Making British Culture*, ch6, 18-20.

6th: The soul is only a bundle of perceptions

Ans: Pray, where is the percipient? Has Mr Hume mislaid his? It may be so – yet still it may exist – and may God have mercy on it. Prior’s three blue beans etc is as learned - & more comic than Hume’s Bundle⁸¹

Douglas was yet another contemporary reader who took delight in belittling Hume’s philosophy without seemingly reading any of his works, including the *History*. Yet this did not stop him identifying himself so thoroughly with Hume’s Scottish antagonists, and entering the fray with his own extemporaneous remarks which again took aim at the pernicious influence of Hume’s rhetorical skill: ‘there may be some art in endeavouring to establish unintelligible maxims, whereon to found sophistical arguments & false conclusions, but it is absurd & awkward for a philosopher to play off axioms which are obviously false or nonsense’. Moreover, in a vicious endnote Douglas made plain exactly why it was so important to resist Hume’s attempt to undermine the whole edifice of Christian belief, which Beattie had argued posed such a real and present danger to humanity’s future prospects: ‘To endeavour to overturn the plainest principles of human knowledge, to subvert the foundations of morality & religion *is philosophically playing the Devil. If the Devil had given Eve such an insipid Hume apple, she would have spit it in his face.*’⁸²

Predictably, Cameron also turned to his former mentor Beattie when he came to ruminate on the dangers that sophistry and scepticism posed for the modern world. Though happy to treat Hume as a trusted authority on a wide range of issues, the Great Infidel came eventually to cast a long shadow over Cameron’s thinking. This much is clear from ‘Verses written on reading Dr Beattie’s “Essay on Truth”’ which Cameron composed in 1806, when he was already in his late 50s and presumably contemplating his own future prospects. Cameron starts by acknowledging the status of British letters in the modern world, putting his own spin on the ‘new-created light’ of Edinburgh for which ‘all the

⁸¹ Adv. MS17.1.11, f130v; compare Beattie, *Essay on Truth*, 265-7.

⁸² Adv. MS17.1.11, f131r; compare with Beattie, *Essay on Truth*, 361 (my *italics* represent Douglas’ addition to Beattie’s original).

nations sound applausive noise'.⁸³ He rhetorically questions Beattie's impolite attack on Hume, asking 'Why wakes O Beattie, thy discordant voice, / to damp the general joy, to rouse alarms / of treason, rapine, blood-besprinkled arms?' But Beattie, Cameron believes, will have his day: 'Thy voice O Beattie, shall be heard at last, / As wak'd by Truth in energetic strain, / Her injured rights & honours to maintain'. As he had earlier explained, recycling the terms of the title of Beattie's major work,

When wildering Scepticism shall have spread
Throughout the world her desolation dread,
Immutable, eternal Truth shall rise,
& illuminate the earth and skies,
Like Phaebus, beaming with celestial light,
Dispel the fen-born meteors of the night;
Then shall her enemies be fain to hide
Beneath the crumbled pillars of their pride;
Thy name, O Beattie, then shall be rever'd,
To her, to all her faithful friends endear'd,
Approv'd for warmth & energy of heart,
Disdaining Sophistry's entangling art,
With mists of Doubt o'erwhelming all the mind,
Where Faith and Truth no stable footing find.⁸⁴

Throughout Cameron's eloquent hymn to Beattie it is French philosophy that is the primary target, with Britain's 'new-created light, / From Gallic oracles reflected bright'. However, for Cameron, as for the Perth antiquaries who attacked French sophistry, the allusion to Hume would have been unequivocal: accusations of 'sophistry', 'scepticism' and 'pride' were synonymous with Hume after Beattie's sustained and notoriously impolite attack on him.⁸⁵

⁸³ Cameron's praise of Edinburgh's 'capital of the mind' is reminiscent of other contemporary comment by Carlo Denina, Tobias Smollett and others with which he may have been familiar; *EB*, especially 68.

⁸⁴ NAS CH1/15/5, ff3r-3v.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, f3v.

VII

At least Cameron had read Hume's *Essays*, and was sophisticated enough to assess his essays sympathetically and seriously. Most knew of Hume's scepticism by reputation alone, and all the frustration, bafflement, effrontery and sheer horror that his alleged views evoked were ultimately reflected in direct attacks on his character. 'Amusements in Solitude' was once again a case in point. Having so violently dismissed Hume's *History*, and deployed the likes of Robertson, Blair and Hutcheson to defend her faith, our commonplacer turned finally to an assault on Hume's character. Coming across Adam Smith's famous letter describing Hume 'as approaching as nearly to the idea of a perfectly wise & virtuous man, as perhaps the nature of Human frailty will permit', she was plainly horrified: 'He became the patron of infidelity – advocate for, & teacher of the most abominable & Horable vices – vices, shocking to nature; & destructive to every virtue, & rational enjoyment. – Is this the man of wisdom & philosophy – the man of compleat virtue?' This naturally led her into a fully rationalised dismissal of Smith's conclusion along now familiar lines:

Tho' the man had been form'd a mere Rational animal, without a power of believing; by which he is made capable of receiving information & instruction, both from God & man; and by that, be led to know & acknowledge his creator and Redeemer; - with the duties - & glorious hopes which arise from these Reflections; - I could hardly agree with M. Smith that his Beloved Friend, had attain'd the summit of Human wisdom & virtue. – He falls infinitely below the wise and virtuous Heathens, who darkly but vigorously felt after Truth. But as a power of Believing is implanted in the human soul, as a sister eye to reason; and Mr Hume had within his reach, The Divine Revelation, made to man of the Sublimest Truths, Teaching the Divinist virtues, exciting us by the most exalting Hopes, to go on towards perfection; - surely the proper exercise of this internal eye, is as necessary to compleat the perfect character of a wise and virtuous man, as the exercise of reason & experience in the most extensive learning, & the greatest Depth of Thought, & Eligance of Language. – Blind of an Eye the celebrated author appears – Lame of a Leg, tho' prop'd by Friendship & all the Grace of cheerfull good Humor – and Gayeity to the Last.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ MS8239, f22r. Smith wrote 'One single, and as I thought a very harmless sheet of paper, which I happened to write concerning the death of our late friend Mr Hume, brought upon me ten times more abuse than the very violent attack I had made upon the whole commercial system of Great Britain'; *The Correspondence of Adam Smith*, ed. E. C. Mossner and I. S. Ross (Indianapolis, 1987), 251; 217-21.

Ultimately, Hume's 'blindness' to the orthodox objects of Christian faith made him little different than the 'Brutes' whose history she thought he was most qualified to write, and she accordingly dismissed Hume as a force of nonsense:

This brings to my Remembrance a verse found in Professor Hutchisons Class one morning:

Three Sages, in three Different nations Born;
England & Ireland & Scotland did adorn.
The first from nature banished Spirit quite;
The second Kick'd of[f] Mat[t]er, out of Spite.
The force of Nonsense [sic], could no further go;
To form a Hume, she join'd the other two.⁸⁷

A much more personal attack on Hume seems to have been circulating in mid-eighteenth-century Scotland posing as an additional essay, clearly modelled on Hume's own satirical 'Character of Sir Robert Walpole' which first appeared in 1742:⁸⁸

ESSAY XIII Character of the author of the Essays

Mr Home Author of the Essays & Ambassador extra-ordinary from the Republick of Letters to the Common-wealth of Petticoats, a person of great Abilities, but no Genius; of some Judgment, but no Invention; of vast Reading but no Taste. His Stile is smooth, not easy, proper, not elegant, concise not lively. His Reflections are more uncommon than natural; more curious than useful. His writings are larger than his Fame, his Fame less than his Vanity. He would have merited more Praise, had he never been an Author tho' it must be confessed, he would have made a good Schoolmaster. As a Man I love him, as he is a Pedant I pity him; and as he affects to be a Critick & a Man of Mode, I despise & laugh at him. With many Faults and few Excellencies to atone for them, he has incurred the Displeasure of the Ladys, instead of gaining their Favour. I would therefore advise him to retire from their Court to his Brother's House at Ninewells, where he may pass the Remainder of his Days in Solitude and obtruse Speculations.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ MS8239, f.22r.; f.17v.

⁸⁸ Its similarity to Hume's essay on the character of Sir Robert Walpole was noted by at least one contemporary, see NAS GD18/5143; Hume, *Essays*, 574-6; it was withdrawn in 1770.

⁸⁹ NAS GD26/13/279.

Versions of this skit survive in at least three archival collections in Scotland, and though their original source has yet to be uncovered, such wide distribution usefully illustrates the popularity of the kind of sentiments it expressed.⁹⁰ The Earl of Leven even transcribed an abridged version into the end pages of his own copy of the *Essays*, directly following Hume's character assassination of Walpole.⁹¹ In all extant versions, Hume's notorious predilection for female company was ridiculed ruthlessly as a prelude to a thorough debunking of his literary fame. In the process, Hume's *Essays* were tarnished with those very qualities they condemned, including pedantry, bad taste and inelegance. Ultimately, the many Scottish readers who collected this skit and others like it agreed that Hume would have been better to keep his scepticism to himself.

VIII

Clearly, the tendency of such malicious anecdotalising was to marginalise Hume's significance for the mental world which readers inhabited in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Scotland. This comes as no surprise. Scotland was still a deeply spiritual nation in the age of Enlightenment, and part of Hume's great notoriety in his own lifetime derived from his scandalous disregard for organised religion.⁹² Nevertheless, Hume's works tended to be an important influence on the lives and attitudes of the people who read them. No two people in this survey read Hume's works in the same way, though they often seem to have been influenced by well-known critical analyses, and most readers' experiences were carefully variegated – adapting some of his views to consolidate their own opinions, whilst at the same time censoring, sometimes in the most impolite terms, his perceived Tory politics or threatening stance on religion. Even those who appear not to have read Hume at all recognised that his arguments had fundamental implications for the way in which they saw the world, and deployed other

⁹⁰ Compare NAS GD18/5143 and Edinburgh University Library La.II.451/2.

⁹¹ Private collection.

⁹² On religious belief in eighteenth-century Scotland, see C. Brown, *Religion and Society in Scotland since 1707* (Edinburgh, 1997); idem., *The Social History of Religion in Scotland since 1730* (London, 1987); T. C. Smout, 'Born again at Cambuslang: New Evidence on Popular Religion and Literacy in Eighteenth-Century Scotland', *Past and Present*, 97 (1982).

Scottish Enlightenment authors to man the barricades against his secularism and alleged atheism.

Beyond our special concern in this chapter for the reception of David Hume, however, the reading experiences discussed here illuminate further the ways in which works of the Scottish Enlightenment were endowed with meaning by contemporary readers from all ranks – from the Duchess of Atholl, through the banker Gilbert Innes, the minister William Cameron, the naval paymaster William Douglas, to the nurseryman William Drummond. Every reader's life was in some way changed by their encounter with Hume or his antagonists, and this confirms our suspicion that books made a formative contribution to the construction of the self. Moreover, readers often engaged with Hume in the explicit realisation that they formed part of a much wider community of readers, yielding yet more striking evidence for the way Enlightenment ideas and values were discussed, argued about, and commended to friends and relatives by readers throughout Scotland – in the subscription libraries and taverns of small market towns like Kelso, as well as in the vast piles of the landowning elite and in the genteel drawing rooms of the New Town.

