
The Scots Church in Rotterdam – a Church for Seventeenth Century Migrants and Exiles

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PART II. “MINISTERS AND VACANCIES IN THE CONGREGATION 1660-1690”

The first paper in this series, “The Creation of a Kirk”, looked at the establishment of a Scots Church in Rotterdam in 1643, where the Scots migrant community could worship God in their mother tongue and according to the forms of the Church of Scotland.¹ The civic and national authorities in the Dutch Republic² granted permission for the formation of a Scots congregation and helped the congregation to secure the translation³ of an able Perthshire minister, Alexander Petrie, who

¹ R. Dickie, “The Scots Church in Rotterdam – a Church for Seventeenth Century Migrants and Exiles: Part I. ‘The Creation of a Kirk’”, *Scottish Reformation Society Historical Journal*, Vol. 3 (2013), pp. 71-108. [Further references to the journal are abbreviated to *SRSHJ*.]

² The Dutch Republic existed from 1581 to 1795 and was the country formed by the Union of Utrecht (1579) which unified the seven northern provinces of the Netherlands hitherto under the control of Habsburg Spain. The Republic was officially known as the *Republic of the Seven United Netherlands*, the *Republic of the United Netherlands*, or the *Republic of the Seven United Provinces*. It was also known as *The United Provinces*. These terms are used interchangeably. The provinces of the Dutch Republic comprised the Duchy of Guelders, the County of Holland, the County of Zeeland, the former Bishopric of Utrecht, the Lordship of Overijssel, the Lordship of Frisia, and the Lordship of Groningen and Ommelanden. The remaining southern provinces were then known as the Spanish Netherlands. References to Holland in the present paper (and other papers in this series) indicate specifically the Dutch province of that name. References and quotations referring to Holland from other authors may inaccurately mean the Republic, however.

³ The Scots ecclesiastical usage of this word signifies the act or procedure of removing a minister from one pastoral charge to another. See the entry under “translate” in *Dictionary of the Scots Language* (www.dsl.ac.uk).

was inducted to the charge when the church opened in 1643. Thanks to the vigilance of the minister and his Consistory,⁴ the Rotterdam Church faithfully adhered to the doctrines, worship and practice of the Church of Scotland.

For many centuries, Scottish migration to the Low Countries had been largely based on commerce and military service. The Rotterdam Church was established for the largest Scots migrant community in the country. In 1661, some eighteen years after the establishment of the Scots church, Rotterdam welcomed a new type of Scottish migrant, those who adhered to the National Covenant of 1638 and opposed the imposition of Episcopacy within Scotland.

Persecution of Covenanters began immediately after the restoration of King Charles II in 1660. This took the form of harassment, fines, imprisonment and torture, and the first execution of Covenanters took place in 1661. The first Scottish Covenanter exiles began to arrive in the Netherlands that year. The Revolution of 1688 marked the beginning of the end of Episcopal persecution of Covenanters in Scotland and opened up the way for remaining exiles to return to their homeland. The vast majority of exiles had left the Netherlands by 1690, the year which marked the re-establishment of Presbyterianism in Scotland.⁵ The period of Covenanter exiles may conveniently be regarded as 1660 to 1690. During this time, some sixty-five ministers spent periods in exile in the Netherlands.⁶ In addition, 170 “definite” exiles and 184 “possible” exiles have been identified.⁷ The duration of exile varied depending on circumstances, and some of them never returned to their native shores. Many of the exiles settled in Rotterdam for a part or the whole of their exile, and their numbers swelled those of the Scots congregation which also continued to expand due to economic migration.

⁴ The Consistory (from the Latin *consistorium*, meaning “sitting together”) in Reformed churches is the governing body where the elders and deacons meet together. It has the functions of a combined Kirk Session and Deacons’ Court. The minutes of the Rotterdam consistory meetings relate to the offices and duties of both elders and deacons, often without distinction of the separate roles. The minutes often use “Consistory” and “Session” interchangeably but the phrase “Deacons’ Court” is absent from the records.

⁵ The year 1690 also marked the victory of William of Orange at the Battle of the Boyne in Northern Ireland, which ended attempts by James VII and II to regain his throne.

⁶ G. Gardner, *The Scottish Exile Community in The Netherlands 1660-1690* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2004), pp. 10, 231-215.

⁷ G. Gardner, *ibid.*, pp. 16-22, 216-232.

The present paper examines the events occurring when ministerial vacancies arose within the Scots congregation at Rotterdam during the period of the Covenanter exiles. The main primary source materials for this are a large archive of unpublished manuscript documents from the Scots Church of Rotterdam dating from its foundation in 1643 to the present era.⁸ The records of the Consistory and other church documents are located at the *Gemeentearchief Rotterdam* (GAR).⁹ The principal documents of the Scottish Church Records (SCR) relevant to this paper are the first two volumes of the Consistory minutes: the first volume covers the period from August 1643 to 24th January 1675 (GAR/SCR/1) and the second volume (GAR/SCR/2)¹⁰ includes the remainder of the period of exile.

Four ministers served the congregation during the period from 1660 to 1690: the dates of their ministries are given in parentheses.

Alexander Petrie	(1643-62)
John Hoog, also known as Hog or Hogg ¹¹	(1662-89)
Robert McWard, ¹² also known as M'Cuard, MacWard, M'Ward, or Macquire (collegiate minister ¹³)	(1676-77)
Robert Fleming (collegiate minister)	(1677-94)

⁸ With the exception of one relatively recent volume lost during the upheaval of moving the archive to safety during the Second World War. Conventions used in transcribing the records are detailed in R. Dickie, *SRSHJ*, Vol. 3 (2013), p. 73, fn. 10.

⁹ The *Gemeentearchief Rotterdam* is the Municipal Archive of Rotterdam (www.gemeentearchief.rotterdam.nl/en/collectie/archives). References to page numbers relate to handwritten numbering in the records and dates of the meetings are also given.

¹⁰ GAR/SCR/2 contains two paginations. The first section covers 77 pages numbered by hand from 31st January 1675 to 31st July 1685. Handwritten page numbers in the renumbered subsequent section of GAR/SCR/2 are provided as far as page 102, which ends with the minute of 7th October 1688. Thereafter only the date of the meeting is supplied. This series of papers quotes extensively from the documents *verbatim*. Punctuation marks, capitalisation and lower case letters are retained. Quotations are therefore precise transcriptions although they may jar on present-day readers. I have forborne from using the annotation [sic] even where (for example) there is no capitalisation after a full stop.

¹¹ In this paper, the form Hoog is used. Hog modified the spelling of his name to Hoog, presumably for the benefit of his Dutch hosts: the word “hoog” is a Dutch word [meaning “high”] and was therefore easier for them to pronounce than the unfamiliar Scottish name “Hog” and its variant spelling “Hogg”. All three spellings are used in the Consistory minutes but his own preferred practice was to write “Hoog”. His descendants remained in the Dutch Republic for decades after his death and continued to use this spelling.

¹² The form McWard is used in this paper. This is the spelling he used in signing a letter to the Session.

¹³ A collegiate ministry occurs when a congregation is under the joint pastorate of two or more ministers.

**1. Alexander Petrie (*circa* 1594-16th September 1662) –
Minister of Rotterdam
30th August 1643-16th September 1662**

Alexander Petrie was the first minister of the Scots congregation in Rotterdam. Biographical details of Petrie were given in the first paper.¹⁴ The salient points of his life and ministry may be summarised as follows.

Petrie was born in Montrose *circa* 1594 and his university education took place at St. Andrews where he graduated M.A. in 1615. There is no indication of his activities for the next five years until he returned to Montrose to become master of the Grammar School from 1620 to 1630. He was ordained as minister of Rhynd, near Perth, sometime after 18th July 1632. This was during the time of Episcopal ascendancy, when the Presbyterian cause was at a low ebb.¹⁵ Petrie himself was a staunch supporter of the Covenant during these dark years and was appointed a member of the memorable Glasgow General Assembly of 1638 and the Assembly of 1639.¹⁶ He was also elected Clerk to the Synod of Perth and Stirling on 8th October 1639. There is no other extant information about Petrie's time in Scotland and the next recorded information is his translation to Rotterdam in 1643, aged about forty-nine.¹⁷

The records of the Rotterdam Church formally detail the process leading to the founding of the Scots Church and the appointment of its

¹⁴ R. Dickie, *SRSJH*, Vol. 3 (2013), pp. 71-108.

¹⁵ In the consistory records, Petrie gives an indication that he may have been a minister elsewhere before Rhynd. "I haue been many times in Kirksessiones, both wher I was minister, and wher other ministers haue been: I haue been in sundrie Presbyteries, and in the synodes of bishopes, and in the Provincial synodes of Perth and Sterlin and Fife, and I haue been in fyue general assemblies." GAR/SCR/1, p. 44 (26th December 1650). However, it is conceivable that he could have written this based on his work as a minister and Synod clerk, which exposed him to various Church courts.

¹⁶ The 1638 Glasgow Assembly was the first to meet for twenty years. It abolished the office of bishop and other trappings of Episcopacy. The Assembly declared the Prayer Book and other liturgical innovations unlawful, and went on to re-establish Presbyterian government in the Church of Scotland. This challenged the absolutism of Charles I and led to the "Bishops' Wars" of 1639 and 1640 in which the Covenanters were victorious.

