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# SOMEWHERE BETWEEN ZURICH AND GENEVA? THE STANCE OF REFORMATION SCOTLAND IN 1560

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## INTRODUCTION: IDENTIFYING THE LOYALTIES OF SCOTLAND'S EARLY REFORMATION

Between the spring of 1560 and the close of 1562, the leaders of the emergent Protestant Church of Scotland prepared three major standards that would guide its life during the following decades. These were first, a “Book of Reformation,” a scheme for the renovation of the un-reformed church into a national Protestant Church; we know it now as the *First Book of Discipline*. Second, and better known, was the *Scots Confession*, produced on short notice by a committee of six men, all of whom shared the first name, John. Third came the “Forme of Prayers,” the service-book ratified in 1562 and soon after known as the *Book of Common Order*. Given the extreme scarcity of Protestant leaders in 1560 (one recent estimate puts it that there were not more than twelve Protestant ministers in the entire land in 1560)<sup>1</sup> the question may fairly be asked, ‘How could this early theological and ecclesiastical output have been so substantial?’

At least since the publication of Peter Hume Brown’s biography of John Knox in 1895, answers to this question have alleged slavish imitation. Hume Brown asserted that the theological stance of the Scottish Reformation in 1560 was essentially that of John Calvin. In the *Knox* biography, Hume Brown wrote:

To all intents and purposes, it [the Scots Confession] is a mere compendium of Calvinistic theology in the fully developed form it had assumed in Calvin’s later days.<sup>2</sup>

So pervasive did Hume Brown take this Genevan influence to be that he argued that the *Confession of Faith* and *Book of Discipline* could still have made their appearance in Scotland in 1560 even if Knox himself had never returned.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Robert M. Healey, ‘The Preaching Ministry in Scotland’s *First Book of Discipline*’, *Church History* 58.3 (1989), 343.

<sup>2</sup> Peter Hume Brown, *John Knox*, 2 vols. (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1895), II, 122.

<sup>3</sup> Brown, *John Knox*, II, 122, 123.

Just as dogmatic in tone was the mid-twentieth century opinion of Maurice Taylor. In contributing to a Roman Catholic analysis of the Scottish events of 1560, he opined that John Knox — a Zwinglian until his fleeing England after Mary Tudor's accession to the throne of England in 1553 — thereafter came 'under the influence of Calvin'.<sup>4</sup> His return to Scotland in 1559, issuing in the rapid acceptance of a Confession of Faith and Book of Discipline, represented 'Calvinism in Scotland made official, explicit and complete'.<sup>5</sup>

According to such writers, the stance of the Scottish Reformed Church — as displayed in these three forms — was the manifestation of wholesale borrowing. Calvin, either speaking alone, or like a ventriloquist speaking through Knox, had supplied the Scottish reform movement with its ideology. We move only incrementally beyond this outlook when we consider the view of the latest biographer of Knox, who in a 2009 essay recorded the opinion that these materials of the 1560–62 period showed that:

Knox and [his associate] Goodman brought to Scotland a 'start-up' kit for the new Kirk which would prove to be of greater significance than their experience as ministers in Geneva [...] After its short and revolutionary crisis in 1559–60, the Scottish Kirk was fortunate to have to hand a package of key texts and a model of how to run a church which had been road-tested by the English-speaking exile congregation in Geneva.<sup>6</sup>

On this view, it was not so much Calvin himself, but the 'laboratory' of Knox's exile congregation at Geneva, which was the spring from which all the productions of 1560–1562 flowed. The origination remains foreign; the mediators of the influence of Calvin and Geneva are the ministers of Geneva's refugee congregation.

<sup>4</sup> Maurice Taylor, 'The Conflicting Doctrines of the Scottish Reformation' in David McRoberts, ed. *Essays on the Scottish Reformation* (Glasgow: Burns, 1962), p. 256.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 259.

<sup>6</sup> Jane Dawson, 'Scotland and the Example of Geneva' in *Theology in Scotland* 16.2 (2009), 64, 68. She argues similarly in 'Knox, Goodman and the Example of Geneva' in Patrick Collinson and Polly Ha, eds. *The Reception of the Continental Reformation in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 107–35. The same sentiments are expressed in Dawson's *John Knox* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), p. 192. A similar conception of heavy indebtedness to Geneva is set out in detail in James Kirk, *Patterns of Reform* (Edinburgh: St Andrew Press, 1989), chap. 3, 'The Calvinist Contribution to the Scottish Reformation'. To be fair, Kirk's concern is to account for developments well beyond 1562.

I hope the reader will grasp the difficulty of maintaining such opinions today. The difficulty lies not in what these writers affirmed (the importance of foreign antecedents and of the powerful example of Calvin), but in what they omitted (factors closer to home). We should acknowledge that something like these opinions lives on in the popular Protestantism that clings to a kind of 'Calvin's Geneva *über alles*' notion of the utter dominance of that city and that Reformer in the advance of Reformed Protestantism.<sup>7</sup>

We return to the question, 'How may we account for the primary documents of Reformation Scotland in 1560–1562, the period of the Parliamentary establishment of Protestantism?' In what follows we will consider several strands of evidence indicating that Reformation Scotland 1560–1562 followed a much more eclectic theological approach. There are three major considerations.