CONCLUSION

‘A Nation of Readers’

Scottish Enlightenment, British Culture and the History of Reading

Robert Darnton suggests that historical reading is ‘both familiar and foreign, it is an activity that we share with our ancestors yet that never can be the same as what they experienced’. The conventional ‘great men’ approach to intellectual history thus depends on ‘the illusion of stepping outside of time in order to make contact with authors who lived centuries ago’, without recognising that our responses to them ‘cannot be the same as that of readers in the past’.¹ Darnton’s insight applies especially well to recent, sometimes quite vitriolic, arguments about the nature, extent and diffusion of the Scottish Enlightenment. Even authors who have had the greatest impact on posterity like Adam Smith and David Hume meant something quite different to contemporary readers, and though their ideas are still held to be of immense relevance to the modern world we need to reconstruct how they were read by contemporaries to understand fully the intellectual culture of which they were a part.

I

The experiences of provincial readers tell us a great deal about what the Scottish Enlightenment was, who was involved in it and how far it extended, to paraphrase George Elder Davie, beyond the drawing rooms of New Town Edinburgh. Though it arose in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen, the heartlands of Enlightenment culture in provincial Scotland were the towns that were becoming an increasingly prominent feature of Lowland Scotland – spreading geographically from Border towns like Kelso, Hawick and Selkirk, across to Dumfries, Kirkcudbright, Wigtown and Ayr in the south west, taking in ever-expanding industrial towns in the central belt like Kilmarnock, Paisley, Dundee, and Greenock, incorporating traditional county towns serving substantial rural

¹ Darnton, ‘First Steps’, 5.

hinterlands like Perth, Forfar and Cupar, and stretching as far north as Inverness, Peterhead, Wick, Orkney and Shetland. The values that have come to define the 'cultural' interpretation of the Scottish Enlightenment had an important impact on intellectual culture in such towns, with associational libraries becoming the focus for the patriotic sociability of country lairds and tenant farmers, and urban professionals, merchants, manufacturers and tradesmen alike. Their fervent support for such associational ventures often went hand in hand with elaborate boasts about their valuable contribution to local affairs in what can be seen as a self-conscious attempt to imitate and emulate the more effortless clubbability of the metropolitan *literati*.

The professional classes were in the vanguard, with lawyers, surgeons, physicians and clergymen of all denominations dominating subscription lists for associational libraries, taking a leading role in their foundation, and proving the most responsive readers of all. They were supported by the landed elite who eagerly rushed to patronise the Scottish Enlightenment, providing the wealth to underpin its material profitability as a publishing phenomenon but also underwriting its expansive plans to improve Scotland, including the building of new towns, funding innovations in agriculture and industry, and keeping a benevolent eye on the financial viability of associational libraries. Moreover, genteel men and women often made the most capable readers, blessed with the leisure time, easy access to books and educational opportunities to read widely, understand difficult material, and thereby engage with authors like Hume, Reid and Smith on their own terms.

But this provincial Enlightenment also involved groups of people not so commonly associated with intellectual culture, especially farmers, merchants, manufacturers and tradesmen. Booksellers were a particularly crucial feature. As Richard Sher has shown, the Enlightenment would not have been possible in Scotland had it not been for enterprising booksellers like William Creech and Alexander Kincaid who were prepared to publish, edit, market and sell its constituent books.² Booksellers were also well placed to stimulate provincial culture, with Isaac Forsyth shining out as a seller of Enlightenment, running a long-lived circulating library in Elgin, promoting books that

² Most thoroughly in *EB*.

addressed the improvement of Scottish farming, and leading projects designed explicitly to improve the local infrastructure. However, it is clear too that merchants and tradesmen not so immediately involved in the book trade were eager to engage in enlightened activity, subscribing to associational libraries in their droves, contributing to their management and proving prolific borrowers of books from endowed libraries – even though it is very rarely possible to reconstruct their responses to those books.

We can also help to resolve arguments amongst recent historians of science, philosophy and political economy about what constituted the distinctive contribution of the Scottish Enlightenment to the history of ideas. Sher has identified a list of ‘common values and beliefs that were shared by “enlightened” men of letters everywhere, including science, virtue, reason, toleration, cosmopolitanism, polite learning, critical methods, freedom of the press, and fundamental human rights’,³ and readers throughout Scotland read to consolidate their own adherence to such values. Polite learning clearly dominated the reading horizons of the elite readers surveyed here, and many commonplacers made the pursuit of virtue their priority.⁴ Readers like William Cameron and Gilbert Innes took notes to foster their own sense of religious toleration, while the Earl of Mansfield was merely the most powerful of many readers who looked to the past for lessons about the administration of the burgeoning British Empire in the present. In negotiating their responses to such problems, Scottish readers were engaged in a process of personal self-understanding in which they aligned themselves squarely with core values of Enlightenment culture.

More dramatically, readers in provincial Scotland gravitated towards works that celebrated Scotland’s distinctive national identity, whether in poetry or prose, and engaged in discourses that allowed them to make their own patriotic contribution to the world of literature and science. They raided Scottish history for a sense of where they had come from, and turned to Burns, Fergusson and Ramsay to perpetuate a Scottish vernacular tradition that seemed to be threatened by attacks on the Scots language led by

³ R. B. Sher, ‘Storm over the Literati’, *Cencrastus*, 28 (1987-8), 5.

⁴ There was of course a substantial popular literature on which poorer elements of society not discussed in this study could draw; see B. Burgh, ‘Libraries and Literacy in Popular Education’, in *CHLB2*.

Hume. Indeed, contesting notions of post-union patriotism precipitated a divergence between metropolitan Enlightenment and provincial Enlightenment. Amateur antiquaries competed with professional historians in Edinburgh for possession of the Scottish past, and readers attempted to marginalise Hume's philosophy (often in the most impolite terms) from their reading experiences as a profound threat to the moral foundations of the Scottish nation. There was thus a clear fissure in the 'interpretive community' of eighteenth-century Scotland, with many provincial readers resisting elements of intellectual culture as it was produced in the Scottish metropolis.⁵

Concern over the future identity of the Scots people placed more practical demands on provincial consumers of literature. The mentality of improvement could be found everywhere in provincial Scotland: individuals read to improve themselves personally and materially, and engaged in associational libraries with the express intention of improving the towns in which they lived. Even more obviously, Scottish landowners and farmers seized on the literature of agricultural improvement to change the face of rural Scotland, replicating and emulating the experiments they read about in Kames, Home, Anderson or Dickson to improve their own farming practises, to maximise production and efficiency. Indeed, adherence to the mentality of improvement was so prevalent in provincial Scotland that we might more positively talk of an 'Age of Improvement', rather than argue over the proper meaning and application of the term 'Scottish Enlightenment'.

Much more importantly, though, it is not at all clear how far all this can be considered distinctively Scottish. Books by Hume, Robertson, Smith and Blair were enormously popular across the English-speaking world and beyond, and consumers in Scotland leaned heavily on increasing notions of canonicity in British literature. Associational values were the same throughout Britain, and Scottish subscription libraries took their rhetoric, selection processes, organisational structure and even titles from prestigious institutions in England. Immersion in serious reading, a love of libraries, an interest in

⁵ S. Fish, *Is there a Text in this Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge MA and London, 1980).

books quite far down the social scale, and a rhetorical attachment to improvement were prevalent attitudes and priorities amongst most educated Britons in the Georgian period, and in many parts of continental Europe. Even individual readers' responses were patrolled by influential critics writing for the *Annual Register*, the *Critical Review*, the *Monthly Review*, the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and, latterly, the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly Reviews*. In the end, therefore, our study of provincial culture seems to suggest that much of the most important and pervasive manifestations of the Enlightenment in Scotland, especially outside literati circles in the major cities, were not particularly Scottish after all.

II

Quite apart from enhancing our understanding of intellectual culture in eighteenth-century Scotland, however, the methodologies deployed in this study have clear implications for the burgeoning field of the history of reading. Indeed, our excavation of reading experiences in eighteenth-century Scotland has profound ramifications for the famous thesis, now rather dated, that there was a 'Reading Revolution' in Europe in the second half of the eighteenth century. Rolf Engelsing maintains that there was a seismic shift away from 'intensive' reading (that is thorough reading, involving close study and numerous re-readings) of a small number of texts (usually devotional), towards 'extensive' reading (superficial, skimmed and hence more recognisably modern) of a much wider variety of texts (especially newspapers, magazines, novels and other ephemeral print material).⁶ Although most provincial Scots in the last decades of the eighteenth century undoubtedly read a far wider range of texts than their forbears, evidence of their reading experiences does not support the notion that they were 'consuming' literature less intensively. Ridpath read Hume and Robertson again and again, and quite often revised his initial judgements of books with further re-readings and contextual research. Many other readers compiled huge commonplace books, extracting material selectively and treating books in ways that can only be termed 'intensive'.

⁶ See R. Engelsing, *Der Bürger als Leser: Lesergeschichte in Deutschland 1500-1800* (Stuttgart, 1974); R. Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and other episodes in French Cultural History* (New York, 1984), esp. 242f.; R. DeMaria Jr, *Samuel Johnson and the Life of Reading* (Baltimore MD, 1997), 4, 16-18.

It is also clear that Scottish readers reacted to different types of book in different ways: a controversial text that seemed to undercut a reader's most fundamental beliefs was treated differently from an informative history, while readers were constantly warned against the immorality of certain books – with the result that novels featured very rarely in their commonplace books. Hume's *History* could be treated as all three – a dangerous threat to orthodox Christian virtue which needed to be vigorously put down, a conventional authority that made an indispensable contribution to polite education, or an entertaining romp whose dubious political and moral undercurrents should not be taken too much to heart. The same reader might treat some texts intensively while he or she 'consumed' other texts without paying them anywhere near as much attention, while it was undoubtedly possible for readers to read a single text both intensively and extensively at different times. Although Engelsing's 'Reading Revolution' may still be useful in summarising important changes in the way some books were used, then, Scottish sources support Stephen Colclough's insistence that 'the metaphor of revolution breaks down' when we consider the sheer diversity of personal reading experiences.⁷

This realisation in turn has much broader implications for the ways in which historians and theorists alike think about the process of reading. In the first place, it is clear that there was a certain stability in the meanings assigned to the texts of the Scottish Enlightenment by contemporary readers: in broad terms, readers approached moral philosophy for guidance on moral conduct; they turned to works on rhetoric and the *belles lettres* to improve their own standards of taste; they read history for information about the past and, in the traditional sense, for philosophy teaching by example. In this they were guided by critical judgements in the public domain, by generic aspects of commonplacing and by instructions on how to read in an age that famously invented literary criticism. There was only so far that contemporary readers could misconstrue their textual authorities, only rarely – and always in restricted ways – deriving meaning from texts that their authors never intended. Meanwhile, the vast majority of the readers

⁷ S. Colclough, 'Recovering the Reader: Commonplace Books and Diaries as Sources of Reading Experiences', *Publishing History*, 44 (1998), 29.

surveyed here can be described as submissive readers, respecting the integrity and authority of the printed word. As Robert DeMaria maintains, therefore, ‘texts are stable enough to permit us to examine readers by looking at them’: to use the telling phraseology of a leading *Rezeptionsästhetik* theorist Hans Robert Jauss, ‘potential for meaning’ was indeed ‘embedded in a work’.⁸

Even so, it is equally true that many readers in eighteenth-century Scotland ‘appropriated’ texts for their own purposes and adapted them to their own circumstances. Readers used texts for their own (often intensely personal) ends, creating meanings that were informed by their professional interests, existing commitments, worries and beliefs – a process encouraged by literary theorists who prescribed sound critical judgement to polite readers who aspired to good taste. Moreover, readers often responded unpredictably to texts, assigning meanings to them in a way that simply tends not to be recognised by modern scholarship. Robertson’s historiography may have been noteworthy for his narrative strategies designed to consolidate the Union, but even the best qualified provincial readers – like George Ridpath – could be left bemused by such strategies. More dramatically, Hume’s hostility to organised religion caused very real offence to readers and coloured their responses accordingly. In these instances, it is clear that the act of reading involved ‘the appropriation of text’, as ‘reader-response’ theorists have increasingly come to agree. As Roger Chartier explains, ‘the history of reading and readers, popular or otherwise [is] ... an account of the historicity of the process of the appropriation of text’, by which is meant ‘the “effectuation” or “actualization” of the semantic possibilities of the text’.⁹

⁸ DeMaria, *Samuel Johnson*, 3; H. R. Jauss, quoted by K. Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions: The Politics of Reading in Early Modern England* (London, 2000), 35.