¹⁷ H. Scott, *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanæ. The succession of ministers in the Church of Scotland from the Reformation. Volume IV. Synods of Argyll, and of Perth and Stirling* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1923), p. 243. The following *Fasti* are also cited in this paper: *Volume I, Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1915); *Volume II, Synods of Merse and Teviotdale, Dumfries and Galloway* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1917); *Volume III, Synod of Glasgow and Ayr* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1920); *Volume VI, Synods of Aberdeen and of Moray* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1926); *Volume VII, Synods of Ross, Sutherland and Caithness, Glenelg, Orkney and Shetland, The Church in England, Ireland and Overseas* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1928). Subsequent references are abbreviated to *FES*.

first minister. “The creation of a kirk in fauoures of the Scotese dwelling within this towne, & seamen resorting hither was by them petitioned of the Vroedschape,¹⁸ who sent unto the States General¹⁹ & obtained of them the libertie & a stipend therunto: & they as also the brethren of the Consistorie & the forenamed supplicantes sent their seuerall letters unto the Presbyterie of Edinburgh crauing of them that they wold be pleased to send a Minister for the beginning of sik [such] a work. They sent hither Mr Alexander Petrie. All these particulares ar to be seen by the authentical actes.”²⁰

Petrie had a major influence in shaping the Rotterdam congregation and ensuring that it adhered to orthodox doctrine, worship and practice during the nineteen years of his ministry. He was an able and pious minister, esteemed alike by his congregation and by the Calvinistic section of the city’s Dutch Reformed ministers. He was well versed in the doctrines and practice of the Church of Scotland and sought to maintain these “old paths”. This was difficult in a cosmopolitan city where a variety of religious opinions circulated, and in a country whose laws and customs (even in religious matters) differed from his native land. Moreover, Petrie had to contend with divisions and dissent in his own congregation, where the members were not necessarily well versed in (or sympathetic to) the principles and practice of the Church in Scotland. The accession of new, non-Scottish members of the congregation compounded this situation.

In perusing the Consistory records during his ministry it is easy to concur with Steven’s observation that Petrie had “a hasty and warm temperament” and “made little allowance for the uneducated persons with whom he acted”.²¹ Yet he was a loving pastor who cared passionately for the welfare of souls and it is clear that Petrie’s adherence to the witness of the covenanted Church of Scotland never wavered. When the first banished Covenanters arrived in Rotterdam in 1661 and

¹⁸ The *vroedschap* was the council of a Dutch town. It “consisted of up to forty members and each held his seat for life. Councillors were chosen by the regents, an elite group of wealthy families which dominated civic affairs.” G. Gardner, *ibid.*, p. 99.

¹⁹ States General is the usual translation of *Staten Generaal*, the Dutch legislature which has met in Den Haag [The Hague] at the *Binnenhof* [Dutch: “The Inner Court” – part of a complex of administrative buildings] since 1446 until the present day.

²⁰ GAR/SCR/1, p. 1 (1643).

²¹ W. Steven, *The History of the Scottish Church, Rotterdam. To which are subjoined, Notices of the Other British Churches in the Netherlands; and a Brief View of the Dutch Ecclesiastical Establishment* (Edinburgh: Waugh and Innes, 1833), p. 22.

1662, a few months before his death, they could aver that they found in Petrie a like-minded minister who was “dissatisfied with the times [prevailing in Scotland under Charles II]”.²²

The Consistory records from August 1643 to December 1657 occupy 72 closely written pages of Petrie’s neat handwriting, detailing functions related to the Kirk Session such as disciplinary cases (often recorded in great detail), intimation of the Lord’s Supper which was celebrated four times a year, and the annual election of elders.²³ The records also meticulously detail diaconal functions such as weekly income and expenditure, loans to members of the congregation (and their repayments), and extraordinary disbursements.

In contrast to the average of over five manuscript pages per year from 1643 to 1657, entries in the Consistory records in the final years of Petrie’s ministry are significantly less detailed, often consisting of little more than unadorned records of the weekly meetings for financial transactions. In particular, entries during the twenty-one month period from January 1660 to the time of Petrie’s death in September 1662 are predominantly of a financial nature and occupy little over two pages. The few cases of discipline in the final years relate mainly to squabbles within the Scots community, and these tail off in the summer of 1661, with only an occasional record of the outcomes.²⁴

²² Robert McWard, who succeeded Petrie as minister in Rotterdam, was banished from Scotland by Parliament and arrived in the city at the end of 1661. In a letter to Lady Kenmure he wrote: “I have occasion now and then to preach at Rotterdam, where we have an old Scots minister, who is dissatisfied with the times.” Quoted in T. Lockerby, *A Sketch of the Life of the Rev. John Brown, sometime Minister of the Gospel in Wamphray: containing many of his interesting letters hitherto unpublished, with illustrative notes, and a historical appendix; exhibiting a full view of the times and sufferings of the covenanters* (Edinburgh: Thornton & Collie, 1839), p. 57.

²³ Lifelong tenure of eldership was unknown in those days. An annual election of elders was the norm in the Church of Scotland. “The election of elders and deacons should be made every yeare once.” *First Book of Discipline*, chapter X, *The Eight [sic] Head, touching the Election [and Office] of Elders and Deacons; [and the Censure of Ministers, Elders, and Deacons]* section 3, in *The Books of Discipline and of Common Order; The Directory of Public Worship; The Form of Process; and the Order of Election of Superintendents, Ministers, Elders, and Deacons* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Printing and Publishing Company, 1836), p. 64.

²⁴ The final case recorded in June 1661 details the outcome in a case of mutual complaints of four women. As was common in those days, both in Scotland and the Rotterdam Church, the Session required reconciliation with the threat of a financial penalty for future offence: “Catherin gibson complained on Margaret rowan and Cristin and Margaret Leggets: and they complain on her All the four are found guilty, and oblige themselves that they shall not speak ill one of another, Vnder pain of 6 g. Etc.” GAR/SCR/1, p. 76 (10th June 1661). The guilder was the primary monetary unit in the Dutch Republic and was variously abbreviated in the records, commonly as “g.,” “gul” and “guld” (for “gulden”), or “ƒ” (for florijn).

The Consistory records contain no substantive information about the final phase of Petrie's life, ending in his death in September 1662, aged approximately 68 years. In the year of his death Petrie published his *magnum opus* on the history of the Christian Church.²⁵ It is known that he died of a protracted and painful illness shortly after publication,²⁶ and the burden of bringing a highly detailed volume to the press, combined with failing health, may explain the paucity of records in the final years of his life, with no other Consistory member designated to (or, perhaps, able to) write the formal minutes of their meetings.

The final entry in Petrie's hand is the weekly entry dated 14th July 1662, some two months before his death on 16th September. Perhaps indicating that he wished to settle his affairs in anticipation of his demise, the minute records repayment of a large sum Petrie had borrowed from the Session: "The Minister declares that he hath payd unto such as the Session had appointed the 200 guld. which he had borrowed from the Session in such maner as is written above [. . .] And now the 200 g. is layd into the kirks great box."²⁷ Poignantly, this entry which begins in Petrie's hand ends abruptly in mid-sentence²⁸ and a new line in a new hand continues: "Here ends Mr Petries Writing, & Mr Hoogs follows."²⁹ Petrie died on 16th September, some nine weeks after the date of the Consistory meeting of 14th July. The weekly Consistory record entries from 21st July to 15th September relating to Petrie's ministry are written in Hoog's hand, as are the thirteen weekly entries during the pastoral vacancy until Hoog was inducted on 31st December 1662. The most likely explanation is that rough copies of minutes were made at the time of Consistory meetings, and transcribed into the official minute book later.

Over a year after Petrie's death, one further Consistory minute records a settlement of his estate: "put vnto the kirk box 29 gul which Mr

²⁵ A. Petrie, *A compendious History of the Catholick Church, from the year 600 until the year 1600, shewing her Deformation and Reformation; together with the Rise, Reign, Rage, and Begin-fall of the Roman Antichrist, with many profitable Instructions, gathered out of divers writers of the several times, and other Histories, by Alexander Petrie, Minister of the Scots Congregation at Rotterdam* ('s-Gravenhage: Vlaek, 1662).

²⁶ W. Steven, *The History of the Scottish Church, Rotterdam*, p. 21.

²⁷ GAR/SCR/1, p. 76 (14th July 1662). Two hundred guilders was a substantial sum: Petrie's annual stipend was 700 guilders.

²⁸ "[. . .] the Minister received his Note on 23 and". GAR/SCR/1, p. 76 (14th July 1662).

²⁹ GAR/SCR/1, p. 76 (14th July 1662).

Petrie our minister did leave to the poore which Mr Petrie did leave to them when he Desecaed to wit to the poore.”³⁰

The vacancy following Alexander Petrie's death

After Petrie's death the Rotterdam magistrates invited the exiled minister of Airth (near Stirling), Robert McWard, to supply Petrie's vacant pulpit and it would appear that he alone was responsible for maintaining public ordinances, despite the presence of other Scottish ministers in Rotterdam.³¹ There is no documentary record to indicate why the civil magistrates preferred McWard. Steven mentions an entry from the city treasurer's records: "To Doctor Robert Macquire [McWard], for performing the whole pastoral duties in the vacant Scottish Church here during three months, the sum of 125 guilders, due Dec. 1, 1662."³² On the same date the treasurer's disbursements included the following: "Paid to the heirs of Mr. Alexander Petrie, 350 guilders, being one half year's tractament [stipend] and house hire, due in August."³³

The action of the magistrates in appointing a preacher was in line with Dutch practice. It is interesting to note that this intervention occurred without demur from the Consistory. Whereas the Dutch authorities paying ministers' stipends and pensions was consistent with the Church of Scotland's stance on the Establishment principle, the interference of a civic authority in the appointment of a preacher – even a temporary arrangement during a vacancy – is apparent Erastianism.³⁴

³⁰ GAR/SDR/1, p. 79 (30th October 1663).