## I. INTERACTIONS WITH SUCCESSIVE WAVES OF REFORMIST THOUGHT

Commencing with the Lollards, Scotland experienced successive waves of reformist thought. Each phase of reformist thought had representatives still on the scene to interact with developments which followed. We consider Lollard, Lutheran, Anglican, Helvetic, Erasmian and Genevan waves.

### *Lollard*

Both because of the enrolment of Scottish students at Oxford University from 1357 onward (Oxford being a stronghold of John Wycliffe's teaching) and because of the migration of English Lollards into Scotland to avoid ensuing persecution, this medieval dissenting movement came to be associated with various Scottish regions.<sup>8</sup> After 1400, there were allegations made against various persons claimed to have declared Lollard

<sup>7</sup> The notion of the dominance and pervasiveness of Calvin and Geneva's collective influence in the British Reformations found classic expression in the 1949 work of Charles Davis Cremins, *The Reception of Calvinist Thought in England* (Urbana, IL, University of Illinois Press, 1949). It finds popular expression today through the labours of popular Christian communicators such as John Piper. See his 2012 video of Calvin's Geneva here: <<http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/after-darkness-light-video-from-geneva>>.

<sup>8</sup> The persistence of Lollardy into the Reformation era and its links with the new movements is discussed in Margaret Aston, *Lollards and Reformers: Images and Literacy in Late Medieval Religion* (London: Hambledon Press, 1984), chap. 7.

opinions. In Lanarkshire, the focus of attention was Quintin Folkhyrde,<sup>9</sup> by 1407 James Resby was executed for Lollardy at Perth.<sup>10</sup> The need to counteract Lollard heresy provided a justification for the foundation of the University of St Andrews in 1410. That same city was the site of the execution of another person of similar persuasion in 1439: a Moravian Hussite, Paul Kraver (or Crawar) who was in Scotland soliciting support for his Moravian (Hussite) cause in advance of the Council of Basel.<sup>11</sup>

Yet by the 1490s, what had been until then a sporadic chain of occurrences gained greater visibility. Thirty persons were arrested in Ayrshire in 1494 for their Lollard opinions, a summary of which has been preserved.<sup>12</sup> Friends in high places ensured that the ecclesiastical trial, which took place before King James IV, did not result in a guilty verdict. The Lollard sympathizers were released with an admonition.<sup>13</sup> Now this admitted trace comes suddenly into clearer focus in connection with the career of a particular Ayrshire man: Murdoch Nisbet (d. ca. 1545). Raised in this milieu of sympathy for Lollard opinions, he fled Scotland sometime after 1513 and in a long absence produced a Scots rendering of a Lollard New Testament.<sup>14</sup> On examination, this New Testament — derived from the improved Lollard version of John Purvey — also reflects familiarity with William Tyndale's first English New Testament of 1525 and the completion of Tyndale's work by Coverdale in 1535. Its prefaces demonstrate familiarity with the writings of Luther, which had begun to circulate in Scotland after 1522.<sup>15</sup> Nisbet is estimated to have returned to Scotland by the early 1530s.<sup>16</sup> The production of his New Testament at

<sup>9</sup> Folkhyrde's activity is detailed in Martin Dotterweich, 'The Emergence of Early Evangelical Theology in Scotland to 1550' (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 2002), pp. 19–25.

<sup>10</sup> W.S. Reid, 'The Lollards in Pre-Reformation Scotland', *Church History* 11.4 (1942), 269–70.

<sup>11</sup> Reid, 272. Further details are supplied by Ian B. Cowan in an article, 'Paul Kravar' in Nigel M. de S. Cameron, ed. *Scottish Dictionary of Church History and Theology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993), p. 466.

<sup>12</sup> Gordon Donaldson, ed. *Scottish Historical Documents* (Glasgow: Scottish Academic Press, 1974), p. 90.

<sup>13</sup> Reid, 281. Margaret H.B. Sanderson, *Ayrshire and the Reformation* (East Linton, East Lothian: Tuckwell, 1997), chap. 4.

<sup>14</sup> Sanderson, *Ayrshire*, p. 42.

<sup>15</sup> Sanderson, pp. 42, 43. Dotterweich, 'The Emergence of Early Evangelical Theology', pp. 56–57 details the existence of two Wycliffite Bibles from this era.

<sup>16</sup> The Nisbet N.T. appeared in a 19th century edition prepared by T.G. Laws and published as *The New Testament in Scots* 3 vols. (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1901). Assessments of the Nisbet N.T. were provided by T.M. Lindsay, 'A Lit-

such a time effectively demonstrates the way in which one early pre-Reformation movement was giving way to a later. And that later movement, Lutheranism, was beginning to make its presence felt in Scotland from the early 1520s onward.