⁹ Chartier, *History of Reading*, 275-6. See Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions*, Ch1 for an excellent introduction; major contributions to the theoretical debate include S. R. Suleiman and I. Crosman (eds.), *The Reader in the Text: Essays on Audience and Interpretation* (Princeton NJ, 1980); Fish, *Is There a Text?*; W. Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (London, 1978); idem., *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore and London, 1974); idem., *Prospecting: From Reader Response to Literary Anthropology* (Baltimore and London, 1989); H. R. Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception* (trans., T. Bahti with an introduction by P. de Man; Minnesota, 1982); idem., *Aesthetic Experience and Literary Hermeneutics* (trans., M. Shaw; Minneapolis, 1982). For a typically idiosyncratic perspective, see A. Manguel, *A History of Reading* (London, 1996), 39, 289: ‘Reading ... is not an automatic process of capturing a text in the way photosensitive paper captures light, but a bewildering, labyrinthine, common and yet personal process of reconstruction’.

Still more excitingly, the present study outlines how historians can understand the process by which real readers in the past ‘appropriated’ meaning in texts. It thereby helps ‘to introduce some empirical depth to the theoretical speculation that currently dominates the discourse of the history of reading’: as Jonathan Rose continues, ‘literary theorists have debated endlessly whether the reader writes the text or the text manipulates the reader. A history of audiences could lead us out of this deadlock by revealing the interactions of specific readers and texts’.¹⁰

Above all, it is clear that an empirical history of reading has to depend on comparative and complementary methodologies. No methodology explored in this study yields all the answers. Quantitative analysis of book ownership has been widely derided for its practical and conceptual flaws, but set alongside borrowing data it can provide a statistical framework in which case studies of personal reading experiences can be properly understood. Without knowing which books were widely available and which were most often taken off library shelves, it is impossible to test the typicality of the more subjective ‘anecdotal’ evidence provided by commonplace books and marginalia.¹¹

III

As James Raven, Helen Small and Naomi Tadmor point out, ‘the history of reading is also a history of the culture in which it takes place, requiring close attention to what it was possible to think, to perceive and, not least, to feel, in particular situations at particular moments in the past.’¹² In introducing this study, we highlighted two startlingly contradictory claims about the Scottishness of the Scottish Enlightenment. On the one hand, some historians (notably Trevor-Roper, Hoeveler and Lough) have denied that the ideas of the Scottish literati were at all relevant to the wider population, that they were

¹⁰ Colclough, ‘Recovering the Reader’, 6; J. Rose, ‘Re-Reading the English Common Reader: A Preface to a History of Audiences’, *JHI*, 53 (1992), 65.

¹¹ St Clair, 5; Robert Darnton demands that we reconstruct the entire ‘communications circuit’ of print; *Kiss*, 107-35; ‘First Steps’; cf D. R. Woolf, *Reading History in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2000).

¹² J. Raven, H. Small and N. Tadmor, ‘Introduction: the practice and representation of reading in England’, in *PRR*, 21.

ignored or, still worse, swamped by ‘a narrow-minded nationalism and bigoted Presbyterianism’ in provincial Scotland. Conversely, some enthusiastic supporters of the concept (including Davie and Witherington) argue that the Scottish Enlightenment should in some way be defined by its eager reception and thorough assimilation ‘throughout Scotland’. By using the experiences of ordinary readers to illuminate Scottish culture in the eighteenth century, it has been possible here to examine these claims empirically for the first time. As a result, it is abundantly clear that the books which constituted the Scottish Enlightenment were very widely diffused in provincial Scotland, and that it was indeed possible for them to be readily encountered, assimilated and discussed by readers quite far down the social scale. Nevertheless, it is also apparent that our current preoccupation with the notion that there was a distinctively Scottish Enlightenment underestimates the extent to which intellectual culture in Scotland reflected values that were commonly held across Georgian Britain. However enthusiastically they followed developments in Scottish literature, readers in provincial Scotland were becoming increasingly integrated into a wider British culture – eager to join in what Samuel Johnson once described, no doubt with England rather than Britain firmly in mind, as ‘a Nation of Readers’.¹³

¹³ Samuel Johnson, *Prefaces, Biographical and Critical, to the Works of the English Poets*, 10 vols. (London, 1779-81), VIII, 33.

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- s.c.evans.39(1) *Catalogue of the Valuable and Extensive Library of the Late Earl of Marchmont [Alexander Hume Campbell]...* (London, 1830)
- s.c.sotheby.4(6) *A Catalogue of the Entire and Valuable Library of the Hon. Alexander Hume Campbell, Lord Register of Scotland...* (London, 1761)
- s.c.sotheby.33(10) *A catalogue of the Library of the Late Sir William Gordon K.B., and Likewise the Medical Library of an Eminent Physician...* (London, 1799)
- s.c.sotheby.36(3) *A Catalogue of the Library of the Late Hon. Stuart Mackenzie, Lord Privy Seal of Scotland...* (London, 1800)
- s.c.sotheby.42(1) *A Catalogue of the Valuable Library of ...James Fergusson, Esq. F.R.S. Astronomical Examiner* (London, 1802)
- s.c.sotheby.48(5) *A Catalogue of the Library of the Late William Butter, M.D....* (London, 1805)
- s.c.sotheby.48(9) *A Catalogue of the Duplicate Books and Books of Prints of a Nobleman's Library [Duke of Queensberry]...* (London, 1805)

- s.c.sotheby.78(7) *A Catalogue of a Valuable and Curious Collection of Books....of John Pinkerton Esq....* (London, 1813)
- s.c.sotheby.94(1) *A Catalogue of the Entire and Select Library of the Late Rev. John Calder D.D....* (London, 1816)
- s.c.sotheby.98(7) *A Catalogue of Part of the Library of Sir Hugh Munro, Bart....* (London, 1817)
- s.c.sotheby.170(6) *Catalogue of the Library of the Late Major Gen. Sir John Dalrymple, Bart. To which is added, the small but valuable Library of a Gentleman...* (London, 1830)
- s.c.220(1) *Bibliotheca Gordoniana...* (London, 1736)
- s.c.481(1) *Catalogue of a Large and Curious Collection of Books ... containing several libraries lately purchased in which is included that of the Hon. Robert Dalzell, Esq....* (London, 1759)
- s.c.732(7) *Catalogue of a Valuable and well-known Library [Duplicates from the Library of John 3rd Earl of Bute]...* (London, 1785)
- s.c.805 *A Catalogue of Books.... Among this Collection is the Librery of the Reverend Mr. James Riddoch late one of the Ministers of St Paul's Chapel in Aberdeen...* (Aberdeen, 1779)
- s.c.805 *Catalogue of a large and valuable collection of books being the libraries of the late Doctor Alexander Rose, Physician of Aberdeen; Alexander Gordon, Esq. at Hallhead; and The Revd. Mr. Robert Garden, Late Minister of the Gospel at St Fergus...* (Aberdeen, 1779)
- s.c.814 *A Catalogue of the Entire, Extensive and Valuable Library of the Late Alexander Geddes D.D. Translator of the bible; Author of the Critical Remarks of the Hebrew Scriptures etc....* (London, 1804)
- s.c.822(4) *Bibliotheca Reekieana; or, A Catalogue of the Curious and Distinguished Library of the Late Mr. John Reekie, Teacher of the Greek and Latin Languages, Calton, Glasgow...* (Glasgow, 1811)
- s.c.1396 *A Catalogue of Instructive and Entertaining Books, Which are lent out to read... by William Phorson,... at his Circulating Library, Bridge-Street, Berwick...* (Berwick, 1790)
- A Catalogue of a Select and Valuable Collection of Books... late the Property of John Earl of Bute, dec....* (London, 1798)

A Catalogue of the Botanical and Natural History Part of the Library of the Late John, Earl of Bute... (London, 1794)

Cambridge University Library

- Munby a.16 ‘The Munby Library: Guide to the Munby Collection in Cambridge University Library’
- Munby c.74 *A Catalogue of the Extensive and Valuable Library of the Late Right Honourable George, Earl of Morton (removed from Dalmahoy near Edinburgh)...* (London, 18th May 1829)
- Munby c.120 *Catalogue of the Library of the Late John Erskine Esq....* (London, 1817)
- Munby c.126 *A Catalogue of the Valuable and Extensive Library of the Late Rt Hon Lord Glenbervie...* (London, 1823)
- Munby c.129 *Catalogue of a Considerable Portion of the Library of the Late John Young, Esq. Professor of Greek in the University of Glasgow...* (London, 1825)
- Munby c.129 *Catalogue of the Law and Miscellaneous Library of the Late John Campbell Esq. Accomptant General of the Court of Chancery...* (London, 1826)
- Munby c.140 *Catalogue of the Valuable and Extensive Library of the Late Right Honourable Sir James Mackintosh...* (London, 1832)
- Munby c.163 *A Catalogue of the very Valuable, Rare and Curious Library of the Late Col. James Alex. Stuart...* (London 1814)
- Munby d.6 *A Catalogue of a Portion of the Library of the Late Right Honourable Francis, Lord Seaforth...* (London, 1816)
- Munby d.6 *Catalogue of the Library which Belonged to the Right Honourable the Late Lord Seaforth...* (Edinburgh, 1815)
- Munby d.133 *Catalogue of the Library of the Late Rev. Walter Fisher of Cranston...* (Edinburgh, 1829)
- Munby d.133 *Catalogue of Books... Being the Libraries of a Clergyman deceased, and a Gentleman leaving this Country...* (Edinburgh, 17th May, [no year])
- Munby d.134 *Catalogue of T. Caithness’ Circulating Library, 1 Albany Street, Edinburgh* (n.p., 1830)
- Munby d.135 *Catalogue of Books, being the library of the late Rev. Dr. W. F. Ireland, Minister of North Leith....* (Edinburgh, 1828)

- Munby d.135 *Catalogue of Books Belonging to the Paisley Canal-street Relief Library, instituted 1815* (Paisley, 1817)
- Munby d.135 *Catalogue of the Books in the private Collection belonging to the Cives and Students of the Divinity Hall, in the University of Glasgow...* (Glasgow, 1821)
- Pryme d564a *A Catalogue of the Brechin Library* (n.p., 1809)

Edinburgh University Library

- Dc.1.48 William Thomson's Medical Commonplace Book
- Dc.3.63 Drummond Commonplace Book, 1795
- La.III.352 Account of marle in the county of Forfar, J. Jamieson, 1791
- La.III.652 David Macpherson's annotations in a copy of Innes' *Critical Essay*