³¹ Eight other exiled Scottish ministers spent part or all of their time at Rotterdam during the period which began in 1661 – James Simson (1621-1666) of Airth near Stirling (exiled in Leiden, Rotterdam and Utrecht 1661-1666), James Gardiner (1633x1637-before 1685) of Saddell, Argyllshire (exiled in Rotterdam and Utrecht 1662-1667), John Nevay (*circa* 1606-1672) of Loudoun, Ayrshire (exiled in Rotterdam 1662-1672), Gilbert Rule (1629-1701) of Fife (exiled in Leiden and Rotterdam 1662-1679 and again in 1687), John Brown (*circa* 1610-1679) of Wamphray, Dumfriesshire (exiled in Rotterdam 1663-1679), John Hog or Hoog (*circa* 1610s-1692) of Restalrig, Midlothian (exiled in Rotterdam from 1662 until his death in 1692, and was minister of the congregation 1662-1689), John Livingstone (1603-1672) from Ancrum and Langnewton, Roxburghshire (exiled in Rotterdam 1663-1672), and Robert Traill (*circa* 1603-1678) from Old Greyfriars in Edinburgh (exiled in Rotterdam and Utrecht 1663 - 1670). [The use of "x" within dates indicates a range: hence 1633x1637 signifies that Gardiner was born at an unspecified date between 1633 and 1637.] Data derived from G. Gardner, *The Scottish Exile Community in The Netherlands 1660-1690* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2004), principally Appendix 1, *Exile Ministers*, pp. 213-215, with added details from the relevant volumes of *FES*.

³² W. Steven, *ibid.*, p. 336.

³³ W. Steven, *ibid.*, p. 336.

³⁴ Erastianism is the theological position that the State is supreme in ecclesiastical matters. Erastus was a 16th century Swiss theologian best known for a posthumously

It is worth remembering that the Scots congregation of Rotterdam was a part of the Presbytery of Edinburgh, in common with the other Scots congregations in the Dutch Republic.³⁵ Distance – not to say intercurrent international conflicts – precluded the active participation of ministers and elders in the Presbytery. Similarly there was limited opportunity for the Presbytery to deal with a ministerial vacancy. In 1643 the newly formed Scots Church was permitted to send commissioners to sit in the local *Classis*³⁶ of the Dutch Reformed Church.³⁷ This arrangement was made with the concurrence of the Presbytery in Edinburgh, a model replicating the arrangements for Amsterdam's English Presbyterian Church.³⁸ However, in 1644 the *Classis* of Schieland overturned the arrangement³⁹ in line with its general refusal to police foreign congregations within its jurisdiction; the magistrates respected this position.⁴⁰ This effectively left the Scots Church without a functioning Presbyterian system either in Scotland or in the Dutch Republic – in reality, therefore, the Rotterdam Church became virtually an Independent body in 1644. It is nevertheless surprising that the Congregation supinely tolerated the magistrates appointing a preacher eighteen years later, thereby subverting the spiritual independence of the Church.

2. John Hoog (circa 1610s-April 1692) – Minister of Rotterdam 31st December 1662-19th July 1689

The Consistory records provide no information about the actions of the Consistory during the vacancy. The thirteen weekly entries during the

published work in which he argued that the sins of Christians should be punished by the State rather than the Church.

³⁵ The status of the Church is given in greater detail in R. Dickie, *SRSJH*, Vol. 3 (2013), pp. 84-85.

³⁶ *Classis* is the Dutch word for *Presbytery*. Of Latin derivation, it appears in the Westminster Assembly Documents – *The Form of Presbyterian Church Government and of Ordination of Ministers* which was approved by the General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland (1645): the section dealing with Presbyteries is entitled *Of Classical Assemblies*, printed in *Westminster Confession of Faith* (repr. Glasgow: Free Presbyterian Publications, 1994), pp. 406-409. The Rotterdam Reformed Churches belonged to the regional *Classis* of Schieland.

³⁷ GAR/Classis Schieland/5 (14th October 1642).

³⁸ W. Steven, *ibid.*, pp. 272-80.

³⁹ GAR/Classis Schieland/5 (20th June 1644).

⁴⁰ D. Catterall, *Community without borders: Scots migrants and the changing face of power in the Dutch Republic, c. 1600-1700* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), p. 246.

pastoral vacancy deal solely with financial transactions to the exclusion of noting any steps taken to fill the vacancy. However, absence of records does not indicate absence of action, not least as the Dutch authorities required a congregation to present the names of two or three candidates for their inspection.⁴¹ During this period, the Consistory nominated and called John Hoog, he accepted the call, and this was endorsed by the Rotterdam civic authorities and the States General in The Hague.

John Hoog hailed from a long line of ministers extending over four generations. His paternal great-grandfather, Archibald Hogg of Blairydrine⁴² was minister of Durris in Aberdeenshire (1574-before 20th March 1595).⁴³ A son of Archibald Hogg, Patrick Hog (i.e., John Hoog's paternal grandfather), was minister of Fetlar and North Yell, Shetland (before 15th August 1603-1615),⁴⁴ and subsequently of Delting, in the north of Mainland, Shetland (1615-1622x1624).⁴⁵ John Hoog's father (son of Patrick Hog) was Thomas Hog (*circa* 1580s-1639), minister of the Second Charge in South Leith (1616-1618) and subsequently of Stobo, Peeblesshire (1619-1639).⁴⁶

Information about John Hoog's early days is derived from Scott's *Fasti*.⁴⁷ The place and year of his birth is unknown. He graduated M.A. from the University of Edinburgh on 16th July 1634, which makes it likely that he was born in the 1610s. The Presbytery of Dalkeith licensed him to preach on 13th October 1636 and he was ordained to West Linton, Peeblesshire, on 5th February 1640. The Town Council of Edinburgh nominated him on 25th February 1646 and he was translated to the Second Charge of Canongate (Edinburgh) on 19th May that year. Over six years later he was called by a committee of Session and Heritors on 11th January 1653, translated and admitted (at Restalrig) to the charge of South Leith on 28th July. He preached in the town's Tolbooth on 22nd June 1654, which was the first day of preaching in Leith since 3rd September 1650. Hoog was deprived [deposed] by the Acts of

⁴¹ The authorities took no part in choosing a minister but could take exception to a nominee.

⁴² In Kincardineshire, near Crathes.

⁴³ *FES*, Vol. VI, p. 52.

⁴⁴ *FES*, Vol. VII, p. 295.

⁴⁵ *FES*, Vol. VII, p. 306.

⁴⁶ *FES*, Vol. I, p. 290.

⁴⁷ *FES*, Vol. I, p. 162. It is also of interest that James Hog (of the "Marrow" controversy) was a grandson of Thomas Hogg and therefore a nephew of John Hoog.

Parliament and Privy Council in 1662 and his name features in Robert Wodrow's *Roll of Ministers who were Nonconformists to Prelacy, and were banished, turned out from their Parishes, or confined*.⁴⁸ He left Scotland on 4th June 1663.⁴⁹

Induction of John Hoog

The silence of the Consistory record about calling a minister is broken with a terse entry on the last day of December 1662, some three and a half months after the death of Alexander Petrie: "Mr Johne Hoog was Resauett [received] and admitett to be prychar of the of the gospall In the Scots kirk of Rotardam be [by] Mr Jacobus burchie⁵⁰ with foull Consent of the bourgermastars⁵¹ and Lords of Rotardam and the Sessione of the Scots Kirk of Rotardam."⁵² This took place relatively shortly after the Scottish Privy Council deposed Hoog for nonconformity. In this cursory account of the induction of John Hoog there is no reference to the Presbytery of Edinburgh or even to the other Scots congregations in the Netherlands. Rotterdam's Dutch Reformed Church and the civic authorities jointly decided in 1642 (with concurrence of the Church of Scotland) that the planned Scots Church would become an official part of the Dutch Reformed Church.⁵³

It is clear that Hoog remained a thorn in the flesh of the Scottish authorities, even though he was resident overseas. Twenty years after his removal to Rotterdam he was forfeited by the Court of Justiciary on

⁴⁸ R. Wodrow, *The History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland from the Restauration to the Revolution: Collected from the Publick Records, Original Papers, and Manuscripts of that Time, and other well attested Narratives* (Edinburgh: James Watson, 1721), Vol. 1, Appendix, p. 72.

⁴⁹ *FES*, Vol. I, p. 162.

⁵⁰ Jacobus Borstius (1612-1680) was a minister in Rotterdam from 1654 to 1680. He belonged to the minority Calvinistic grouping in the Dutch Reformed Church and was a staunch friend of the Scots Church in Rotterdam, frequently aiding it during difficulties. A biographical notice of Borstius by H. Florijn appears in D. Nauta, A. de Groot, J. van den Berg, *et al.*, *Biografisch lexicon voor de gescheidenis van het Nederlands protestantisme, Deel 3* (Kampen: Uitgeversmaatschappij J. H. Kok, 1988), pp. 49-50.

⁵¹ Bourgermestar is one of the anglicized versions of the Dutch word *burgemeester*, the approximate equivalent of a Scottish provost or English mayor.

⁵² GAR/SCR/1, p. 80 (31st December 1662). It should be noted that the pages of the Consistory record are out of order. Minutes of meetings in 1662 skip from page 77 to page 80, and pages 78 and 79 refer to 1663: this is presumably due to scribal error.

⁵³ GAR/NHG/1 (4th December 1641) [NHG is the GAR's abbreviation for Archieven Hevormde gemeente Rotterdam]; K. L. Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism: A History of English and Scottish Churches of the Netherlands in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 1982), pp. 167-78.

2nd April 1683 for the “crime” of holding intercourse with several intercommuned ministers who had escaped to Holland. In consequence he had his goods escheat the following year, on 25th February 1684.⁵⁴ This implies that Hoog continued to have property in Scotland as the legal term “escheat” refers to the lifelong forfeiture of heritable or movable property after conviction.