### **Lutheran**

The fact that in 1525, the Scottish parliament made explicit reference to 'the heretic Luther' as the source of 'dampnable opinyeonis' circulating in the land, provides a clear indicator that the German reformer's influence had been detected.<sup>17</sup> We have seen that Murdoch Nisbet had absorbed enough of Luther's teaching that it was reflected in his Lollard-Scots New Testament. But even before Nisbet could do that, there was the fact that scores of Scottish students were studying at Paris and Cologne in the years following the launch of Luther's protest. In such cities, the leading ideas of Luther circulated widely. No less than twelve Scots are known to have studied in Wittenberg in this period.<sup>18</sup> And the literature which such students encountered abroad soon began to arrive surreptitiously in the east-coast Scottish ports of Aberdeen, Montrose, Dundee, Edinburgh and Leith.<sup>19</sup>

Patrick Hamilton (1504–1528) was one of the many Scottish students who studied in Paris and later — upon his first being suspected of heresy at St Andrews — at Wittenberg and Marburg. At his return, he influenced a second Scot and St Andrews student, Alexander Alane (or Ale-sius) before his own martyrdom.<sup>20</sup> Doctrinal theses, composed by Hamilton at Wittenberg, were translated into English after Hamilton's death by the English proto-reformer, John Frith in 1529 as "Patrick's Places". Here was a clear example of Lutheran-style teaching on justification by faith, composed by a Scot, circulating clandestinely on both sides of the bor-

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erary Relic of Scottish Lollardy', *Scottish Historical Review* 1 (1904), 260–90, and T.M.A. MacNabb, 'The New Testament in Scots', *Records of the Scottish Church Historical Society*, 11 (1951), 82–103.

<sup>17</sup> Acts of the Parliament of Scotland, II. 295 as excerpted in Donaldson, *Scottish Historical Documents*, pp. 102, 103.

<sup>18</sup> James Kirk, 'The Religion of Early Scottish Protestants' in James Kirk, ed. *Humanism and Reform: The Church in Europe, England and Scotland 1400–1643* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), p. 374.

<sup>19</sup> W.S. Reid, 'Lutheranism in the Scottish Reformation', *Westminster Theological Journal* 7 (1945), 95.

<sup>20</sup> Iain R. Torrance, 'Patrick Hamilton' in the Nigel M. de S. Cameron, ed. *Scottish Dictionary of Church History and Theology*, pp. 390, 391. The advance of evangelical conviction in this period within St Andrews is described by Dotterweich, 'The Emergence of Evangelical Theology', pp. 174–75.

der.<sup>21</sup> Both by the powerful example of his martyrdom and through his disciple, Alesius, he furthered Lutheran influence in Scotland.<sup>22</sup> Alesius, himself a St Andrews graduate, went into exile in 1530 and then served the Lutheran cause, ultimately as professor of theology at Leipzig.

That the Lutheran phase of Scotland's reform was not abruptly ended by Hamilton's martyrdom and the flight of Alesius is illustrated by at least two evidences. First, another St Andrews graduate, John Gau, having imbibed Lutheran teaching, went into exile in Sweden and from there, sent back into Scotland a book which he had translated from Danish, *The Richt Vay to the Kingdom of Hevine*; this embraced a Lutheran understanding of salvation by faith.<sup>23</sup> This, having been smuggled into the country by North Sea merchants, was dispersed across Scotland. Similarly, there circulated within Scotland from about 1540 the writings associated with John Wedderburn, the *Gude and Godlie Ballades*. John Wedderburn had been exposed to Lutheran ideas while at St Andrews, had likely witnessed the execution of Hamilton in that place and fled to Lutheran Saxony circa 1539.<sup>24</sup> Critical to our purpose here, we can note that the oldest surviving bound edition of what had earlier circulated in broadsheet form is that of 1567. As this was seven years following the parliamentary establishment of Protestantism, the publication serves as a demonstration of the ongoing existence of Lutheran sentiments in an era when Scottish Protestantism is reckoned to have moved on to embrace new emphases.

Such Lutheran influences continued to exert influence in the post-1560 era also through individuals who, having fled Scotland earlier in

<sup>21</sup> James Kirk, 'The Religion of Early Scottish Protestants', p. 375.

<sup>22</sup> A.F.S. Pearson, 'Alexander Alesius and the English Reformation', *Records of the Scottish Church History Society* 10 (1949), 57–87; John T. McNeil, 'Alexander Alesius, Scottish Lutheran', *Archiv für Reformationgeschichte* 55 (1964), 161–91; G. Wiedermann, 'Alexander Alesius: Lectures on the Psalms at Cambridge, 1536', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 37 (1986), 15–41. *Patrik's Places* are reprinted as an appendix in William Croft Dickinson, ed. *John Knox's History of the Reformation in Scotland* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1950), II.