Glasgow University Library

- MS Gen 254 Catalogues of Books belonging to Lord Ross at Hawkhead, 1753; Lady Glasgow's Books
- MS Gen 1266 'Loose desultory sketches of truths', General David Melville
- MS Murray 170 Commonplace Book of David Boyle of Sherralton
- MS Robertson 28 Commonplace Book of William Motherwell
- 856 *Catalogus Librorum A.C.D.A. [Archibald Campbell, 3rd Duke of Argyll]* (Glasgow, 1758)
- BD17-h.11 *Catalogue of the valuable Medical Library... of the Late George C. Monteath, M.D....* (Glasgow, 1828)
- BD17-h.31 *Catalogue of the Valuable Library of the Late Right Honourable Lord Stuart De Rothesay...* (London, 1855)
- BG33-h.13 *Regulations and Catalogue of Books of the Barrowfield Printfield and Dyework Library* (Glasgow, 1825)
- BG33-h.13 *Regulations and Catalogue of the Bridgeton Public Library* (Glasgow, 1824)
- BG33-h.13 *Catalogue of Books in the Inverkip Subscription Library* (Greenock, 1835)

- Euing Add.53 *A Catalogue of a valuable collection of books ... including, among many other late purchases, the entire library of Archibald Duff, Esq, Deceased* (London, 1779)
- MU1-b.3 *Catalogue of Books, Illustrated Works and Music in The Library of Archibald McLellan, Esq., Glasgow* (n.p., 1839)
- MU22-b.2 *Catalogue of the Library of Mr. William Muir* (Glasgow, 1820)
- MU22-c.1 *Regulations and Catalogue of the Barony of Gorbals Public Library. Instituted December 1817* (Glasgow, 1822)
- MU33-g.7 *A Catalogue of the Valuable Library of the Reverend Mr. Alexander Campbell, Late minister of the Gospel at Inverera...* (Glasgow, 1765)
- MU34-c.12 *Regulations and Catalogue of Maybole Library Society* (Glasgow, 1822)
- MU34-c.23 *Catalogue of Books; being the library of the Hon. Mr. Baron Maule, deceased* (Edinburgh, 1782)
- MU34-c.23 *A Catalogue of the Library of the Right Rev. Mr. William Falconar, Late one of the Episcopal Clergymen in Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1784)
- MU34-c.23 *A Catalogue of a Select and Valuable collections of Books... To be Sold by Auction (by the Warrant of the Sheriff)...* (Edinburgh, 1801)
- MU34-c.23 *A Catalogue of a Very Valuable and Extensive Collections of Books... the Property of two Eminent Collectors...* (Edinburgh, 1800).
- MU34-c.23 *A Catalogue of ...the Library of the Late Right-Reverend James Trail D.D....* (Edinburgh, 1801)
- MU34-c.23 *A Catalogue of The Library... John M'Gouan, Esq. F.R.S. F.A.S.E. etc....* (Edinburgh, 1803)
- MU34-c.23 *A Catalogue of ... The Library of Mr. Hugh Murray-Kynnymound of Melgum, Advocate...* (Edinburgh, 1743)
- MU34-c.23 *A Catalogue of Books ... The Libraries of Several Gentlemen deceased [ms note – Viz Lord Monzie & his sons Charles & Patrick]...* (Edinburgh, 1760)
- MU34-c.23 *A Catalogue of Books; being the library of the Hon. Mr Baron Maule, deceased; ...* (Edinburgh, 1782)
- MU37-e.1 *Catalogue of Books in the Library of John Horrocks, Esquire at Tullichewin Castle* (n.p., 1827)
- MU47-g.35 *Catalogue of Renton Library...* (Glasgow, 1819)
- Robertson BF69-f.2 *Institution, Rules & Catalogue of the Orkney Library* (Edinburgh, 1816)

Robertson BF70-e.2 *A Catalogue of Books in the Theological Library presently at Whitburn...*
(Glasgow, 1792)

National Archives of Scotland

- B48/18/45 Extract of Gift of Robert Henry's Library to the Town Council and
Presbytery of Linlithgow
- B73/2/1/11 List of Books belonging to Mr John Russell, 3 May 1752
- CC5/21/5/2 List of Books of Rev. John Good, minister of Auchencairn
- CC5/21/5/3 List of Books of Dr. William Knox
- CH1/5/122-3 Diary of George Ridpath of Stichel
- CH1/15 Notebooks of Poetry and Prose extracts, and original poetry of William
Cameron, Minister at Kirknewton, Poet
- CH2/481/5 Catalogues of the Library of the Luss Kirk Session
- CH2/555/29 Commonplace Book of Dr David Cruden, minister of Nigg
- CH2/1463/1 List of Books belonging to J. Dick, schoolmaster at Innerwick, 13 Sept
1782
- CH3/281/5 Catalogue of the Library of Selkirk Theological Hall, 1789
- CH3/1248/9 Catalogue of Books of John Low, n.d.
- CH12/31-2 Reading Notes of Bishop Alexander Jolly of Aberdeen and Orkney
- CS96/135/2 Roup Roll of Books etc. belonging to Duncan Chisholm, solicitor,
general merchant and dealer in Inverness, 4 July 1825
- CS96/146 Inventory of Effects belonging to James Finlay, merchant in Airdrie,
4 April 1828
- CS96/150/1 Inventory and Valuation of Books belonging to Mr Harper, Clynelish,
20 November 1827
- CS96/162/1 Inventory of Effects of James Mac Alpine, 1822
- CS96/168 Inventory of Law and Printed books belonging to Bankrupt John
MacAndrew, Inverness 1831
- CS96/203 Inventory of Books belonging to John Surtees, Markinch, 30 September
1812
- CS96/289 List of Books belonging to Crauford Tait WS
- CS96/297 Inventory of Possession of James Waugh, wright in Jedburgh
- CS96/326 Inventory of Household Furniture and other effects which belonged to
William Borthwick, 22 March 1822

- CS96/353 Inventory of the Estate of John Deans, carpet manufacturer of Peacockbank, Stewarton near Kilmarnock
- CS96/408 Inventory of Household Furniture being part of the Sequestered estate of William Sturrock, merchant in Dundee, 7 November 1802
- CS96/436 Valuation Inventory of William Wilson's Books
- CS96/680 List of Books of William Forbes, July 1818
- CS96/730 List of Books of James Allan, Alloa, 2 December 1794
- CS96/753 Inventory of Effects of John Johnston, 1807
- CS96/761 Catalogue of Books belonging to Peter Jack, writer, builder and merchant in Paisley, 1829
- CS96/764 Inventory of Books of Robert Kilgour and Robert Kilgour Junior, manufacturers of Kinmudy, 14 March 1828
- CS96/774 Inventory of Furniture etc. belonging to deceased William Strachan, Baker in Aberdeen, November 1806
- CS96/819 Inventory of Books of Thomas Ross, merchant in Montrose
- CS96/902 Catalogue of David Stephens' Books, Trunkmaker in Edinburgh, 1 March 1808
- CS96/1061 Inventory of Personal Property of Gavin Kempt, Merchant in Leith, 1785
- CS96/1253 Inventory of Books of William Munro of Achany, cattle dealer
- CS96/1573 *A New Catalogue of Books for a Circulating Library, containing... which are lent to be read ... by Alexander Brown, Bookseller and stationer, North Bridge-street, Edinburgh* (n.d.)
- CS96/2072 Roup Roll of Household Furniture of N. and J. MacVicar, bleachers in Keirfield, 5 February 1827
- CS96/2617 Inventory of Household Furniture etc. belonging to James Grant, writer and banker of Burnhall, Berwickshire, 10 July 1829
- CS96/2655 Inventory of Books of Joseph Stephenson, farmer at Longyester, 10 June 1803
- CS96/3380 Inventory of Household Furniture etc. of Gilbert Land Junior, Glasgow, 23 April 1819
- CS96/3404 Inventory of Household Furniture etc. of James Laurie, 6 February 1817
- CS96/3461 Inventory of Household Furniture etc. of John Sorley Junior, Ironmonger in Glasgow, 31 August 1819

- CS96/3567 Inventory and Valuation of Books belonging to William Ballingall, Glasgow, 21 October 1820
- CS96/3593 Inventory of Household Furniture etc. belonging to James Ferguson, writer and banker in Stewarton, 1820
- CS96/3564 Inventory of effects of William MacDonald and Charles Gibson
- CS96/3706 Inventory of Household Furniture etc. belonging to the late Thomas Potts, writer in Greenock
- CS96/3745 Inventory of John Ruthven's Household Furniture
- CS96/3779 Inventory of Books of James Henderson, fishcurer at Clyth, 1827
- CS96/3903 Inventory of Household effects belonging to Robert McTurk at Stenhouse, 1829
- CS96/3992 Inventory of Books of Archibald Cleghorn, merchant in Leith, 1827
- CS96/4013 Inventory of Possessions of Laurence Phillips, Manufacturer and Merchant in Glasgow, 9 July 1824
- CS96/4091 Inventory of Effects of William Harley, merchant and builder in Glasgow, 9 February 1822
- CS96/4108 Inventory of Books of Alexander Kirkwood, manufacturer in Glasgow
- CS96/4190 Inventory of household furniture etc. belonging to James Chisholm, haberdasher in Glasgow, 3 January 1828
- CS96/4377 Inventory of Valuation of the Household Furniture etc. belonging to Alexander Russell, Glasgow, 1 March 1821
- CS96/4556 Inventory of Furniture belonging to James Sanders, 5 May 1821
- CS96/4571 Inventory of Books of Alexander Campbell, merchant in Greenock
- CS96/4643 Inventory of the Effects belonging to the sequestrated estate of James and George Spence, Manufacturers in Dunfermline, 28 May 1829
- CS96/4658 Valuation of Household Furniture of Bankrupt Daniel MacKellar, draper in Greenock
- CS96/4662 Inventory of Moveable Estates of John Tweedie
- CS96/4702 Inventory of Library of George Carswell, manufacturer in Paisley
- CS313/1040 Inventory of the moveable effects belonging to James Lord Torphichen 1780; inventory of the moveable effects which belonged to Elizabeth Lady Torphichen, 1780

GD1/46/21	Papers of John Inglis, including #22, Excerpt from Kames
GD1/392	Papers relating to William Coldstream, Schoolmaster of Dunblane
GD1/494/154	Catalogue of Books belonging of Lieutenant John Buchan Sydserff of Ruchlaw, 1817
GD1/626/4	List of Books associated with the Montgomerie Fleming Family of Kelvinside and the Robertson Family, Glasgow, n.d.
GD1/675/97	Inventory of Books of William Pitcairn of Burntisland, c.1826
GD1/726	Notebooks and Journals of Elizabeth Rose of Kilravock
GD1/1045	Papers of the Rev. Forrest Frew
GD1/1132/25	Inventory of Books belonging to Mr. Alexander Kerr of Slobbo
GD1/1248/1	Notebook belonging to Robert Butchart, Arbirlot, Angus
GD2/308	Commonplace Book
GD3/6/35/4	Catalogue of Books at Skelmorlie Castle, 19/11/1833
GD5/599	List of Books belonging to the Bertram family of Nisbet
GD10/425	Catalogue of Books sold by Alexander Murray of Cally House
GD10/433	Catalogue of Books of the deceased James Laurie of Reidcastle, 12 October 1763
GD12/12/2230	Catalogue of the Books of Bishop Jolly, n.d.
GD16/57/96	List of Books belonging to Thomas Donaldson, Dundee
GD16/57/98	List of Books sold by Thomas Miller of Dundee
GD18/2336	Memorandum Book including Lists of Books, 1750-1774
GD18/5130	Advice to sons
GD18/5133	Notes on English relations with Ireland
GD18/5134	Fragmentary notes from a dissertation on language
GD18/5145	Transcription of the 'Athenian Creed'
GD18/5148	Excerpts from Watson's <i>Philip II</i> and fragmentary notes
GD23/9/74	Catalogue of Books at Balmacaan
GD24/3/160	Catalogue of Library of Sir William Stirling, 1800
GD25/9/Box 31	Library Catalogues, Earls of Cassillis
GD26/6/199	Catalogue of Books at Melville House, c.1800
GD26/13/279	Essay on the character of David Hume
GD27/7/112-4	Catalogues of Books at Dalquharran Castle, 1837-44
GD29/2185	List of Books of Bruce family of Kinross
GD38/1/1246-7	Extracts from Books, n.d.