Resignation of John Hoog

Hoog was born in the 1610s and hence was around 60 years old when a second Minister was inducted to the expanding Rotterdam Church in January 1676. The relief this afforded was shortlived, as Charles II insistently petitioned the Dutch authorities to have the new Minister, Robert McWard, expelled from Rotterdam, which eventually occurred in February 1677, only thirteen months after his induction. With the full burden of pastoral duties laid on him once more, Hoog intimated his physical weakness for resuming the undivided work as the sole minister of the congregation: “the frequent exercises [public services] though short would be great, & finding his bodily strength much decayed, yet he was resolved through their earnest intreaty, relying upon the strength of his Master who seemes to call for this duty now at his hand, to continue for a space in keeping up these severall dyets of preaching & lecturing, so long as the Lord should in mercy enable him so to do. for which the Session gave him hearty thanks.”⁵⁵

Twelve years later, in 1689, “Mr Hogg did make known unto the Sesion his resolution of becoming Emeritus⁵⁶ and therfor did desire their asistance as to what belonged to them theranent”.⁵⁷ By this time Hoog was probably aged well over seventy years. The Session appointed three of their number to meet with Hoog. They reported that “he does persist in his resolution” and he reiterated this in person when he appeared before the Session in April 1689: “Mr Hog being calld in did declare his weakness unto the Session & again desired their concurrence as to his becoming emeritus.”⁵⁸ This was granted and Hoog began

⁵⁴ *FES*, Vol. I, p. 162.

⁵⁵ GAR/SCR/2, p. 21 (25th February 1677).

⁵⁶ Retired, but allowed to retain the title of Minister. In Rotterdam, the civic authorities continued to pay a stipend for *emeritus* Ministers – this was in essence a pension.

⁵⁷ GAR/SCR/2 (17th March 1689).

⁵⁸ GAR/SCR/2 (1st April 1689).

the process of being formally recognised as Emeritus. This involved the approval of the Rotterdam magistrates and the States General in The Hague.

By 1st July that year the magistrates had granted approval and it was anticipated that the States General would shortly concur.⁵⁹ Although not explicitly stated in the minutes, it would appear that this date marked the formal conclusion of Hoog's settled ministry in Rotterdam as Robert Fleming and two elders were "appointed to assist in petitioning the Magistrates for a Minister to supply the place of Mr John Hog".⁶⁰ It seems this was granted as the Session meeting on 4th August proceeded to nominate three ministers whose names would be forwarded to the Rotterdam authorities.

As the scope of this paper is to cover the period from 1660 to 1690 it may be noted that several attempts were made during 1689 and 1690 to fill the vacancy caused by Hoog's resignation. Several ministers were nominated during this period – William Carstares,⁶¹ David Blair (on two occasions)^{62,63} and John Forest.⁶⁴ By 1690 few of the Covenanting exiles, if any, were left other than a few individuals who settled in the Dutch Republic. The congregation now once more consisted largely of economic migrants, supplemented by seafarers. The vacancy was filled by James Brown in August 1691 and Hoog died in Rotterdam in April 1692.

In relation to the vacancy caused by Hoog's resignation, it may be of interest to note the difficulties engendered by the arrangements for finding a successor. The nomination of candidates and the call to

⁵⁹ "Mr Hog declared his desire and resolution for his desisting from the publick exercise of the ministerie in this place in regard of his great age, as he hath petitioned the Magistrates of this city for his being Emeritus and hes obtaind the same allsoo its likely to be obtaind from the states generall at the Hague. Therfor he desires the consistorie may endeavour to have the vacancie supplied and he promises to continue his assistance in the publick work till there be a supplie, if his abilitie will permitt." GAR/SCR/2 (1st July 1689).

⁶⁰ GAR/SCR/2 (1st July 1689).

⁶¹ GAR/SCR/2 (17th August 1689). The name is variably spelled Carstares or Carstairs. Whereas the Consistory record uses the latter spelling, most references in historical literature use the former spelling. For consistency with other historical works, I have used the form "Carstares" in the narrative, though the juxtaposition of the alternative spelling in quotations may appear clumsy.

⁶² Blair had been minister of St. Andrews and was in exile in The Hague and Leiden.

⁶³ GAR/SCR/2 (21st December 1689).

⁶⁴ GAR/SCR/2 (11th September 1690).

a minister was the responsibility of the Session alone: the congregation was not involved. Previous vacancies had been filled promptly – just over three months elapsed from the death of Alexander Petrie to the induction of John Hoog, and even the difficult vacancy arising from the banishment of the collegiate minister Robert McWard was eventually filled by Robert Fleming within eleven months. Following Hoog demitting office on 1st July 1689, it is clear that the congregation was growing restive at the prolonged vacancy. Nine months later the Consistory took steps to address the congregation's concerns: "Seeing that some of the congregation had unjustly blamed the consistory in neglecting the seeking after a minister They thought it fitt that the Moderator John Chrystie elder, and Thomas Augustine deacon should speak with some of the old members of the Consistory, and to acquaint them how far they had proceeded, and how much they were disappointed as to a minister, and to desire their councell and information anent one."⁶⁵ Six months later, in September 1690, by which stage the vacancy had lasted fourteen months, some members of the congregation had taken matters further and complained to the magistrates. The Session had to give an account to the magistrates, who urged prompt action, bearing in mind that a call would be sent by ship to Scotland; the approach of autumn weather would reduce the opportunities for action.⁶⁶ In the event, the vacancy lasted until the induction of James Brown on 2nd September 1692, some twenty-six months after Hoog's resignation.

3. Robert McWard (1625x1627-December 1681) – Minister of Rotterdam 23rd January 1676-25th February 1677

John Hoog had been inducted to the Rotterdam charge on the last day of 1662. By the mid-1670s Rotterdam was a flourishing port attracting

⁶⁵ GAR/SCR/2 (8th March 1690).

⁶⁶ "It was represented to the session that some of the members of the congregation had unjustly informed the Magistrates that the consistorie had without grounds delayed the choiseing of a Minister Whereupon the Magistrates sent for the Consistorie. And they did depute John Chrystie & James Norrie to accompany Mr ffleemin thither to deliver our reasons for the delay which was drawn up in write and is marked a copie of it in the end of the Minute book The which was done on fryday the 8 instant; Wpon which the Magistrates advised us to make our election before the ships for Scotland should depart. Yett declaring they were to impose nothing as to time or manner." GAR/SCR/2 (11th September 1690).

economic migrants, particularly from seafaring countries bordering on the North Sea.⁶⁷ In addition to those seeking work, Rotterdam continued to afford asylum to many who, by voluntary or constrained exile, avoided the tyrannical and persecuting government of the Stuart regime in Scotland. It is not coincidental that the quality of the Consistory records improved at this time. The Consistory reflected adversely on the informal nature of the records and assigned one of the elders to revise the book: for this purpose they chose Andrew Russell.⁶⁸ This resulted in considerably more detailed and meticulous records, invaluable for historical research.

With the increasing size of the congregation the Consistory took two significant actions at the beginning of 1675. Firstly it was clear that the existing church premises in Lombardstraat were inadequate for the numbers attending services. Accordingly in January it was decided that the Consistory should approach the civic authorities with suggestions for extending the church or seeking alternative premises. Two elders were ordered to “cause draw up a supplication to be given in to the Lords of the Town, in order to the enlarging of the Church, or for giving a larger church in some other place of the Towne, And to consult Burgo master Daen thereannent.”⁶⁹ Permission was granted for addition of a gallery in the church in due course.

The second significant step taken by the Consistory in 1675 occurred in February when the Consistory decided to petition the Dutch authorities for permission to appoint a second Minister to the congregation: “Report being made by the respective Elders and Deacons of their monthly visitation through their respective quarters and precincts, It is found that the condition of the Congregation is such, that one Minister cannot be able sufficiently to discharge the whole duty in publick and private, that their condition calls for. And therefore they unanimously, and with one consent have voted to supplicat the Lords of

⁶⁷ D. Catterall, *Community without borders: Scots migrants and the changing face of power in the Dutch Republic, c. 1600-1700* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), pp. 26-7, 32, 133.

⁶⁸ “Upon complaint of the informality of the former Session book, it is ordered to be given out to Andrew Russell to revise it.” GAR/SCR/2, p. 1 (31st January 1675). Gardner designates Russell as a “possible exile” who was present in Rotterdam from 1667 to 1697. He married a “definite exile”, Janet Livingstone. Russell had considerable business interests in Rotterdam and was in essence an unofficial “banker” for the Scots in Rotterdam. His extensive collection of business papers and correspondence is located in the National Archive of Scotland in Edinburgh (“Andrew Russell papers”) and is a major primary source of information for historians.

⁶⁹ GAR/SCR/2, p. 1 (31st January 1675).

the Town, that they would be pleased to grant the Session liberty for choosing another Minister to whom they would also be pleased to allow some competent maintenance, and in order hereunto, they have given order to the Minister Mr John Hog, Robert Allane⁷⁰ and Andrew Russell two of the Elders to mannage the same, and to speak to men heere Burgo Master Dahen⁷¹ for his concurrence therein.”⁷²

The Consistory obviously expected a speedy decision as their disappointment at lack of progress is recorded one month later: “The said day, the Minister and Elders appointed to get the answeare of the Lords of the Towne to the Session’s supplication concerning a second Minister, reported that the same was not yet obtained.”⁷³ Accordingly it was concluded that they should meet formally, making this a matter of prayer: “It was appointed by all the members present, that the whole members of the Session should meet in the Ministers Chamber for prayer, that the Lord would bless, and give success to them in prosecution of so necessary a work, to get liberty to call another Minister, and to move the Burgo Masters to grant the same, and that the granting thereof may be a mercy both to the Congregation, and to others occasionally resorting thereto.”⁷⁴ It should be noted that permission to add to the number of ministers in the Dutch Republic did not solely rest with the local magistrates: the permission of the States General in The Hague was also required.

The Consistory met frequently, as was their custom, usually several times a month. After the meeting on 14th March 1675 the minutes of the following thirty-one meetings are silent on the progress of the request until the end of that year when the Session was specially convened on Monday 30th December, for the sole purpose of receiving the welcome news that final approval for the appointment of a second Minister was granted: “The said day the Session conveened upon an extraordinary day, upon information given to them, that their

⁷⁰ Robert Allane was the second husband of Isobel Petrie, one of three daughters of Alexander Petrie (the first minister of the Rotterdam congregation): Isobel Petrie’s first husband was William Wallace, an expatriate Scottish merchant who died about 1667.