<sup>23</sup> James Kirk, 'John Gau' in Nigel M. de S. Cameron, ed. *Scottish Dictionary of Church History and Theology*, p. 352. Gau's book was edited and prepared for publication by A.F. Mitchell and issued by the Scottish Text Society in 1888. A wider range of this Lutheran-oriented literature is surveyed in James K. Cameron, 'Aspects of the Lutheran Contribution to the Scottish Reformation', *Records of the Scottish Church History Society* 22.1 (1984), 1–12.

<sup>24</sup> Iain Ross, ed. *The Gude and Godlie Ballatis* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1939). A full critical edition was produced by A.F. Mitchell for the Scottish Text Society in 1897. It is not entirely clear whether the *Ballades* are the collaborative work of three Wedderburn brothers, or the solo project of one.

periods of persecution returned to Scotland from Lutheran territories. The eventual Protestant minister of Dundee, William Christison, returned to that city in 1560 having served previously at Bergen, Norway. William Ramsay, a 1545 St Andrews graduate, went directly to Wittenberg upon graduation and returned in 1560 to join the faculty of St Salvador's College, St Andrews.<sup>25</sup> These transitions from Lutheran territory into the Reformed Church of Scotland seem to have involved no significant hurdles for those returning.

### *Anglican*

The death of King James V after the Battle of Solway Moss in 1542 exposed Scotland to a period of political instability. As a short-term remedy, Scotland entrusted the role of head of state to a regent, the second Earl of Arran. During this regency, King Henry VIII made diplomatic overtures to secure a marriage between his only son, the future Edward VI, and Mary, daughter to the late King James V.<sup>26</sup> Regent Arran was at that time amenable both to this proposal and to the English promotion of cross-border Protestantism. In this period, by English initiative, Tyndale New Testaments became readily available in Scotland. The English promotion of Protestantism in Scotland did not continue to enjoy Scottish state support once Arran returned to his earlier Catholic allegiance. Yet for an initial period following 1543, Bibles and Christian literature in English became available as never before in Scotland.

Conversely, Scottish proto-Protestants needing to evade prosecution readily found refuge in neighbouring England in these decades.<sup>27</sup> The English initiatives meant to advance Protestantism in Scotland were renewed in the reign of English king Edward VI. From 1549 onward, the initial First Prayer Book of Edward and — after 1552 — the Second Prayer Book came into wide use in Scotland, a usage which persisted into the post-1560 period.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> James K. Cameron, 'Aspects of the Lutheran Contribution to the Scottish Reformation', *Records of the Scottish Church History Society* 22.1 (1984), 2.

<sup>26</sup> This era, which began with poised diplomatic initiatives descended into cross-border invasions in the 'Rough Wooing' period. See Jenny Wormald, *Court, Kirk and Community: Scotland 1475–1625* (London, Edward Arnold, 1981), pp. 103–04.

<sup>27</sup> Wormald, p. 103. Among those fleeing into England were John Spottiswoode, John McAlpine, George Wishart and John Willock. John Knox did not find refuge in England until 1549.

<sup>28</sup> By 1557, the use of the Second Prayer Book seems to have become normative in the underground Protestant congregations in Scotland. See Dickinson, ed.



*The Swiss/HelvetiC Turn*

Not because Lutheranism had somehow disappeared from Scotland (Scottish students continued to frequent Lutheran university theological faculties into the 1550s), but because of the heightened role played by the Reform movements in the Swiss cantons by the 1530s, it was only to be expected that Reformation emphases sounded among the Swiss would manifest themselves in Scotland. Zürich had come to distinguish itself as the nurturer of Reform movements first in other German-speaking and then French regions of the Confederation. Those Swiss influences were meanwhile also making an impression in Scotland's neighbour to the south. English Protestant dissidents had begun to gravitate to Zürich, especially after Henry VIII's Act of Six Articles (1539).<sup>29</sup> No Church of England figure was more attentive to Zürich than future bishop John Hooper.

The future Scottish martyr, George Wishart (c.1513–1546) would encounter Zürich in this period and while there came to be on friendly terms with Heinrich Bullinger, the successor to Zwingli.<sup>30</sup> A graduate of Aberdeen and Louvain, Wishart had initially returned from the Low Countries to Montrose, Scotland to teach Greek until hounded out of Scotland by the Bishop of Brechin in 1538.<sup>31</sup> The next years saw him in Bristol, where once more he ran afoul of the religious authorities. He crossed over to the Continent and was associated for a time with Zürich and Heinrich Bullinger and then returned for a period of lecturing at Cambridge University.<sup>32</sup> By 1543, he was in Scotland preaching as an itinerant.<sup>33</sup> By 1546, Wishart was apprehended and tried for heresy; his preaching is said to have 'popularized the doctrines of the Swiss Reformers in Scotland'.<sup>34</sup>

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*John Knox's History of the Reformation*, i, 137 and fn. 7. See also James Kirk, *Patterns of Reform* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989), p. 12.

<sup>29</sup> Alec Ryrie, *The Gospel and Henry the Eighth: Evangelicals in the Early English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 178.