- GD44/49/14 Catalogues of Books of the Dukes of Gordon at Gordon Castle
1728-1832
- GD45/29/67 Catalogue of Books at Brechin Castle, 1844 (and others)
- GD46/2/52 Catalogue of Books at Glasserton
- GD46/15/140 Catalogue of Books Belonging to James Alexander Stewart
Mackenzie
- GD50/185/267 List of Books at Dysart House
- GD52/1720 Printed Catalogue of Books at the Whitehaugh Library, n.d.
- GD58/8/46 *Catalogue of the Falkirk Library, To which are prefixed the Regulations
of the Society and A List of its Members* (Falkirk, 1810).
- GD71/257 Catalogue of the Library at Allan House
- GD75/740 List of Books at Dundas
- GD83/1017-9 Inventory of the Moveable Effects of Sir William Ramsay, 1808
- GD105/790-1 Catalogue of Books of Mrs Margaret Udney Duff of Cutler
24 January 1793
- GD112/20/5/12 Catalogue of Books at Ardmaddy House, 22 February 1837
- GD112/22/35 Inventories of Books at Taymouth Castle, 1814-1835, including
list of books in Lady Beadalbane's Dressing Room, 1814
- GD113/1/441-456 Medical Notebooks of Dr. James Hall of Duns
- GD113/1/475 Commonplace Book of a member of the Innes family of Stowe
- GD113/5/272/12 Inventory of Books of the deceased James Innes, May 1806
- GD121/1/Box 71 Catalogue of Books [Murthly Castle?]
- GD122/849 Catalogue of Books at Duddingston House, belonging to Walter
Little Gilmour of Liberton and Craigmillar, 1807
- GD122/4/163 List of Books Belonging to Mr Little of Liberton, 1765
- GD122/Box 71 Catalogue of Books of Sir James Mackenzie of Royston, Martly
Castle
- GD123/145 Library Catalogue of the House of Dun
- GD125/Box 1 Catalogue of the Kilravock Library, 1789
- GD125/Box 32/6 Journal of Elizabeth Rose
- GD126/Box 30/10 Craigton Library Catalogue
- GD132/876 Memorandum book containing miscellaneous jottings, C18
- GD136/1195 List of Medical Books Borrowed by George Mackie from William
Sinclair of Lochend, 12 April 1794

GD136/1355	List of Books, Sinclair family of Freswick
GD138/3/8	Library Catalogue of Galloway House
GD138/3/11	Library Catalogue of Cumloden House, belonging to Sir William Stewart
GD148/399	List of Books at Craigends House
GD150/2825	List of Books belonging to Colonel Robert Douglas, 1750
GD153/Box 48	Catalogues of Books of Dugald Gilchrist of Ospisdale, Ardoch 1777 and 1788
GD158/2538	List of Books, 1787
GD158/2552	List of Books, Sept. 1792
GD158/3000	A Catalogue of the Earl of Marchmont's Library, 1776
GD160/352/2	Notes on Walter Scott's novels
GD161/Box 20	Catalogue of the Books of Dr Francis Hamilton of Bardourie
GD161/Box 22	Catalogue of the Library at Leny House, 1828
GD164/2177	Catalogue of Books belonging to the Earl of Rosslyn
GD165/7/19/19	List of Books belonging to Griersons of Dalgoner, 1804
GD165/7/19/16	List of Books belonging to James Grierson of Dalgoner, 1769
GD170/3501 & 3542	Catalogues of Books at Barcaldine, n.d.
GD170/3641	List of Books of Rev. John Baillie of Ecclesmachan
GD174/2055	List of books belonging to James Spalding of Bonnymilns, 3 January 1764
GD180/728	List of Books belonging to Cathcart family of Genock, 28 February 1766
GD180/731	MS Catalogue of the Stranraer Subscription Library
GD188/25/2	Catalogue of Books, with ms sermons [Guthrie of Guthrie]
GD190/3/46	Catalogue of Books at Methven Castle, August 1806
GD193/69/7	Catalogue of Books of Edward Wright of Kersy, 1747
GD199/188	List of Books, Ross family of Pitcalnie, C18
GD209/45	List of Books belonging to Robert Pollock, 1736
GD224/812/12	Pages from or intended for a commonplace book, n.d.
GD224/962/21	Inventory and Appraisalment of Household Furniture, including Books at Dalkeith Palace, 22 April 1812; Inventory and Appraisalment of Moveable Property which belonged to the late Charles William Montagu Scott Douglas, Duke of Buccleuch at Dalkeith Palace, 29 June 1819

GD224/1063/1	Dalkeith House Library borrowing book, 1795-1822
GD248	Seafield Muniments
GD248/25/2/20	Order by James Grant of Grant anent loan of books from Castle Grant Library, 6 December 1765
GD248/30/3/5	Catalogue of books of John Grant minister of Urquhart, 31 May 1799
GD248/37/4	Notebooks of William Lorimer
GD248/204/10/11	Account due by Lady Grant to Isaac Forsyth, 11 November 1803
GD248/364/14	Printed circular sent by Isaac Forsyth to James Grant, Heathfield, 20 November 1804
GD248/366/2	Estate Correspondence 1794 (includes Isaac Forsyth to James Grant, factor of Strathspey)
GD248/367/8	Estate Correspondence 1804 (includes Isaac Forsyth to James Grant)
GD248/381/7/2	<i>Catalogue of books consisting mainly of two gentlemen of the law, sold by J. Dickson</i> (Edinburgh, 1786)
GD248/387/7/6	Printed Circular sent by Isaac Forsyth to James Grant, Heathfield n.d.
GD248/438/6	Library Catalogue, Borrowing Book, Castle Grant Library, 1695-1744
GD248/451/17	Estate Correspondence 1808-1814 (includes Isaac Forsyth to James Grant of Heathfield)
GD248/452/9	Estate Correspondence 1809 (includes printed circular sent by Isaac Forsyth)
GD248/485/8	Catalogue of Books at Castle Grant
GD248/461/1/1	Catalogue of Books of John Grant, minister of Urquhart
GD248/513/6	Estate Correspondence 1799 (includes Isaac Forsyth to James Grant)
GD248/535	Notebooks of John Grant of Grant and others
GD248/541/8/2-5	Catalogues of Books belonging to Duff of Hatton Lodge and Grant of Grant
GD248/612	Anonymous Printed Library Catalogue
GD248/614-7	Notes from reading, miscellaneous notes of John Grant, minister of Dundurcas and Elgin
GD248/1069	C18 Library Catalogue (Lord Findlater's Books?)
GD268/22/5-15	Catalogues of Books belonging to James Loch of Drylaw, 1759
GD297/27	Commonplace Book of Lady Charlotte Rawdon
GD345/800 and 1207	Library Records, Grant family of Monymusk
GD347/65	List of Books of George Taylor of Golspie

GD385/139	Catalogue of Books at Craighall
GD461/1/1	Two Catalogues of books from the Seafield Muniments
JC53/7	List of Books of James Veitch, Lord Eliock
RH15/44/17	Catalogue of the Books of George Monro, 5 December 1768
RH15/123/71	Catalogue of Books of James Inglis, minister at Muthill
SC14/78	Catalogue of Books at Hempriggs, 1846
SC20/47/13	Inventory of Household Plinishings and Furniture of the deceased William Morries of Brieryhill
SC20/47/16	Catalogues of Books (John Halkerston at Greenside House; Captain George Makgill of Kembach)
SC67/41/3	Inventories of Books (David Crawford of Carronbank; Hugh Gourlay)
SC67/41/5	Inventory of Mr Henderson's Books, December 1799

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Acc. 5699	Commonplace Book of William Drummond, nurseryman of Coney Park, Stirling
Acc. 6684/45-6	Commonplace Books of Stephana Malcolm of Burnfoot
Acc. 7724	Library at Mellerstain, C18
Acc. 7753	Catalogue of Books at Edgerston, 1801
Acc. 7903	Catalogue of Leadhills Subscription Library
Acc. 7935	Books of William Murray of Touchadam
Acc. 8075	Catalogue of the Library at Freefield, 1820
Acc. 8275	Commonplace Book, 1813
Acc. 8987	Catalogue of Books at New Hailes, n.d.
Acc. 9677	Catalogue of the Tynninghame Library
Acc. 10229/100, 128	Library Catalogues of the Glenberrie family
Acc. 10494	Catalogue of the Brodie Library, 1825
Acc. 11395	Inventory of the Books of Col. Charles Campbell of Barbreck, 1796
Acc. 11863	Catalogue of Books belonging to David Geddes, deputy auditor of excise, Edinburgh
Acc. 12400	Catalogue of the Library of Maxtone Graham
Adv.MS 5.1.7	Catalogue of the Library of Sir Ellis Cunliffe, BT, 1762
Adv.MS 5.1.9	Library of John Maule of Inverkeillor, late C18

- Adv.MSS 17/1/10-11 Commonplace Books of a member of the Douglas family of Cavers, 1772-75
- Dep.175/94/1 *Catalogue of a Valuable Collection of Books ... the Library of the Late Sir William G. Gordon Cumming, Baronet of Altyre...*
(Nisbet: Edinburgh, 1855)
- Dep.187 Library Catalogues (Thirlestane Castle, 1843; Carstairs House, 1828)
- Dep.341/413 Library Ledger, Chambers Circulating Library, 1828
- MS 348 Catalogue of the Library of Baron David Hume
- MS 1537 Catalogue of Books belonging to Rev. Donald Sage, minister of Kirkmichael & Cullicudden, 28 October 1823
- MS 2790 Inventory of household furniture, including books at Castletoun
- MS 2822 Catalogue of Books of Thomas Crawford 2nd of Cartburn
- MS 3528 Catalogue of Books at Carmichael House, late C18
- MS 5114 Catalogues of Books belonging to members of the Erskine family of Alva, 1750-97
- MS 5117 Part Catalogue of Library at Alva, 1774
- MS 5118-20 Notebooks of John Erskine of Cambus, advocate, containing lists of books belonging to him and lent out by him
- MS 5122 Notebook of James Erskine of Aberdona containing list of books read by him, 1804-6
- MS 5330 Includes notes on Smith's *Wealth of Nations* and the *Spectator*; inventories of books; etc., Stuart Stevenson of Castlemilk and Torrance papers
- MS 5456-7 Anonymous Library Catalogues, C18
- MS 5458 Catalogue of Books in Mrs Carre of Nisbet's Library
- MS 5818-27 Catalogues of the Lothian family libraries at Newbattle and London
- MS 6303-7 Catalogues of the Newbyth Library
- MS 6308-9 Catalogues of the Library of the Hendersons of Fordel
- MS 8244 Commonplace Book, 1815-27
- MSS 8238-40 'Amusements in Solitude', Stuart Stevenson of Castlemilk and Torrance papers
- MS 8325 Catalogues of Books belonging to Andrew Stuart of Craighorn and Castlemilk, WS, 1771-83
- MS 9002 Commonplace Book of Henry Robert Oswald, early C19