⁷¹ “Men heere Burgo master” is an anglicised spelling of the Dutch title “*Mijnheer Burgemeester*”, literally “(Mr) Mayor”. Dahen may have exercised the function without holding the office of a Burgemeester as there is a gap in the list of Burgemeesters in Rotterdam (http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lijst_van_burgemeesters_van_Rotterdam).

⁷² GAR/SCR/2, p. 1 (14th February 1675).

⁷³ GAR/SCR/2, p. 2 (14th March 1675).

⁷⁴ GAR/SCR/2, p. 2 (14th March 1675).

supplication presented to the Estates of Holland to grant them liberty to choose a second Minister, was granted. And appointed Robert Allane and Andrew Russell Elders to goe to the Hague for receiveing the same.”⁷⁵ The contents of the document from the States General is not recorded. It is clear that the Consistory records from March to December had simply failed to record their participation in the drawn-out process of negotiating with local and national authorities for permission to appoint a collegiate minister.

This was a cause for thanksgiving and it was “ordered, that upon thursday next in the forenoon, the whole members of the Session should meet together in the Ministers house for prayer to seek the Lords further direction and assistance in this business of so great a concernment, and to give thanks to the Lord for bringing about the same to such a good issue, beyond their expectations”.⁷⁶ This duly took place on Thursday 2nd January when “some few of the Session meeting the said day for prayer and thanksgiving for the good success they had gott in their call. They appoint the Minister, Robert Allane & Andrew Russell to manage what further is to be done with the Lords of the Town”.⁷⁷

Six days later the Minister and Elders took the first steps: “The Minister & Elders goe about to the Burgomaster & Heere Vardevlot, supplicating liberty to bring in their nomination of a Minister before them, who ordered the saids Minister & elders to bring up the nomination of three unto them. The Minister and Elders desired that they might have the priviledge, their Lordships had lately granted in bringing up but one unto them. They answered, this our priviledge in having three to nominat was greater then in nominating only one, seeing they said they were not to elect the person to be Minister, but only to approve of the nomination, & to returne the same back to the Session to elect.”⁷⁸ It must have been a relief to the Consistory to know that the authorities would not interfere in their choice of a Minister.

At this time in the history of the Church of Scotland, nominations and election of a Minister were the responsibility of the Session alone, without the involvement of the congregation. The Session therefore proceeded without further delay to the next stage of the process. “All the

⁷⁵ GAR/SCR/2, p. 5 (30th December 1675).

⁷⁶ GAR SCR/2, p. 5 (30th December 1675).

⁷⁷ GAR/SCR/2, pp. 5-6 (2nd January 1676)

⁷⁸ GAR/SCR/2, p. 6 (8th January 1676).

members of the Session are appointed to meet in Mr Hogs house in the afternoon, for making the nomination, to be given up to the Lords. They meet, and after prayer, they unanimously nominat Mr John Carstairs, Mr Robert McWard & Mr John Brown, to be given up to the Lords with all diligence and appoints John Fleeming, Andrew Russell, David Edmondstone & James Thomson to present the said nomination unto the Lords. And the Minister, Robert Allane, Robert Caldham & John Fall to acquaint Mr McWard & Mr Brown therewith.”⁷⁹ Matters proceeded apace as three days later, on 11th January, the Saturday of the Communion season, “The Lords of the Wett approve the nomination, and exhort us to elect a Godly, and able man”.⁸⁰

Two days later, the Session met following the service on the thanksgiving day of the Communion season.⁸¹ They set about their task methodically, taking three separate votes on the procedure to be followed. The first vote concerned the nominees. John Carstares was not in the United Provinces, whereas the other two nominees (Robert McWard and John Brown) were exiles resident in Rotterdam. By a majority it was decided that they should vote on the two local nominees and desist from considering John Carstares, a Covenanting stalwart who was yet in Scotland.⁸² The Session’s second decision was the procedure for choosing between the two nominees – either by voting or casting lots: “It was proposed, whether upon some considerations, it were better to vote, or to cast Lots, And it was carried not to cast Lots, but to vote.”⁸³ It is interesting to note that casting lots was an acceptable way of choosing a Minister. The third and last decision concerned the voting process: they decided that a form of secret ballot would enable each member to make a personal decision without being influenced by the votes of the other members. The ballot paper consisted of a single blank sheet on which each member would write his choice, fold the paper to conceal the

⁷⁹ GAR/SCR/2, p. 6 (8th January 1676).

⁸⁰ GAR/SCR/2, p. 6 (11th January 1676).

⁸¹ “The whole Session being convened upon Monday after the thanksgiving sermon for the Lords Supper celebrated the day before.” GAR/SCR/2, p. 6 (13th January 1676).

⁸² GAR/SCR/2, p. 6 (13th January 1676). “After prayer, it was motioned, whether the Election should run upon Mr John Carstaires, who was in Scotland, or upon the other two worthy men that are now here in Town, and by plurality of votes it was carried, that upon the consideration of the inconvenience of worthy Mr Carstaires his absence, that the vote should only run upon the two worthy men uiz Mr Robert Mcward & Mr John Brown, who are in Town.”

⁸³ GAR/SCR/2, p. 6 (13th January 1676).

handwriting, and pass it to each successive person who would follow the same procedure.⁸⁴

Hoog examined the completed ballot paper in the privacy of his study and returned to give the decision. However, the Consistory then decided that the signed paper should be displayed openly in the interest of transparency.⁸⁵ There was a clear majority in favour of Robert McWard: “It was found that Mr Mcward had six votes, & that Mr Brown had only three.”⁸⁶ It was then appointed that the minister and two elders should “communicat to Mr Mcward the vote of the Session, in electing him to be their Minister, which being done, the Session after prayer was dismissed”.⁸⁷ They lost no time in meeting with McWard that same day: “The persons appointed to speak to Mr Mcward concerning their vote of electing him their Minister, did in the afternoone the said day signify the same to him, who took it to advisement, it being a business of such weight & importance.”⁸⁸ McWard’s wish for time to prayerfully consider the call did not prevent a delegation hastening to seek the Council’s approval of their choice four days later, on 17th January.⁸⁹

⁸⁴ GAR/SCR/2, p. 6 (13th January 1676). “It was motioned, whether to vote verbally, & by mouth, or that every man should write his vote, were most expedient, seing that voting in write would have this advantage, that none would by byassed to give their vote, from any respect they might carry to the judgment of others. So it was carried to give their votes in write, by taking an half sheet of paper, on the upper end whereof (all being withdrawn) Mr Hog wrote his vote, & so wrapping up the paper to cover the name, did seale the same at both ends, conforme to which, it went round about to all the members of the Session, only Robert Caldham, who could not write, did desire Mr Hog to write down the persons name which secretly he spoke of to him. Thereafter it was motioned, who should open the paper, that he might give a faithfull report who the person was that carried the vote, with whose report the Session should rest satisfied, that the votes of particular members of the Session should be kept secret, out of respect to both the worthy men that were in the Leet.” A “leet” was (and still is) the Scots word for a list of candidates. *Dictionary of the Scots Language* (www.dsl.ac.uk).

⁸⁵ GAR/SCR/2, p. 6 (13th January 1676). “It was voted, that Mr Hog should open the paper, who thereupon retiring to his study, and returning againe, gave his report, that Mr Robert Mcward carried it, after which it was thought hard by some, that the votes should be kept hid & secret, alledging that there was non there, that needed to think shame of his vote. whereupon, for removing jealousies, it was agreed, that the paper containing the particular votes should be shewed, to all.”

⁸⁶ GAR/SCR/2, p. 6 (13th January 1676).

⁸⁷ GAR/SCR/2, p. 6 (13th January 1676).

⁸⁸ GAR/SCR/2, p. 6 (13th January 1676). “Advisement” means “deliberation” (www.dsl.ac.uk).

⁸⁹ GAR/SCR/2, p. 6 (17th January 1676). “Mr John Hog Minister, John Fleeming, Robert Allane & Andrew Russell being appointed to get the approbation of the Lords of the wett to the Election made of Mr Robert Mcward for their Minister, the saids Lords did approve of the Election.”

The day following the visit to the Council a delegation consisting of John Hoog and three elders “appointed by the Session to receive Mr Mcwards answere, did goe together to his chamber, who did signify to them his willingness to serve here in the Gospell”.⁹⁰ This good news was tempered by McWard’s insistence “that he judged himself to be bound & tied to his flock in Glasgow. and that he would upon no other termes accept of the Sessions call. so that when soever the Lord should be pleased to send a good day in Scotland, for calling back the Captivity thereof again, he might then have his liberty to returne to his people in Glasgow, & that he was only in the interim obleiged to stay in this place. To which they all answered, that they never intended his accepting of the Sessions call and Election of him to be upon any other termes.”⁹¹

The whole Session convened that same Saturday to receive the news and settled the arrangements for McWard’s induction. By intimation from the pulpit the following day, the Congregation would learn formally of McWard’s acceptance of the call. Furthermore the customary opportunity would be given to any objecting to the new Minister to meet the Session the following Wednesday, the eve of the induction.⁹² On Wednesday the Session received no objections against McWard, and made final arrangements for the following day: “The whole Session Conveenes. three publick intimations were made by George Levingstone Coster [beadle],⁹³ if there were any that had any thing to object against the admission of Mr Robert Mcward to be their Minister; that they would now come and signify the same to the Session now convened for that effect, who were to receive and heare what just exceptions they might have against him. But no person compearing, the Session gave order to buy a green cloth for covering of a table to be set before the pulpit, whereat the said Mr Mcward with the members of the Consistory may sit, to morrow in time of sermon, as use is in such cases.”⁹⁴

⁹⁰ GAR/SCR/2, p. 7 (18th January 1676).

⁹¹ GAR/SCR/2, p. 7 (18th January 1676).