<sup>30</sup> An explanation of how he came to possess the 1536 Helvetic Confession in original Latin version, direct from Bullinger, and well in advance of any European publication, is provided by Ian Hazlett in the Martin H. Dotterweich, ed. *George Wishart Quincentennial Proceedings* (n.p.: www.wishart.org, 2014), pp. 23–24.

<sup>31</sup> Martin Holt Dotterweich, 'George Wishart in England' in Dotterweich, ed. *George Wishart*, p. 26.

<sup>32</sup> Gottfried W. Locher, *Zwingli's Thought: New Perspectives* (Leiden: Brill, 1984), p. 372.

<sup>33</sup> James Kirk, 'George Wishart' in the Nigel M. de S. Cameron, ed. *Scottish Dictionary of Church History and Theology*, p. 877.

<sup>34</sup> James Kirk, 'George Wishart', *SDCHT*, p. 877.

After his execution at St Andrews, there was published from within England his translation of the *First Helvetic Confession* (1536). This confession, never before published at its release in England c. 1548, displayed a collaborative Swiss Reformed theology determined to speak in as great harmony as possible with the Lutheran position in light of opposition from Holy Roman Empire and Papacy.<sup>35</sup> The translation serves as a kind of mirror of Wishart's own theological position in the 1540s.

On the basis of this known Zurich connection, Wishart's theological position has been mislabelled as 'Zwinglian'. And since John Knox came into close and prolonged relationship with Wishart in the years of his itinerant preaching in Scotland, the designation, 'Zwinglian' has been used to describe his own theological outlook in the late 1540s. But clearly, in such references the term, 'Zwinglian' is being used anachronistically (and pejoratively) for it was Bullinger as the figurehead of the ongoing Zurich Reformation who was now giving the theological direction. It was this emphasis that Knox's eventual colleague, John Willock (preaching as a Scots refugee in England from 1540 onward) found in pro-Protestant preachers Latimer, Hooper, and Ridley; Willock encountered it also in the Swiss student of theology at Oxford, John ab Ulmis, and the superintendent of the London 'Strangers Churches', John á Lasco.<sup>36</sup> At the accession of Catholic Queen Mary Tudor, Willock went not to Frankfurt, Zurich or Strasbourg (some of the better-known destinations of refugees), but followed á Lasco to Emden where he ministered, under á Lasco's supervision, to an English refugee congregation.

The theological orientation of the Protestant churches at Emden was clearly that of Zwingli and Bullinger.<sup>37</sup> From Emden, John Willock went into Scotland in 1555 (ostensibly on a diplomatic errand). He never returned to Emden from this diplomatic errand but became a chief preacher in Scotland's underground Protestant movement that was gathering strength in the period leading to 1559–60. It is important to note, however, an almost certain decline of the theological influence of Bullinger and Zurich after 1560. The support lent by Bullinger in that period to the retention both of episcopacy and of distinctive clerical garb in the

<sup>35</sup> Ian Hazlett, 'George Wishart and the Swiss Confession of Faith' in Martin H. Dotterweich, ed., *George Wishart Quincentennial Conference Proceedings* (n.p.: www.wishart.org, 2014), p. 22.

<sup>36</sup> Duncan Shaw, 'John Willock' in Duncan Shaw, ed. *Reformation and Revolution: Essays Presented to Hugh Watt* (Edinburgh: St Andrew Press, 1967), pp. 50–51.

<sup>37</sup> Shaw, 'John Willock', p. 51.

Church of England caused him to be perceived to be working at cross purposes to the priorities of the Scottish Church.<sup>38</sup>

### *Erasmian Humanism*

Having acknowledged the growing influence of Zürich for both English and Scottish reformation movements, the stage would seem to be set for a discussion of the influence of Calvin and of Geneva. Yet doing so at this point would leave unaddressed what would otherwise remain a giant riddle. That under-acknowledged factor is the late-emerging support for the Reformation in the half-decade leading to 1560 by those who — almost until the last minute — had maintained outward support for Scottish Catholicism because they sincerely harboured the desire to see Scriptural reform advance in that church. Such an emphasis was encouraged at Aberdeen University in the period up to 1540. Still more students were encouraged in this direction at St Andrews.<sup>39</sup> Let us refer to specific persons.

John Erskine of Dun, a St Andrews graduate, was never ordained in the pre-Reformation Church. But this laird knew the Scriptures and had hosted George Wishart in his home in 1543; he threw in his lot with the cause of Reform in 1555 and eventually (post-1560) became the Reformed superintendent of Angus and Mearns. The illegitimate son of the late king, James V (and therefore, half-brother to Mary Queen of Scots) was another such person: Lord James Stewart (c.1531–1570). Embodying in his own biography the compromise and complexity of the pre-Reformation church, he had been made head (prior) of the Augustinian priory at St Andrews at age eight; he filled this leadership role without ever subsequently taking monastic vows. He took a course of studies in St Andrews University; functioning as prior he had begun to take his place in the series of reforming councils summoned by the Scottish Catholic hierarchy in an attempt to pre-empt the growing criticisms of the rising Protestant movement. John Winram (c.1492–1582), the sub-prior of that same Augustinian monastery at St Andrews, was himself a theological graduate of the university, read Greek, and was early-on familiar with continental Reformation thought. With his Augustinian superior (Stewart), Winram embraced the Reformation in 1559. He rapidly became the Protestant superintendent of Fife. Another St Andrews dignitary, John Douglas (c.1494–1574), rector of St Mary's College, joined the Reformation cause