MS 9301	List of Books belonging to the Dunlop family, 17/10/1797
MS 9317	Anecdotes
MS 9367	Notes on Hume's History of England, attributed to Sir James Steuart of Coltness
MS 13320	Lists of Books and Accounts of Elliot family of Minto
MS 16479-82	Papers of the Gray Library, Haddington
MS 17861-6	Lists of Books at Saltoun
MS 21827	Catalogue of Books at Dalkeith Palace
ABS.2.204.049	<i>Catalogue of the Books in the Town of Haddington's Library</i> (Haddington, 1828)
ABS.2.205	<i>Catalogue of a Valuable Collection of Miscellaneous Books; including the Libraries of the Late Rt. Hon. John Thomas Earl of Mar, etc.</i> (Edinburgh, 1829)
ABS.2.205	<i>Catalogue of a Valuable Collection of Miscellaneous Books; including the Duplicates of Part of a Nobleman's Library</i> (Edinburgh, 1829)
ABS.2.205	<i>Catalogue of a Valuable and Extensive Collection of Books in Divinity, Law & General Literature, including the Libraries of Two Gentlemen Deceased</i> (Edinburgh, 1831)
ABS.2.205	<i>Law Library...</i> (Edinburgh, 1830)
ABS.2.205	<i>Law Library...</i> (Edinburgh, 1830)
ABS.2.205	<i>Catalogue of Books...</i> (Edinburgh, 1830)
ABS.2.205	<i>Catalogue of Books...</i> (Edinburgh, 1830)
ABS.2.205	<i>Catalogue of Law and Miscellaneous Books, being the Libraries of the Late W. Inglis Esq. W.S. and of the Late James Laidlaw, Esq. W.S.... also of several small collections being duplicates from Gentlemen's libraries etc....</i> (Edinburgh, 1832)
ABS.2.205	<i>Catalogue of the Libraries of Two Gentlemen, lately deceased...</i> (Edinburgh, 1832)
ABS.2.205	<i>Catalogue of the Libraries of Two Gentlemen, lately deceased...</i> (Edinburgh, 1832)
ABS.2.205	<i>Catalogue of Books, Pictures, Plate, Antique Cabinets etc. Consisting of the Library of the late Melville Burd W.S., the Library of a Gentleman leaving this country, and the Library of an Advocate</i> (Edinburgh, 1829)

- ABS.2.205 *Catalogue of Books ... Containing the very Valuable Library of Books ... of the late James Brodie, Esq. of Brodie ... the Books ... of that distinguished artist, the late Patrick Gibson ... a portion of the Library of the late Rev. Dr. Hall ...* (Edinburgh, 1830)
- ABS.2.205 *Catalogue of the Library of the Late William Laurence Brown, D.D....and of several smaller libraries...* (Edinburgh, 1830)
- ABS.2.205 *Catalogue of the Library of William Ritchie Esq....* (Edinburgh, 1831)
- ABS.2.205 *Catalogue of the Library of the Late Rev. John Steele of Morham...* (Edinburgh, 1831)
- ABS.2.205 *Catalogue of the Library of the Late Sir James Nasmyth, Bart. Of Posso* (Edinburgh, 1832)
- ABS.2.205 *Catalogue of a Valuable Library...the Property of the Late Dr. J.S. Ramsay...* (Edinburgh, [1830?])
- ABS.2.205 *Catalogue of the Library of the Late Dr. Charles Stuart...* (Edinburgh, 1829)
- ABS.2.205 *Catalogue of the Valuable Library Belonging to the Bankrupt Estate of Mr. David Bridges, Jun....* (Edinburgh, 1830)
- ABS.2.205 *Catalogue of the Library of the Late Robert Dunbar Esq., of the Tax Office, Edinburgh...* (Edinburgh, 1830)
- ABS.2.205 *Catalogue of the Library of the Late Rev. Archibald Singers, Minister of Fala...* (Edinburgh, 1830)
- ABS.2.205 *Catalogue of the Valuable and Choice Collection of Books ... the Property of the late Dr Arrot...* (Edinburgh, 1818)
- ABS.2.205 *Catalogue of a Small but Splendid Collection of Books;... being the Library of a Gentleman Leaving Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1830)
- ABS.2.205 *Catalogue of the Library of the Late John Dillon, S.S.C. F.S.S.A., Late Vice-President of the Maitland Club ...* (Glasgow, 1831)
- ABS.2.205 *Catalogue of the Library of the Late James Donaldson, Esq. of Broughtonhall...* (Edinburgh, 1831)
- ABS.2.205 *Catalogue of the Library of the Late Samuel Muir Esq. Rector of the High School, Perth...* (Edinburgh, 1832)
- ABS.2.205 *Catalogue of the Library... of the Late Robert Hamilton Esq. Principal Clerk of Session, and Professor of Public Law* (Edinburgh, 1832)

- ABS.2.205 *Catalogue of the Library of David Constable, Esq. Advocate...*
(Edinburgh, 1828)
- ABS.2.205.004(8) *Catalogue of the Library of Sir J. P. Grant of Rothiemurchus and of
two smaller collections containing a very valuable selection of books in
general literature, many of them in splendid bindings, also some pictures
and prints* (Edinburgh, 1831)
- ABS.3.81.10 *Catalogue of the Breadalbane Library, To be Sold by Mr. Dowell*
(Edinburgh, 1865)
- ABS.3.204.030 *Catalogue of the Valuable and Extensive Library of Thomas Thomson,
Esq., Advocate...* (Edinburgh, 1841)
- ABS.3.204.030 *Catalogue of ... The Library of the late George Drummond Stewart Esq.
of Brace, Comprising a number of books collected by The Right Hon. Sir
William Drummond...* (Edinburgh, 1849)
- ABS.3.204.030 *Catalogue of an Extensive and Valuable Collection of Books...
Comprising the Libraries of the late Sir John Graham Dalyell, Bart. Of
Binns; the late David Allester, Esq. W.S., and a Gentleman Recently
Deceased, removed from his Residence in Linlithgowshire* (Edinburgh,
1852)
- APS.1.77.48 *Hawick Subscription Library: List of Present Proprietors of Hawick
Library, and Catalogue of the Library* (Hawick, [1810?])
- APS.1.79.28 *Catalogue of Books in the Air, Newton and Wallacetown Library; to
which are prefixed the Rules and Regulations* (Air, 1814)
- APS.1.79.182 *Catalogue of the Bothkennar Library Established in 1824 by Donations*
(Falkirk, 1824)
- APS.2.82.31 *A Catalogue of the books in the Library Belonging to the Presbytery of
Dumfries* (Dumfries, 1784)
- F.7.d.15 *Bibliotheca Boswelliana: A Catalogue of the Entire Library of the late
James Boswell, Esq....* (London, 1825)
- GG.2/2 *Catalogue of the Edinburgh Subscription Library. 1794-1833. With
Charter of Erection, Laws of the Society & List of Members etc.*
(Edinburgh, 1833)
- Hall.149.i *A Catalogue of the Leightonian Library, Dunblane* (Edinburgh, 1793)
- Hall.193.e.5(1) *Catalogue of David Burns' Select Circulating Library, Brechin* (Brechin,
1835)

- H.6.e.20 *A New Catalogue of the Edinburgh Circulating Library containing twenty thousand volumes, English, French and Italian ... which are lent ... By J. Sibbald (Edinburgh, 1786)*
- H.11.a.21 *Catalogue of the Gray Library, Kinfauns Castle (Kinfauns, 1828)*
- H.32.a.14 *A Catalogue of Books, in several Faculties and Languages, being the Library of Mr. Alexander Inglis of Murdistoun lately deceased... (Edinburgh, 1719)*
- K.R.14.e *Catalogue of the Entire Library of the Late Sir John Leslie Professor of Natural Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh... (Edinburgh, 1833)*
- K.R.14.e.1 *Catalogue of a Valuable Collection of Books, comprising the well-selected Library of a Gentleman of Rank going abroad; the architectural and miscellaneous library the late William Stark Esq., and various other collections;... (Edinburgh, 1815)*
- K.R.14.e.2 *Catalogue of Books being the Library selected by, and formerly the property of, John Surtees, Esq. Balgonie;... (Leith, 1814)*
- K.R.14.e.2 *Catalogue of Books To be sold by Auction... (Edinburgh, 1815)*
- K.R.14.e.2 *Catalogue of Books and Pictures (Edinburgh, 1815)*
- K.R.14.e.2 *Catalogue of the Abbotrule Library, and Several Minor Collections of Books... (Edinburgh, 1815)*
- K.R.14.e.2 *Catalogue of a Large Collection of Books including Duplicates of the Library of a Nobleman; the Almost Entire Library of a Family of Rank and Several Lesser Collections... (Edinburgh, 1816)*
- K.R.14.e.5 *Catalogue of the Library of the late Sir J. Buchanan Riddell, Bt., with several smaller selections... (Edinburgh, 1820)*
- K.R.14.e.5 *Catalogue of the Library of the Late Rev. Thomas Miller D.D. Minister of New-Cumnock... (Edinburgh, 1820)*
- K.R.14.e.5 *Catalogue of the Library of the late Patrick Miller Esq. of Dalswinton... (Edinburgh, 1820)*
- K.R.14.e.5 *Catalogue of the Library of the Late John Playfair, Esq... Professor of Natural Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh... (Edinburgh, 1820)*
- K.R.14.e.6 *Catalogue of ...the Library of the Late Dr. Sandeman, of London, with several smaller collections... (Edinburgh, 1821)*
- K.R.14.e.6 *Catalogue of ... the Library of a Gentleman Lately Gone Abroad, with several smaller selections... (Edinburgh, 1821)*

- K.R.14.e.6 *Pitfour Library: Catalogue of the Libraries of the Late Lord Pitfour..., of James Ferguson Esq. of Pifour, M.P., and of Governor Ferguson of Pitfour...* (Edinburgh 1821)
- K.R.14.e.6 *Catalogue of ... the Library of the Late Henry Glassford of Dugaldston, Esq. M.P....* (Edinburgh, 1820)
- K.R.16.f.1 *Catalogue of ... The Libraries of the Ancient Family of Garthland, of Henry Weber Esq.... and several valuable collections* (Edinburgh, 1814)
- K.R.16.f.2 *Catalogue of the Extensive and Valuable Collection of Books of the Late Thomas Sivright, esq. of Meggetland and Southouse* (Edinburgh, 1836)
- K.R.16.f.2 *Catalogue of a Portion of the Extensive Library of the Rev. Alex. Brunton...* (Edinburgh, 1843)
- K.R.16.f.2 *Catalogue of the Choice and Valuable Library of the Late Macvey Napier Esq., Professor of Conveyancing in the University of Edinburgh....* (Edinburgh, 1847)
- K.R.16.f.5 *Catalogue of the Collection of Books and Pictures Belonging to the Estate of David Stuart, Earl of Buchan, who died in 1829...* (Edinburgh, 1859)
- K.R.32.d *A catalogue of the Library of the late learned Antiquarian, Walter Macfarlane, esq., and of some other collections of books lately purchased ... Catalogues to be had at the shop of A. Kincaid and J. Bell* (Edinburgh, 1768)
- K.R.32.f *A Catalogue of Books; being the library of the learned Dr John Clerk Physician in Edinburgh; and of Dr David Clerk, his son* (Edinburgh, 1768)
- LC283 *Catalogue of the Private Library of Peter Buchan, Corresponding Member of the Antiquarian Society of Scotland; of the Northern Institution for the Promotion of Science and Literature; and the Antiquarian Society of Newcastle-upon-Tyne; Editor of 'The Ancient Ballads and Songs of the North of Scotland', etc...* (Aberdeen, 1837)
- NG.1608.b25 *A Catalogue of Rare, Valuable and Curious Books... all collected with the greatest Care by the late celebrated Antiquarian Mr. Robert Miln, writer in Edinburgh...* (Edinburgh, 1748)
- R.120.b *Catalogue of Blair-Adam Library* (London, 1883)