⁹² GAR/SCR/2, p. 7 (18th January 1676). “The Session Conveenes being Saturday, [. . .]. Mr Mcwards answere was reported, which was approved of by all, whereupon they appoint intimation to be made to morrow from pulpit to the Congregation in the forenoon after sermon, that the receiveing of Mr Robert Mcward to be their Minister, should be upon thursday next the 23th currant, and that if any had ought to object against his receiving & admission, should upon weddensday next at two a clock in the afternoone come unto the Session to signify the same.”

⁹³ See R. Dickie, *SRSJ*, Vol. 3 (2013), p. 107, fn. 177, for further information on the use of Dutch words in Consistory records.

⁹⁴ GAR/SCR/2, p. 7 (22nd January 1676).

Tantalisingly there are no further details regarding the induction of Mr McWard. The following three pages of the Consistory record book are blank and the next entry is on 29th July, some six months later. Presumably the contemporaneous notes were mislaid or otherwise unavailable to the scribe, and the pages were left blank for later transcription.

McWard was born in Glenluce, Kirkcudbrightshire, sometime between 1625 and 1627. In 1643 he was enrolled as a student of divinity under Samuel Rutherford at St. Andrews and shortly afterwards accompanied Rutherford to the Westminster Assembly of Divines in the capacity of a private secretary. In 1650 he was appointed to the Chair of Humanity⁹⁵ at St. Andrews and was appointed regent in the University of Glasgow in 1653, having been licensed to preach the gospel shortly before that. In 1656 he succeeded the saintly Andrew Gray as minister of the Outer High Church located in the nave of Glasgow Cathedral, with ordination taking place on 4th September 1656.

In early 1661 McWard preached a series of sermons on weekdays in the Tron Church, Glasgow, on Amos 3:2 (“You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities”). In February he closed one sermon with the words: “For my part, as a poor member of the Church of Scotland, and an unworthy minister in it, I do this day call you who are the people of God to witness, that I humbly dissent from all acts which are or shall be passed against the Covenants and the work of Reformation in Scotland: and I protest that I am desirous to be free of the guilt thereof, and pray that God may put it upon record in heaven.” For this he was indicted before Parliament on 5th and 12th July 1661 for sedition and treasonable preaching and was condemned to be banished. McWard was thus an early Covenanting exile in the Dutch Republic, arriving there in 1661.⁹⁶

Banishment of Robert McWard from Rotterdam

The despotic House of Stuart could not endure godly, faithful preachers. Even in exile overseas, the Covenanters were subjected to persecution. Charles continued to try to capture or banish members of the exile

⁹⁵ Humanity was the study of Classical antiquity and its associated languages, Greek and Latin.

⁹⁶ *FES, Vol. III*, p. 465 (where he is listed as “Robert M’Cuaird [M’Vaird]”); J. Howie, *The Scots Worthies* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, 1870), pp. 476-7; W. Steven, *ibid.*, p. 336.

community in the Dutch Republic. He accused three exiled ministers of trying to stir up sedition and treason against him and writing defamatory documents. In July 1670, the English diplomat, Sir William Temple,⁹⁷ presented to the Dutch authorities Charles' demand for the banishment of three ministers – Robert Traill,⁹⁸ Robert McWard, and John Nevay.⁹⁹ No action was taken by the authorities but two months later Temple raised the matter again, with the result that the three men were ordered to leave Rotterdam within fifteen days. However, the edict was not enforced and the Ministers remained in the city.¹⁰⁰ Charles did not give up his attempts to silence the Covenanting ministers in the Dutch

⁹⁷ William Temple (1628-1699) was the son of Sir John Temple of Dublin, Master of the Rolls in Ireland. He was born in London and educated at Cambridge. Temple travelled extensively in Europe on English diplomatic missions and was made the 1st Baron Sheen in 1666. Among various diplomatic successes Temple negotiated the marriage of Prince William III of Orange to Princess Mary of England (the future Queen Mary II) in 1677. He took no part in the Glorious Revolution of 1688, but acquiesced to the new regime. Temple was subsequently offered, but refused, a role as Secretary of State to the government of William and Mary. J. W. Cousin, *A Short Biographical Dictionary of English Literature* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1910), p. 375.

⁹⁸ Robert Traill (or Trail) (1603-1678) graduated from St. Andrews in 1621. He studied at the Protestant College of Saumur in France, and became English tutor to the sister of the Duc de Rohan. After returning to Scotland he became chaplain to the Duke of Argyll. He was ordained at Elie, Fife, in 1639. He was translated to Old Greyfriars Church, Edinburgh, in 1649. Notably he attended the Marquess of Montrose on the scaffold in 1650 and preached at the coronation of Charles II at Scone in 1651 and in 1654 he was appointed by Cromwell to certify the ability and piety of such as were fit to be admitted to the ministry in Lothian and the Borders. He was imprisoned in Edinburgh Castle for ten months in 1660 and was temporarily allowed home due to sickness. In 1662 he was charged with high treason before the Privy Council and was given notice to leave Scotland within a month, on pain of death. Due to bad weather, he was unable to find any ships sailing across the North Sea and the Privy Council granted him a further month's grace. He spent his years in exile in Rotterdam and Utrecht and returned to Edinburgh in 1670. *FES*, Vol. I, pp. 38-39; G. Gardner, *The Scottish Exile Community in the Netherlands*, p. 215.

⁹⁹ "John Neave or Nevay, nephew of Andrew Cant, minister of Aberdeen; M.A. (King's College, Aberdeen, 1626); was tutor to George, Master of Ramsay; licensed by Presbytery of Dalkeith 14th October 1630 on the recommendation of that of Alford, but left its bounds a fortnight after; admitted [Loudoun] about 1637; appointed in 1647 a member of committee to revise the Psalter. He was present at Mauchline Moor in opposition to the royal army June 1648, but was pardoned by Parliament 16th January 1649; was appointed a commissioner by Parliament for visiting the University of Aberdeen 31st July 1649; was active in raising the western army in 1650, and in 1651 a prominent supporter of the Protesters. In 1654 he was named by the Council of England on a committee for authorising admissions to the ministry in the province of Glasgow and Ayr. On 23rd December 1662 he was banished by the Privy Council from His Majesty's dominions and went to Holland, where he died in 1672, aged about 66. He was a man of great zeal though somewhat violent and did not object to the execution of the Macdonald prisoners taken at Dunaverty." *FES*, Vol. III, pp. 119-120.

¹⁰⁰ G. Gardner, *ibid.*, p. 108.

Republic and in 1676 Temple presented further demands on behalf of Charles against two ministers (McWard and John Brown¹⁰¹) and James Wallace of Auchens,¹⁰² who went under the alias “Forbes”. Charles insisted that the three men had been convicted of *lèse majesté* in Scotland and as rebels should be banished under the provisions of the Treaty of Breda. The Dutch authorities ignored the first two letters from Charles and then informed Temple that the three were religious and not political exiles. Reluctantly, and after much procrastination, the Dutch complied for fear of estrangement between Charles and the United Provinces.¹⁰³

All members of the Session convened on the morning of 1st February 1677 and Mr McWard presented them with solemn news that he was obliged to go into exile: “It was there signified to them by Mr Robert Mcward Minister, that there was come an order from the Stats Generall, that he, Mr John Brown, & Mr Wallace behoved to remove from this place, and out of the seven Provinces belonging to the saids States with all possible diligence, which ordinance so resolved was imposed upon them doubtless from the Court of England.”

It is instructive to consider the reaction of Session to this blow and to note that they did not rail at the malicious actions of the authorities in

¹⁰¹ “John Brown, probably born and educated at Kirkcudbright; M.A. (Edinburgh, 24th July 1630). Though noticed as a minister by Samuel Rutherford in his correspondence as early as 1637, he was probably not settled here [Wamphray] earlier than 1655. He was deprived by Act of Parliament 11th June, and Decreet of Privy Council 1st October 1662. On 6th November thereafter, he was accused of reproaching some of his brethren, calling them ‘perjured knaves and villains’, for attending the Diocesan Synod at Glasgow, and was sentenced to be kept a ‘close prisoner in the Tolbooth of Edinburgh’. After being there five weeks, to the impairing of his health and danger of his life, he petitioned for a release. This was granted on condition of ‘obliging himself to remove and depart off the king’s dominions, and not to return without licence from his majesty and council, under pain of death’. He went to Rotterdam in March 1663, and ministered in the Scots Church there. Shortly before his death [in 1669] he took part in the ordination of Richard Cameron.” *FES, Vol. II*, p. 224. The Consistory record indicates that Brown was regularly employed in preaching to the congregation: “every Lords day [he] was an helper in the work of the Lord”. GAR/SCR/2, p. 18 (1st February 1677).

¹⁰² Colonel James Wallace of Auchens, Ayrshire. He was leader of the Covenanting forces at the Pentland Rising (15th-28th November 1666). At the Battle of Rullion Green (28th November) the Covenanters were soundly beaten by government forces led by General Tam Dalyell of the Binns. Wallace went into exile in Rotterdam where he ably assisted the Minister in catechising. He became a diligent and highly respected elder of the Congregation in 1676. An account of his life is given in T. McCrie, *Memoirs of Mr. William Veitch, and George Brysson, written by themselves: with other narratives illustrative of the history of Scotland, from the Reformation to the Revolution* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1825), pp. 355-387. An abbreviated biography is found in *Dictionary of National Biography* (Editor: S. Lee) (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1899), Vol. 59, pp. 98-99.

¹⁰³ G. Gardner, *ibid.*, pp. 108-110.