<sup>38</sup> Bruce Gordon, 'Peter Martyr Vermigli in Scotland' in Emidio Campi, ed. *Peter Martyr Vermigli: Humanism, Republicanism, Reformation* (Genève: Librairie Droz, 2002), pp. 284, 285.

<sup>39</sup> James Kirk, 'The Religion of Early Scottish Protestants', pp. 362, 363.

in 1560. John Carswell (d. 1572), another St Andrews graduate, threw his support behind the Reformation when his patron, the Earl of Argyll, did so. John Row (1525–1580), a St Andrews graduate, went on to distinction in canon law. He returned to Scotland from Rome in 1559 and threw in his lot with the by-then returned John Knox.

As one looks beneath the surface, one finds in many such cases the common elements of the university study of Greek (prior to the 1550s, available only on the Continent),<sup>40</sup> access to Erasmus' *Annotations on the New Testament* (1519, revised through 1535), linkage with either King's College, Aberdeen or the colleges comprising St Andrews, and some familiarity with continental Reformation theology. Those who had travelled such paths gradually developed aspirations for the purification of the church and the restoration of her teaching ministry. These aspirations were left unfulfilled by the faltering efforts of the Scottish Catholic reforming councils of 1549, 1552 and 1559. The type of aspirations they harboured and the distance that they had already travelled in a reforming direction were exhibited in a production of 1552 which bore the name, "Archbishop Hamilton's Catechism".<sup>41</sup> This was so informed by Christian humanist aspirations that it de-emphasized the role of the Papacy and supported the concept of salvation appropriated by faith.<sup>42</sup>

All these individuals had lived through the Lutheran-tinged era of Patrick Hamilton; a good number had witnessed the death of George Wishart. They approached 1560 as men honestly seeking reform, yet without embracing it as exemplified by Lollardy, by Patrick Hamilton or George Wishart. Yet, a range of these individuals instantly took their

<sup>40</sup> Alec Ryrie, *The Age of Reformation: The Tudor-Stewart Realms 1485–1603*, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2017), p. 62. Carol Edington in an essay 'Knox and the Castillians' in Roger Mason, ed. *John Knox and the Reformation* (Brookfield, VT.: Ashgate, 1998), p. 31 has drawn attention to various non-clerics such as David Lindsay who shared these same Erasmian characteristics.

<sup>41</sup> James Kirk, 'John Hamilton' in Nigel M. de S. Cameron, ed. *Scottish Dictionary of Church History and Theology*, p. 390, proposes English Dominican at St Mary's College, St Andrews, Richard Marshall, as true author.

<sup>42</sup> J.H.S. Burleigh, 'The Scottish Reforming Councils, 1549 to 1559', *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, 11.3 (1953), pp. 189–211. A Roman Catholic appraisal of these enclaves is offered by Thomas Winning, 'Church Councils in Sixteenth Century Scotland' in David McRoberts, ed. *Essays in the Scottish Reformation* (Glasgow: Burns, 1962). A critical edition of Archbishop Hamilton's Catechism was edited by A.F. Mitchell (Edinburgh: William Paterson, 1882).

places in 1560 as framers of the Confession of Faith and the perfecting of the *First Book of Discipline*.

### ***Calvin and Geneva***

Nothing should be said or written which diminishes the hospitality of Calvin and Geneva towards the refugees associated with John Knox. These had initially encountered conflict when they had tried to secure at Frankfurt the same type of nonconforming Anglican worship that they had insisted upon in Edwardian England. It was not predominantly a Scottish group of exiles that left Frankfurt for Geneva in 1556; the majority of the members of the eventual refugee congregation at Geneva would return to their native England after Elizabeth's ascending to the throne at Mary's death in 1558. At their return to England, they would contend (just as at Geneva) for the sustaining of the same nonconforming way of worshipping God we would associate with the later Puritan movement. But as for Scotland? The Scottish contingent leaving Geneva at the death of Mary Tudor consisted of Knox and his English-born wife with Knox's co-pastor, Christopher Goodman — the Englishman who was just as much loathed by Queen Elizabeth as she loathed Knox, the Scot. Both had gone into print opposing the rule of women and affirmed the right of godly citizens to seek the overthrow of tyrants.