- RB.s.420 *Regulations and Catalogue of Books of The Liberton Library, Instituted February 15. 1828.* (Edinburgh, 1830)
- RB.s.927 *A Catalogue of Books Belonging to Beith Library, 1818* (n.p, n.d.)
- RB.s.927 *Catalogue of Books in John Smith's Public Library* (Beith, 1834)
- RB.s.1488 *Catalogue of the Elgin Circulating Library, Containing a Select and Valuable Collection of Books by the Latest and Best Authors; ... Which are Lent to Read, ... by Isaac Forsyth, Bookseller, Stationer and Bookbinder, Elgin* ([?], 1789)
- T.1.f.1 *Catalogue of the Library of the Late J.A.Maconochie, Esq., Sheriff of Orkney and Zetland...* (Edinburgh, 1845)
- T.1.f.1 *Catalogue of the Valuable Library of the Late Lord Cockburn...* (Edinburgh, 1854)
- T.2.d.1 *Catalogue of a Valuable Collection of Books...which belonged to the late Mr. David Herd, Writer in Edinburgh...* (Edinburgh, 1810)
- T.2.d.1 *Catalogue of a Very Valuable Collection of Books, being the library of the late Mr George Paton of the Customs, Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1809)
- T.3.h.4 *Catalogue of a Valuable Library... being the Property of a Gentleman leaving the Country* (Edinburgh, 1822)
- T.3.h.4 *Catalogue of the Library of the Late Dr. Ross (of Montrose)...* (Edinburgh, 1820)
- T.4.g.1 *Catalogue [in Two Parts] of the Libraries of the Late Rev. John M'Omie, LL.D., Secretary to the Literary and Antiquarian Society of Perth; and Rev. Robert Kay, Minister of the West Church of Perth...* (Perth, 1819)
- T.4.g.1 *A Catalogue of a most Splendid Library, the Property of an Eminent Collector;...* (Edinburgh, 1823)
- T.4.g.1 *Catalogue of the Valuable Theological Library which belonged to the Late Rev. John Morell M'Kenzie...* (Edinburgh, 1843)
- x.177.c *Bibliotheca Sibbaldiana: or, a Catalogue of Curious and Valuable Books... Being the Library of the late Learned and Ingenious Sir Robert Sibbald of Kipps, Doctor of Medicine...* (Edinburgh, 1722)
- 3.2771(3) *Laws and Catalogue of the Books Belonging to Kilsyth Reading Society* (Glasgow, 1818)
- 3.2837(13) *Regulations and Catalogue of the Fenwick Library, instituted 1808. Re-modelled and Sanctioned 30th December 1826* (Kilmarnock, 1827)

- 5.864(11) *Sale Catalogue of the Library at Newton-Don...* (Kelso, 1826)
- 5.1412(5) *The House of Monymusk Library* (Aberdeen, 191[?])
- 1942.10(13) *Catalogue of the Library of the Late Professor Dalzel; Dr. Boog of Paisley; John Penny, Late Writer in Edinburgh; a Gentleman of the Law; and a Clergyman, deceased;...* (Edinburgh, 1824)
- A Catalogue of Books including the library of Dr John Brown, and a considerable part of the collection of the deceased Dr Steadman...* (Edinburgh, 1792)

St Andrews University Library

- CH2/1209/18 Includes Catalogue of Books Belonging to Robert Carstairs, schoolmaster at Leuchars, 31 August 1753
- MS Dep.7 Box 22/7/9 Exercise Book of Williamina Belsches, 1795
- MS Dep.43 Minute Book of the Letham Subscription Library, from 1825
- MS35220/233 Catalogue of Books in the Custody of William Barclay
- MS LY980/1 Miscellaneous Library Papers (Eighteenth Century), A to I
- Catalogue of the Duns Subscription Library* (Edinburgh, 1780)
- Catalogue of the Library at Abbotsford* (Edinburgh, 1838)

Stirling University Library

- MSS 21-30 Leightonian Library Collection

Private Archives

Ardgowan House, Greenock

- Typescript library catalogue

Brodie Castle Library, Nairn

- Library Receipt Book, from December 1779; includes catalogue of books, undated [no shelf mark]

Craigston Castle Library, Turriff

- MS Library Catalogue [no shelf mark]
- MS Library Register Book [no shelf mark]

Digital Library Catalogue
Annotated Books

Delgatie Castle, Turriff
Annotated Books

Dunimarle Library, Duff House, Banff
Annotated Books
Digital Library Catalogue

Grandhome House, Aberdeen
MS Library Catalogues, (1748, 1812, n.d.)

Leith Hall, Huntly
77.8160 'Queen Mary' [MS copy of NLS MS 9367]

National Register of Archives for Scotland

NRAS 55	Gordon family, Earls of Aberdeen
/8/1	Catalogue of Captain Gordon's Books, 1772
/8/2	Catalogue of Books, 1795
/8/21	notebooks and essays, 1782-5, 1809-11
NRAS 102	Grant family of Rothiemurchus
/318	Inventory of Books, 1833
/393	Notes taken from Robison's lectures on Natural Philosophy
/568	Notes on the origin of moral sentiments
/582	Miscellaneous notes, n.d. C18
NRAS 208	Charteris family Earls of Wemyss and March
/115	Proofs of a Commonplace Book
/119	Ms notebooks
/125	List of Books of Francis Charteris, 1745

Modern library records and annotated books at Gosford House

- NRAS 234 Murray family, Dukes of Atholl
- Boxes 49, 54, 59, 65 Correspondence
 - Bundle 56 Miscellaneous Inventories
 - Bundle 1233 Printed Catalogue of Mackintosh Library, 1823
 - Bundle 1361 Miscellaneous Notebooks
 - Volume 438 Catalogue of Library at Dunkeld, C19
- NRAS 776 Murray family, Earls of Mansfield
- Box 112/7 Library Accounts, 1778-1796
 - Bundle 308 Inventory of Books belonging to Alexander Fergusson of Craigdarroch, 8 May 1796
 - Bundles 740-3 Lists of Books belonging to Murray family at Scone, Portland Place in London and Kenwood House
 - Vol. 804 Notes on the origins of Feudal Law
 - Vol. 805 Notes on Law in general
 - Vol. 811 Historical notes on the reign of Philip the second of Spain taken by David Murray, 2nd Earl
 - Vol. 814 Commonplace of David Murray, 2nd Earl
 - Vol. 818/3 Papers on History
 - Vol. 818/6 Hymn to Science
 - Vol. 819 Private MS, 2 vols.
- NRAS 832 Maitland family, Earls of Lauderdale
- Vol. 200 Notebook with titles of books, classical notes, etc.
 - /5/5 Includes Accounts for Books, January 1765 – September 1766
 - /64/79 Letters to 7th Earl about purchases of wine and books, 1764-71
- NRAS 852 Hunter family of Hunterston
- Bundle 129 William Cochran's 'Logica Compendium', c.1780
 - Bundle 211 *Regulations [and Catalogue] of the Kilbirnie Subscription Library 1826* (Beith, 1826)
 - Bundle 215-6 Notebooks of William Cochrane
- NRAS 859 Douglas-Home family, Earls of Hume

- Volume 427 Catalogue of Books at the Hirsell, early C19
- NRAS 885 Bowes-Lyon family, Counts of Strathmore
- Box 67 Glamis Castle Library Borrowing Register, 1740-54
- Box 243 Copies and Extracts from Various Books by Mary Eleanor Bowes,
Countess of Strathmore
- Typescript Library Catalogue, Glamis Castle
- NRAS 888 Hope family, Marquesses of Linlithgow
- Bundles 310, 1506 & 3493 Catalogues of the Books at Raehills (1795, 1807, 1816)
- NRAS 934 Campbell-Preston family of Ardchattan
- Bundle 106 Draft Catalogue of Books at Gatcombe House, early C19
- Vols. 53-6 Reading Notes of Jane Campbell of Gatcombe Park
- Vol. 81 Catalogue of Books at Gatcombe House, seat of Alexander
Campbell, c.1795
- NRAS 1141 Hog family of Newliston
- Box 4/101-2 Commonplace books, 1748, 1770-1
- NRAS 1500 Forbes-Irvine family of Drum (National Trust for Scotland)
- Bundle 159 Miscellaneous Transcripts
- Bundle 874 Notes for a Commonplace Book
- Volumes 17, 84-5, 97-8 Commonplace Books, 1750, 1813-4, 1830
- Volumes 91-2 Commonplace Book of James Irvine, art dealer, 1817-26
- Typescript Catalogue of Library at Drum Castle
- NRAS 1907 Francis Fraser of Tornaveen
- Volumes 25, 27 Commonplace Books, 1790, 1814-1820
- NRAS 2362 Stirling family of Garden
- /40 Notes for a Commonplace Book, 1794
- /167 *A Catalogue of Books Contained in The Miners' Library at Leadhills*
(1800)

- /193 Accounts of Books belonging to Rev. William MacGregor Stirling
- /365 Inventory of Robert Stirling's Goods and Chattels taken to College,
November 1815
- /605 Catalogue of Books belonging to Mr Stirling's Library at Leadhills, May
1771

NRAS 2383 Broun-Lindsay family of Colstoun

- Bundles 57-8 Extracts from literary works, Christian Broun, 1804
- Bundles 60-6 Diaries of Christian Broun, 1811-1839

NRAS 2641 Macpherson family of Blairgowrie

- Bundle 69 Letters of Mrs Elizabeth Macpherson of Blairgowrie
- Bundle 76 Correspondence
- Bundle 95 Correspondence
- Bundle 231 Commonplace Book, 1782-99
- Bundle 278 List of Allan Macpherson's Books, 1800-2
- Bundle 484 Commonplace Book of Eliza Macpherson, 1789-1816
- Unlisted copy of will of Colonel Allan Macpherson of Blairgowrie

NRAS 2696 Fraser family of Reelig

- Volume 18 Notebook of A. C. Fraser on Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, n.d.
- Bundle 662 List of Books in Reelig House Library, mid C.19

Other Private Collections

- Annotated Books
- Commonplace Books of Elizabeth Rose of Kilravock
- Commonplace Book of Williamina Belsches
- Commonplace Books (anonymous)
- Unnamed/Anonymous library catalogues