Scotland or at the capitulation of the Dutch States General. This is in contrast to the caricature of Covenanters as wild fanatics and rebels against the Scottish government. The Session lamented the news and concluded that this was a sign of God's displeasure with them for their sins and their unfruitfulness: "the Session being very much grieved, thereby to be deprived of their faithfull, painfull [painstaking] & pious preacher, & of such another also, who every Lords day was an helper in the work of the Lord, & likewise of the most painfull & usefull Elder they had amongst them. which sad & dreadfull stroake they could not look upon, but as a signall & eminent token of the Lords high displeasure against this Congregation, for the manifold sins and grievous provocations thereof, but specially for their unfruitfulness & barrenness under the many waterings & powerfull means of grace, not only of them, but of many other faithfull, able, and painfull Ministers of the Gospell formerly removed by death, whose labours in the Gospell had been very successful elsewhere, so that by this heavy stroake, added to all the former, they could not but foresee in all probability, that the Lord hereby intended to forsake this place, & to extinguish utterly the light of the Gospell therein."¹⁰⁴

This led the Session to supplicate God for mercy: "Which taking to their Consideration, they judged it their duty to be deeply humbled before the Lord, in deprecating the fierceness of his wrath & earnestly to plead with him for mercy & pardon, & not utterly to leave & forsake some small remnant in the place, & to continue with the congregation their other faithfull & painfull Minister, till the Lord in his mercy & good providence should reduce & bring back these others now unjustly banished from them."¹⁰⁵

The Session made a formal statement in their records regarding the status of Mr McWard: "The which Mr Mcward they do still own and avouch to be their Minister, & the said Mr Wallace their Elder notwithstanding of any Act or Ordinance now past out against them as aforesaid, procured by the means of wicked & malicious instruments & enemies of the truth & power of godliness in the Court of England, so as they are bound before God & holds as a duty incumbent upon them to receive & embrace them with all cordiall affection & brotherly affectation in the work of the Lord, whensoever he in his providence shall be pleased

¹⁰⁴ GAR/SCR/2, p. 18 (1st February 1677).

¹⁰⁵ GAR/SCR/2, p. 18 (1st February 1677).

to take off this restraint and bring them back to this place again.”¹⁰⁶ This was no mere act of verbal defiance: it was a clear statement of the independence of the Church from the interference of Charles in the affairs of the Church of Scotland, even in a sovereign foreign nation.

The Consistory considered the adverse providence that God had left the large congregation with only one settled Minister. Hoog now had to anew bear the burden which the collegiate status had been designed to mitigate.¹⁰⁷ They proceeded to give a commission to Mr McWard, as their lawfully called pastor, to supply the needs of the Congregation, specifically limiting the duration of this arrangement until McWard could return to Rotterdam to resume his duties: “They judged it most convenient to have some other faithfull, laborious & Godly Minister of the Church of Scotland to be called to officiat here in the work of the Ministry in the vice & place of the said Mr Mcward, & during his absence therefrom allenary,¹⁰⁸ and under this restraint, And because the said Mr Mcward was best acquaint with such faithfull & pious Gospell Ministers as the necessity of this Congregation doth call for, and withall being most confident of his fervent love to the Congregation, & earnest desire to have it supplied with such a Gospell Ministry, They ordained an Act of the Session to be subscribed by the whole members thereof, empowering him to pitch upon any person he should judge fit, & could find most willing to embrace his said call, whereof the tenour followes.”¹⁰⁹

It is worth noting in full the Act passed by the Consistory (i.e., the remaining minister, the elders and the deacons) which formalised their conclusions, as it emphasises the main points at issue:

The said day, the Minister, Elders & Deacons of the Scots Congregation in Rotterdam, taking to their serious Consideration, that Mr Robert Mcward one of their Ministers, was necessitat to remove from them by an order of the States Generall of the united provinces, whom notwithstanding they cannot but look upon, as

¹⁰⁶ GAR/SCR/2, p. 18 (1st February 1677).

¹⁰⁷ GAR/SCR/2, p. 18 (1st February 1677). “The said day the Session takeing into consideration, that this congregation cannot be well served any considerable space in the dyets of preaching, catechising & other Ministeriall functions such as they have had and these may years bygone, having now only left with them Mr John Hog Minister, although very painfull [assiduous] in the Ministeriall work.”

¹⁰⁸ “Allenary” means “solely, exclusively, only, alone”. *Dictionary of the Scots Language* (www.dsl.ac.uk).

¹⁰⁹ GAR/SCR/2, pp. 18-19 (1st February 1677).

one of their Ministers still. And whereas he cannot at present officiat as a Minister amongst them in regard of the said Ordinance, they do unanimously give full power, order & warrant by this present Act to the said Mr Robert Mcward, to invite & call such Minister or Ministers of the Scots nation to come hither to officiat as one of the ministers in this Congregation, as the said Mr Robert Mcward shall think fitt to nominat, invite, or call for that effect, in his vice & absence from this Congregation in this juncture of affaires. And they by this present Act do oblige themselves & their successors to hold firme & stable whatsoever the said Mr Mcward shall happen to do therein, & to accept and cordially receive whomsoever they shall find willing to come upon the said Call & invitation, & to reside here amongst them to discharge the said office of the Ministry in the absence of the said Mr Mcward in manner aforesaid. In testimony whereof & of their unanimous assent & consent hereunto, they have ordained this present act to be insert & registrat in their session book ad futuram rei memoriam [Latin: to keep the matter in perpetual memory], the extract whereof subscribed with all their hands they ordain to be given to him for his warrant, day year & place foresaids.¹¹⁰

With these desolating events affecting the congregation it can well be imagined that the impending Communion season in February would be a solemn occasion. John Hoog preached on the Lord's day morning, and unexpectedly had to preach at night also: "The Lords supper was celebrat conforme to the former ordinance . . . Mr John Hog having preached. Mr John Brown (who should have preached at night) falling sick, Mr John Hog did preach in his vice [instead of him], & Mr Robert Mcward preached on the morrow the thanksgiving sermon."¹¹¹

McWard preached once more, eleven days later, for the last occasion as Minister of the congregation: "Mr Robert Mcward preached his valedictory sermon in the forenoone, being to remove upon the 27th instant as he did, to the great grief of all truely godly in the place." The minute then records his final act as Minister, namely to present a new Minute book to the Session: "The said day Mr Mcward in presence of the Session delivered to Gilbert Duvie their Clerk this new book of clean paper in folio, to be made use of for the Sessions Register, in time

¹¹⁰ GAR/SCR/2, p. 19 (1st February 1677).

¹¹¹ GAR/SCR/2, p. 21 (14th February 1677).

coming, with severall sheets of paper wherein were written severall Acts of the Session, all which the Session ordained to be insert in this Register, intending to make no more use of the former Session book, for the future, as to the registration of any future Acts therein, in regard that they have found too many things in it unbeseeming, informall, & defective.”¹¹²

The Scots Church was accustomed to three services on the Lord’s Day and the Session anticipated that McWard’s departure might endanger this. They requested John Hoog that he “would be pleased to continue some space of time in keeping up the accustomed sermons & lectures on the Lords day before, afternoone, & at night, albeit he should continue a great deale the shorter space in these severall exercises of preaching & lecturing, than formerly was wount to be, till the Lord in his good providence, & in mercy to this Congregation should provide some Godly Minister of the Gospell to be a helper in the Ministry during this vacancy.” Hoog agreed to this, albeit “withall shewing them that the frequent exercises though short would be great, & finding his bodily strength much decayed, yet he was resolved through their earnest intreaty, relying upon the strength of his Mr who seemes to call for this duty now at his hand, to continue for a space in keeping up these severall dyets of preaching & lecturing, so long as the Lord should in mercy enable him so to do. for which the Session gave him hearty thanks”.¹¹³

Vacancy arising from McWard’s banishment

Robert McWard went into exile in Utrecht. As the crow flies this was a mere thirty miles (48 km) from Rotterdam and the territory was actually one of the Seven United Provinces. However, given the reluctance of the Dutch authorities to banish McWard in the first instance, exile in Utrecht may have been considered sufficient in that it removed him from Rotterdam and from exercising his public ministry.

The Session continued to recognise McWard as the lawfully called Minister of the Congregation despite his removal by the malign interference of Charles II. As such it was his right to nominate a collegiate

¹¹² GAR/SCR/2, p. 21 (15th February 1677). Duvie was a new Session Clerk, recruited by McWard from London. He and his family arrived in Rotterdam just as McWard was banished in February 1677. Duvie’s duties also included those of precentor and schoolmaster for children of the congregation. The quality of Duvie’s Consistory records is exemplary.

¹¹³ GAR/SCR/2, p. 21 (25th February 1677).

Minister to fill his place during his absence, and it should be noted that John Hoog played a duly passive role during the vacancy.

From Utrecht McWard wrote three long and detailed letters to the Session during the vacancy. These letters give invaluable insights into the spiritual-mindedness of McWard as well as highlighting the role he had in filling the vacancy which had arisen under such painful circumstances. For these reasons it is worth dwelling at length on the letters in relation to the vacancy.

Doubtless as a mark of the respect the Session had for their Minister, these were transcribed in full in the Consistory records on 17th June and 9th December 1677 and on 20th January the following year. As befits the first editor and publisher of Samuel Rutherford's correspondence,¹¹⁴ the letters to the Session have a high spiritual tone. They exhibit no bitterness against Charles or the Dutch authorities for his banishment. McWard regarded his tribulations as adverse providences ordained by God, and there are repeated confessions of sin (personal and congregational) along with exhortations to repent and to pray to God for mercy and the restoration of His favour to the Congregation. The letters are discursive and are written in the prolix style common in correspondence of that era.

McWard's first letter to the Session

John Hoog presented McWard's first letter on 17th June 1677.¹¹⁵ This letter was of formidable length – over 6000 words. As transcribed in the clerk's small, neat handwriting, it occupied five pages of the Consistory's large minute book.

Firstly McWard regretted that he had been unable to supply a minister to fill the vacancy in the three months since he was exiled from Rotterdam.¹¹⁶ He detailed his due diligence in the matter, concealing the names of five Ministers he had approached.