Goodman would join Knox in advancing the Reformation in Scotland (Goodman going to St Andrews, Knox to Edinburgh). And yes, these went to Scotland with their Genevan service book (the Form of Prayers) a part of which was Calvin's "Geneva Catechism," a manual of congregational discipline, and a collection of metrical psalms. They went to Scotland facing imminent peril, rather like the missionary theological graduates who would cross from Geneva to enter France and the Low Countries. But the point to take away is that the two preachers lately of Geneva crossed to Scotland, there to join an eclectic team of co-belligerents who had come to Reformation convictions by a variety of routes. Calvin (and Geneva's) influence in Scotland would grow exponentially in years to come; but in 1560 these were far from dominant influences.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Bruce Gordon, 'Peter Martyr Vermigli in Scotland' in Emidio Campi, ed. *Peter Martyr Vermigli: Humanism, Republicanism, Reformation* (Genève: Librairie Droz, 2002), p. 280.

## II. THIS RANGE OF DIVERSITY WAS REFLECTED IN THE COMMITTEE OF SIX MEN, ALL NAMED 'JOHN'

Let us recapitulate what has been observed as we considered the various 'waves' of Reformation thought which had already impacted Scotland by considering how this diversity was reflected in the committee of six which produced first the "Booke of Reformation" and (subsequently) a Confession of Faith on such short notice.

Three (John Knox, John Willock, and John Spottiswoode) had served the Edwardian Church of England when they fled south in times of Scottish persecution. Of these, Spottiswoode was actually ordained in the Church of England. Willock, having in the Edwardian period obtained a Church of England pastoral benefice in Leicestershire, returned to it in 1569 at the conclusion of his extended service in Scotland. Knox himself had preached extensively in London and in the northeast of England.<sup>44</sup> All three — refugees in England — were familiar with the Edwardian Books of Common Prayer and had agreed to use them — if only on some modified basis.<sup>45</sup> Both Willock and Knox had also been exposed (both in England and on the Continent) to European-style Reformed patterns as illustrated in the ministries of John á Lasco and John Calvin. Their pre-1560 undercover ministries in Scotland will have represented a blend of these native and foreign influences.

The additional three men who co-deliberated with Knox, Willock and Spottiswoode on the Book of Reformation (First Book of Discipline) and Confession of Faith (John Douglas, John Row, and John Winram) together represented the more Erasmian route to a break with Rome. Row had been a distinguished canon lawyer who represented the pre-Reformation church as far afield as Rome. A St Andrews graduate, he was exposed to Reformed theology while at Rome and returned to ally himself with the cause. Douglas and Winram were both what might be called academics who held to an Erasmian Catholicism in St Andrews while more and more imbibing clearly Protestant attitudes. Winram's affinity for such views

<sup>44</sup> Duncan Shaw, 'John Willock' in Duncan Shaw, ed. *Reformation and Revolution* (Edinburgh: St Andrew Press, 1967), pp. 47, 67.

<sup>45</sup> Ian Hazlett expresses certainty that the three named came to their committee work in 1560 with a familiarity with the Forty-Two Articles of Religion prepared by Thomas Cranmer in 1552 and ratified only weeks before the death of King Edward VI in 1553. See Ian Hazlett, 'The Scots Confession 1560: Context, Complexion, and Critique', *Archiv für Reformationgeschichte* 78 (1987), 303.

had been observed even as he preached in connection with the heresy trial of George Wishart, in 1546.<sup>46</sup>

### III. ASSESSMENTS OF SCOTLAND 1560 THAT REFLECT THIS COMPLEXITY

With this diversity noted, we are in a position to do *two* things. We may *first* draw attention to features of the documents put forward in 1560–1562 that require this background for a proper understanding.

In the *Scots Confession*, for example, it has been pointed out that the intimation, given in the preface, that the Confession will be subject to correction if anyone can show a statement repugnant to Scripture, finds an antecedent in a Zürich document from 1523.<sup>47</sup> The doctrine of election, set out in chapter VIII, is a much more modest formulation of this doctrine than what we associate with Calvin, Beza or (for that matter) John Knox.<sup>48</sup> The opening sentences of Chapter XXI (The Sacraments) have been shown to have first appeared in a doctrinal summary composed by á Lasco (Winram's past associate) at Emden.<sup>49</sup> The right of Christian citizens to resist tyrannous rulers is handled much more circumspectly in chapter XXIV (the Magistrate) than in the controversial published writings of John Knox or Christopher Goodman. One writer has traced the moderating influence to John Winram.<sup>50</sup>

In the *First Book of Discipline*, the office of elder — so important for the eventual establishing of an explicitly Presbyterian polity — had already existed in the unofficial Scottish 'privy kirks' meeting in the 1550s under the protection of lesser nobles. The enshrined right of congregations to nominate their own minister (provided that they did so within 40 days, and subject to examination) was a practice which had been enshrined in the polity of the Reformed congregations at Emden to which foreign refugees — formerly welcomed in England — fled with their leader, John à Lasco, after the persecuting Mary Tudor ascended to the English throne

<sup>46</sup> James Kirk, 'John Winram' in the Nigel M. de S. Cameron ed. *Scottish Dictionary of Church History and Theology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993), p. 876.