Local Archives

Aberdeen City Archives

- DD5 Commonplace Book of Rev. David Cruden

Aberdeenshire Library and Information Service, Oldmeldrum

Ab75A9 Catalogues, Minutes and Records of the Peterhead Reading Society
*Rules and Regulations of the Reading Society of Peterhead, instituted
1808, with a Catalogue of Their Books* (Aberdeen, 1832)

Angus Local Studies Centre

MS 324 Pierson of Balmadies Commonplace Book
MS 449 Montrose Subscription Library papers
MS 451 Arbroath Subscription Library papers

Ardrossan Public Library

*Sale and Circulating Catalogue of Books ... to be had of William White at his Shops in Irvine
and Beith* (n.p., 1780)

Ayr Carnegie Library

027.441 (Ayr) *Catalogue of the Present Collection of Books in the Air Library...* (Ayr,
1802)
027.441 (Ayr) *Catalogue of Books Belonging to the Ayr Library Society...* (Ayr, 1832)
Minute Books of the Ayr Library Society

Cumbernauld Local Studies Library, Cumbernauld Library

'An Old Country Library' [unsubscribed article based on Cumbernauld Subscription Library cash
book from 1819 and Minute book from 1828]

Cupar Public Library

L027.04133 *The laws and Catalogue of the Cupar Library* (Cupar, 1813)

Dick Library, Kilmarnock

Minutes and Catalogue of Kilmarnock Subscription Library (copy of modern transcription
made available; originals in storage for duration of research project)

Dumbarton Library

Minute Book of the Renton Subscription Library

Dumfries and Galloway Archives

- GGD23 Diary of William Grierson, merchant in Dumfries, 1795-1807
GGD446/2 Accounts and Notes of David Imrie, Minister of St Mungo's
RG3/6/2 Notebook and Diary of a law student from Dumfries

Dundee Central Library

- Lamb Coll. 316 (6) Minute Book of the Dundee Public Library
The Catalogue and Regulations of the Dundee Public Library (Dundee, 1800)
Regulations and Catalogue of the Dundee Public Library (sixth edition; Dundee, 1832)
Catalogue of the French and English Circulating Library of James Chalmers, Bookseller and Stationer, Castle Street, Dundee (Dundee, 1818)
A Catalogue of the New Circulating Library ... By R. Nicoll, Bookseller, Stationer and Printseller, Dundee (Dundee, 1782)
Catalogue of the Library belonging to the Congregation of the Secession Church, School Wynd, Dundee (Dundee, 1832)

Dundee City Archives

- CH2/254/10 Minutes of the Fowlis Subscription Library
CH3/93/29 Library Registers, School Wynd Congregation

Dunfermline Local History Library, Carnegie Library

- D/Lib Minute Books of the Dunfermline Subscription Library, 1789-1829
Catalogue of Books in the Dunfermline Library, Instituted 26th March 1789 (Dunfermline, 1825)
Catalogue of Books in the Evangelical Library, Inverkeithing. Established, January 20, 1802 (Dunfermline, 1822)
Catalogue of Books in the Dunfermline Tradesmen's Library, instituted November 1808 (Dunfermline, 1823)

Ewart Library, Dumfries

- CH2/979/15 Dumfries Presbytery Library Issue Book
CH2/1284/32 Dumfries Presbytery Library Issue Book
Catalogue of Books in the Dumfries Library Taken November 1818 (Dumfries, 1819)

Catalogue of the Society Library, Dumfries, taken 3rd June 1835; with a copy of the Library Regulations (Dumfries, 1835)

Forfar Public Library

Regulations and Catalogue of Books Belonging to the Forfar Library (Dundee, 1795)

Catalogue of the Forfar Library ... (Forfar, 1821)

Hamilton Public Library

Names of Subscribers to the Hamilton Subscription Library (Glasgow, 1824)

Hornel Library, Kirkcudbright (NRA 10173)

MS 2/11 Records of the Kirkcudbright Subscription Library

MS 4/26 Minute Book of the Kirkcudbright Subscription Library

MS 5/27 Regulations of the Wigtown Subscription Library

MS 11/28-30 Borrowing Books of the Wigtown Subscription Library

Innerpefferay Library

Borrowing Registers

Typescript Catalogue

Inverness Public Library

A Catalogue of Books Consisting of some thousand volumes... Which are Lent to be Read... By A. Davidson, Printer, Stationer & Bookbinder, At the Sign of Pope's Head, Inverness ([Inverness?], 1782)

Catalogue of the Inverness Subscription Library (Inverness, 1815)

Midlothian Local Studies Library, Loanhead

ML/4/1-2 Minute Book and Day Book of the Loanhead Subscription Library

Mitchell Library, Glasgow

Catalogue of Books in Stirling's Public Library (Glasgow, 1805)

Catalogue of The Circulating Library of David Potter & Co. No. 2 Brunswick Place, Glasgow... (Glasgow, 1811)

Catalogue of the Circulating Library of A. MacCallum & Co. No. 31 Wilson Street Glasgow...
(Glasgow, 1817)

Regulations and Catalogue of the Glasgow Public Library, instituted December 1804
(Glasgow, 1810)

Catalogue of the Library and Prints of Mr. Robert Chapman, Printer, Glasgow... (Glasgow,
1822)

Orkney Library and Archives

D15 Catalogue of Books belonging to Johnston family of Coubister
027Y *Catalogue of the Stromness Library* ([np], 1829)

Paisley Library

A Catalogue of the Paisley Circulating Library ... which are Lent to Read ... by George Caldwell, Bookseller and Stationer, at his Shop, opposite the head of Dyer's Wynd, near the Cross, Paisley (Paisley, 1789)

Catalogue of Books and Regulations in the Paisley Library Society (Paisley, 1822)

Perth Library

B59/38/6/245 List of Books lent out by John Brodie, 1810-11
B59/38/6/276 Catalogue of Books of Miss Drummond of Machany
MS4 Records of the Perth Subscription Library

Scottish Borders Library Service

DL/3 Records and Accounts of the Duns Subscription Library, 1768-1850
SBA Yetholm Commonplace book
S/PL/7 Selkirk Subscription Library Registers, 1799-1808; 1808-1814
Catalogue of the Selkirk Library, instituted 1777 (Selkirk, 1856)

Stewartry Museum, Kirkcudbright

1996/22/04 Diary of David Campbell, Kirkcudbright, August 1823
Catalogue of Books Belonging to the New Circulating Library recently established in Kirkcudbright ... Which are lend By John Nicholson, Bookseller and Stationer, Kirkcudbright (Dumfries, 1819).

Wanlockhead Museum

Catalogue and Minutes of the Leadhills Subscription Library
Catalogues of the Wanlockhead Library

Watt Library, Greenock

Books Recommended by Subscribers to the Greenock Library, 1813
Catalogue and Regulations, 1808
Minute Books, 5 Jan 1794 to 18 Oct 1815; 12 Jan 1816 to 12 Jan 1831

Wick Public Library

Catalogue of Books Belonging to the Wick and Pulteneytown Subscription Library (Wick, 1832)
Catalogue of the Library of the Wick and Pulteney-Town Reading Club (n.p., 1830)

International Archives

Beinecke Manuscript and Rare Books Library, University of Yale, New Haven, CT

Gen MSS 89/Box 58/1221-26 Reading Notes of James Boswell
Gen MSS 150/Box 27/767 Commonplace Book in a female hand, c.1780-1830
Osborn Bound MS Fc132 Commonplace Book of James Forbes, 1766-c.1800
Osborn MS7733 Letter of Hanna Hume discussing David Hume
Osborn Shelves C340 Commonplace Book of Anne Hamilton, Marchioness of Abercorn, 1793-1800
Osborn Shelves C355 Notes from Reading, anonymous
Osborn Shelves C388 Commonplace book of Frances (Scott) Douglas, Baroness Douglas

X348 K574 1746/11/12 *A Catalogue of Rare, Valuable and Curious Books on all Subjects, collected with the greatest care, by the late Ingenious and Learned Lawyer, Sir James MacKenzie of Roystoun, Baronet, One of the Senators of the College of Justice...* (Edinburgh, 1746)

- X348 K574 1748/12/12 *A Catalogue of Curious and Valuable Books being chiefly the Library of the Right Hon Duncan Forbes of Culloden, Esq.; late Lord President of the Session...* (Edinburgh, 1748)
- X348 K574 1749/2/22 *A Catalogue of Curious and Valuable Books being chiefly the Library of the late Mr. Alexander Bane Professor of Scots Law in the University of Edinburgh...* (Edinburgh, 1749)
- 2000 590 *A Catalogue of Valuable Books, Manuscripts, Curiosities etc. Belonging to the Deceased Mr James Cummyng, Keeper of the Lyon Records and Secretary to the Society of Scottish Antiquaries* (Edinburgh, 1793)
- 2000 62 *A Catalogue of a Rare and Valuable Collection of Books, being the Whole library of the late Mr. Thomas Ruddiman...* (Kincaid & Donaldson: Edinburgh, 1758)
- A Catalogue of the Valuable and Choice Collection of rints, Books of Prints, Original Pictures and Drawings, Books in Various Languages, Busts and Plaster Figures, Mathematical, Surveying, and Drawing Instruments, the Property of the late Mr. John Baxter, Architect in Edinburgh...* (Martin: Edinburgh, 1798)

Cape Town University Library

Catalogue of Books in Stirling's Public Library (Glasgow, 1795)

Folger Shakespeare Institute Library, Washington, DC

William Cullen, *A Treatise on Materia Medica*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1777), marginalia in Folger copy 245-195q

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A Catalogue of Valuable Books; being the Library of the Reverend Mr. Thomas Pitcairne, Minister of the Gospel at West-Kirk, Edinburgh; to be sold by way of Auction at Musselburgh the 15th of January 1752 (n.p./date)

A Catalogue of the Large and Valuable Library of Doctor John Campbell, Author of the Political Survey of Great Britain; the Lives of the Admirals, and many other works; Also, the Library and Manuscripts of Richard Blyke, Esq., Both Deceased... (London, 1776)

Grolier Club Library, New York, NY

- *04.426/R823/1802 *Ross & Blackwood's Catalogue of Books for 1802, comprehending the library of the late George Haldane, Esq., of Gleneagles, and several other libraries lately purchased...* (Edinburgh, 1802)
- *05.42\1817\0728 *Catalogue of an Extensive and Valuable Collection of Books and Prints, Chiefly Old: Being the Entire Library of the late William Stewart, Esq. of Spoutwells...* (Perth, 1817)
- *08.26/D898/1820Arch MS Burgie Library Catalogue
- *08.26/E46 and M667 MS Catalogues of the Minto Library
- *08.26/T971 MS Library Catalogues of Yester House
- A Catalogue of one of the finest collections of books that ever were exposed to sale in this country, partly the library of Robert Alexander Esq. (Edinburgh, 1775)*
- A Catalogue of a very large collection of books in most languages and faculties, containing, among other libraries, that of James Smollett, Esq., of Bonhill, lately deceased...* (Edinburgh, 1776)

National Library of Medicine, Bethesda, MD

- 57720930R *Catalogue of Books, Chiefly Medical, being the Library of the Late William Cullen M.D. Professor of the Practice of Medicine in the University of Edinburgh...* (Edinburgh, 1792)

New York Public Library

- *GO (Queensberry) *Catalogue of a Valuable Collection of Books, including the libraries of James, the Second Duke of Queensberry, and the late Alexander Gibson Hunter Esq. of Blackness...* (Edinburgh, 1818)
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