<sup>47</sup> Shaw, 'John Willock', p. 60.

<sup>48</sup> Ian Hazlett, 'The Scots Confession 1560: Context, Complexion, and Critique', *Archiv für Reformationgeschichte* 78 (1987), 311–12 and Shaw, 'Willock', pp. 59, 60.

<sup>49</sup> Shaw, 'John Willock', p. 60.

<sup>50</sup> Ian Hazlett, 'The Scots Confession 1560: Context, Complexion, and Critique', *Archiv für Reformationgeschichte* 78 (1987), 315.

in 1553.<sup>51</sup> One of the six Johns — John Willock — who fled to Emden with á Lasco in that year and served a congregation of English refugees (part of the larger grouping termed the Marian exiles) worked there under á Lasco's oversight. Both at London and at Emden, á Lasco had filled the pastoral role of 'superintendent', provision for which became an important element of the *First Book of Discipline*.<sup>52</sup>

Second, we may now draw different inferences about the question of indebtedness. We began by noting that from the era of Hume Brown onward, analysts of early Reformation Scotland have found evidence only of the dominance of Calvin, or, of Calvin exerting influence through Knox and the English refugee congregation at Geneva. However, in the light of the diverse influences we have enumerated, there is little wonder that there has long been a choir of voices dissenting from the view set in motion by Hume Brown. In that same decade of the 1890s, A.F. Mitchell (1822–1899) could write in 1899 that these writings are found 'coinciding not infrequently in expression and agreeing generally [...] with other Reformed or Calvinistic Confessions [...] yet with characteristics of their own'.<sup>53</sup> A decade later, C.G. McCrie (1836–1910), writing in 1906 would go no further than to speak of the Scots Confession's 'general agreement with other Reformed symbols' which evidenced 'now and again [...] indications of indebtedness to others'.<sup>54</sup> A.R. MacEwen (1851–1916), writing a decade farther on, insisted that at very least the Confession of Faith was 'an original production with no parallel in the religious literature of any other land. A free use was made of the writings of the continental Reformers [...] but this was in matters of detail rather than principle'.<sup>55</sup> Much closer to our own time, Ian Hazlett has insisted (at least as regards the Scots Confession) that besides Calvin, 'other eddies, streams, and contraflows can be discerned'.<sup>56</sup> David F. Wright left it as his opinion of these writings of the formative period of Scotland's Reformation that:

<sup>51</sup> Basil Hall, *Humanists and Reformers*, 171–207. It is perhaps significant that the year of Willock's departure for Scotland (1555) was also the year of á Lasco's final departure from Emden to Frankfurt on Main.

<sup>52</sup> James K. Cameron, ed. *The First Book of Discipline* (Edinburgh: St Andrew Press, 1972), pp. 49–54 and 115–28.

<sup>53</sup> A.F. Mitchell, *The Scottish Reformation* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1900), p. 103.

<sup>54</sup> C.G. McCrie, *The Confessions of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh: MacNiven and Wallace, 1907), p. 17.

<sup>55</sup> A.R. MacEwen, *A History of the Church in Scotland* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1918), II, 161.

<sup>56</sup> Ian Hazlett, 'The Scots Confession 1560: Context, Complexion, and Critique', *Archiv für Reformationgeschichte* 78 (1987), 319. Similarly, Michael Lynch,



In a movement on which no single master stamped his dominant genius, the determinative theological standards were team efforts [...] <sup>57</sup>

## CONCLUSION

While it is almost certainly the case that the Reformed Church in Scotland moved more clearly into the theological orbit of Geneva in the decades following 1560, the mere return of John Knox from that city to Scotland in 1559 did not ensure or necessitate any such outcome. Of the six men named 'John', Knox alone claimed a personal connection to Geneva and a personal knowledge of Calvin.<sup>58</sup> Especially the elasticity of the Confession of Faith requires us to accept that its framers followed a collaborative and consolidative approach in view of the fact that the primitive Scottish Reformed ministry would enfold a range of individuals indebted to the Edwardian Church of England, Lutheranism in Scandinavia and Saxony, Reformed churches in Emden, Zürich, and Geneva and also Erasmian Catholicism.

To make this observation is not to plead the case for an ongoing theological indeterminacy as being somehow more congruent with the original intention of the Reformers. However, it is to draw attention to an admirable eclecticism, breadth and readiness for collaboration which, if it has not always characterized the Reformed tradition, is most worthy of emulation in our current changed circumstances when theological reconstruction is called for.

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'Calvinism and Scotland' in Menna Prestwich, ed. *International Calvinism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 230 has stressed that the Scots Confession represented a 'collation' of non-Calvinist conviction with that of Knox.

<sup>57</sup> David F. Wright, 'The Scottish Reformation: Theology and Theologians' in David Bagchi and David Steinmetz, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Reformation Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 175.

<sup>58</sup> A point made forcibly by Michael Lynch in his essay, 'Calvinism and Scotland' in Menna Prestwich, ed. *International Calvinism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 229.