¹¹⁴ McWard published these in 1664, three years after his arrival in Rotterdam. *Joshua Redivivus, or Mr. Rutherford's Letters, divided in two parts. The first, containing these which were written from Aberdeen, where he was confined by a sentence of the High Commission. The second, containing some which were written from Anwoth, etc.* (Rotterdam, 1664).

¹¹⁵ GAR/SCR/2, p. 27 (17th June 1677). "The said day, the Minister presented a letter from Mr Mcward directed to the Minister & Members of the Session, which being delivered to the Clerk to be read before them all, was as followes. it being after reading ordered to be insert in the Session book."

¹¹⁶ GAR/SCR/2, p. 27 (17th June 1677). "I expected long before this, to have been in case to have given you an account of the endeavours & diligence hath been used to have the

He had first written to “an eminently gracious young man, who besides his singular piety, & zealous peaceableness, is a person of known prudence and parts for government & discipline, & wrote both most pressing to himself, & to Mr Carstairs (who as he hath weight with him above all others, so your concerns are upon his heart above many of his own) to deale & interpose effectually with him to come over & help us”. Carstares tried to persuade the man to accept, but to no avail, as “it affrighted him into a peremptory aversion, to think he was called to succeed in a place lately supplied by these great men of God Mr Livingston,¹¹⁷ Mr Nevay & Mr Brown”.¹¹⁸ Much later in the letter his identity was revealed as James Kirkton, “one of the most eminently

vacancy in your Congregation supplied with a faithfull Minister, And I expected also to have been in case to have given you a more pleasing & satisfactory account at this time, than now I can do.”

¹¹⁷ John Livingstone was born at Monyabroch (Kilsyth) on 21st June 1603. He graduated M.A. at the University of Glasgow in 1621. Against his father’s wish, he preferred to enter the ministry rather than adopt the life of a country gentleman. He studied theology at St. Andrews, and was licensed in 1625. For a time he assisted the minister of Torphichen, and was afterwards chaplain to the Countess of Wigtown at Cumbernauld. While engaged in the latter capacity he took part in the memorable revival at the Kirk o’ Shotts. He declined presentations to several parishes, chiefly on account of his reluctance to obey the Articles of Perth. In 1630 he went to Ireland, on the invitation of Viscount Clandeboye, and became minister of Killinchy, Co. Down. In 1631 he was suspended for nonconformity, but was soon reinstated through the friendly offices of Archbishop Ussher. On 4th May 1632 he was deposed and excommunicated for the same cause. He resolved to emigrate to America and left Ireland in September 1636, along with a number of his parishioners and other Scottish and English Puritans – 140 in all. They sailed for New England but through contrary winds were obliged to return home. In 1638 he signed the National Covenant, and was commissioned to proceed to London with copies of it for supporters of the Scottish cause at Court. On 5th July 1638 he was admitted minister of Stranraer, where he remained for ten years. Livingstone was translated to the parish of Ancrum and Langnewton in Roxburghshire, on 25th April 1648. He was a member of the Commission of Assembly in 1649. Next year he was one of those appointed to negotiate with Charles II at Breda, as to the terms on which he should receive the Crown. While the royal ships were lying at anchor off Spey-mouth, Livingstone obtained the King’s oath of fidelity to the Covenants. He did not, however, trust Charles, and soon afterwards he identified himself with those who opposed the coronation and the conduct of the government. He was summoned before the Privy Council on 11th December 1662, and, refusing to take the Oath of Allegiance, was banished. He went to Rotterdam in April 1663, where he spent his last years in almost constant study, and in the preparation of a Latin version of the Scriptures which was never published. He died on 9th August 1672. *FES, Vol. II*, pp. 99-100.

¹¹⁸ GAR/SCR/2, p. 27 (17th June 1677). John Carstares (or Carstairs) of Glasgow was in exile in Rotterdam from 1667 to 1671. In correspondence, Carstares concealed his identity by writing under the assumed name of John Martin (G. Gardner, *The Scottish Exile Community in The Netherlands 1660-1690*, p. 27 fn.).

accomplished, faithfull & zealous Ministers that is at present in the Church of Scotland".¹¹⁹

Once McWard accepted that Kirkton would decline the call, he immediately wrote to another unnamed man in Scotland: "I presently wrote an invitation with all the perswasive peremptoriness I could use to one of the most faithfull Ministers of Christ I know in the world, earnestly begging, beseeching, yea & obtesting him to come & labour amongst you in the work of the Lord." In approaching this man, McWard realised that it was unlikely he would accept the call, "[. . .] fearing lest his coming out of the nation at this time of so much distress upon that poor church, should be obstructed & withstood by his brethren, seeing by his counsell & encouragement their hands are much strengthened, & knowing also there were many things relating to himself, which (beside the great, though groundless, reluctancy of his own mind) might determine him to the contrair".¹²⁰

In anticipating that this man would also decline, McWard had written to three others, "[. . .] all eminently able, zealous, prudent & faithfull Ministers". He asked them to confer with one another, "praying them with much intreaty, to take our case into speedy consideration, & after serious seeking of God [. . .] to condescend & agree amongst themselves which of the number should be judged most fit to come, when they had weighed all things relating to this Congregation & the Church of God in the even ballance of the Sanctuary & then that the person thus pitched upon & in providence pointed at should forthwith hasten hither".¹²¹

Further anticipating (correctly) that none of the nominees would accept, McWard took the precaution of asking them in turn to confer

¹¹⁹ GAR/SCR/2, p. 30 (17th June 1677). James Kirkton (1628-1699) was Minister of the Second Charge in Lanark (1655) and translated to Mertoun in 1657. He was deprived in 1662 and resided for a time in England before moving to Rotterdam in 1676. After the Toleration of 1687 he was called to a meeting-house on the Castlehill of Edinburgh. He wrote a biography of John Welsh and *The Secret and True History of the Church of Scotland, from the Restoration to 1678* (*FES*, Vol. I, p. 119). His name is spelled "Kirktown" in the Consistory Records but outside quotations the spelling "Kirkton" is used in this paper as his publications were issued under that form and he is thus registered in Scott's *FES*. In revealing his identity, McWard states, "[. . .] I had pitched upon him, with a preference to all men (of which I am not ashamed, for if his bodily condition, & other things would have suffered him to have come, you would quickly have had a conviction, that in planting the place with him, I had done it by one whose livliness in preaching the Gospell would have made all the Congregation to have blessed the Lord that my withdrawing had made way for planting such a burning & shining light amongst them".

¹²⁰ GAR/SCR/2, p. 27 (17th June 1677).

¹²¹ GAR/SCR/2, p. 27 (17th June 1677).

with Carstares to promptly find and send somebody who had the ministerial abilities to labour in Rotterdam: “[. . .] if the matter so far as it related to the persons themselves nominat should be found impracticable, & so all of them decline the undertaking, then (after I had given an account what I would have the man to be for his ministeriall qualifications of all sorts) I desired Mr Carstairs, together with these other three forthwith to look out for a man qualified with that measure of gifts, zeal, faithfullness, Ministeriall gravity & prudence, as might answeere the exercise of the Ministry in this place, & so without more delay, send him over unto us.”¹²²

McWard asked these men to prayerfully confer in order to agree the most suitable candidate and explained that the Rotterdam Session had vested authority in him to make such an approach: “giving them an account (in order to their more cordiall compliance with our call) how I was impowered by your particular order to see to the supplying of this vacancy, whereto you were led, not only in regard of any present circumstances, but also because this expedient above all others seemed most probably to cut off all demures, & anticipate these objections, which otherwise might have arisen in the mind of a godly man, who dare not rashly engage in a Call.”¹²³

McWard fully recognised the difficulties which might impede the willingness of Ministers in Scotland to accept the invitation. He had even taken the unusual and potentially dangerous step of offering to return to Scotland to supply the congregation which would thereby fall vacant, motivated by the spiritual welfare of the Rotterdam Church. Unsurprisingly his audacious suggestion was refused and knowledge of this became public. Hence McWard felt obliged to explain the background to the Session: “I offered (which I know you would never have allowed me, neither would I now mention it, if it had not been absolutly refused by my Brethren because of my danger) in case any of these worthy & usefull Ministers could be induced to come & take charge with you, & was only demurrant because of the few that are at home, who in this time of danger adventure to labour amongst the people; I say, I offered for removing of this obstruction, & that you might be provided with a man, who will naturally care for the flock of Christ, to goe over forthwith into Scotland, & to take my hazard with others to preach the Gospell, in his

¹²² GAR/SCR/2, pp. 27-28 (17th June 1677).

¹²³ GAR/SCR/2, p. 28 (17th June 1677).

place amongst the people: but as I said, this, because of the danger it did inferre to me, was absolutly refused. Neither should you ever have heard of it if they had not forbid my coming.”¹²⁴

The repeated disappointments in finding a Minister were harder for McWard to bear than what he called the “imbittering circumstances” of his enforced absence from Rotterdam. “God is angry with us, nay, I fear the displeasure be beyond my poor shallow apprehendings & sorrowings. [. . .] I must confess, I either understand nothing of the language of this dispensation, or it speaks this distinctly, that something very displeasent to God amongst us be mourned over. [. . .] Nay, let me add this further, if this Idol of jealousy, if this accursed thing should not be found out, mourned for, & put away, though a man of never so much grace & gifts should come, he might toile all night, as many great fishers of men have done amongst us, & catch nothing.”¹²⁵

Having considered the matter, McWard confessed that none of them (Minister, Session or Congregation) had truly apprehended the Lord’s controversy with them, “nor are the causes of his contendings with us enquired into, or laid to heart by either us or them, as became persons under such significations of his displeasure, what Congregation upon the earth hath had so many faithfull labourers sent to them, & continued so long amongst them [. . .] with so little success?” and he enquired whether “thoughts of this made us tremble, or put us to meditat fervour at these appearances of his departure, upon such a provocation?” He questioned both himself and the Session, “Have you every one of you in your respective places & capacities endeavoured to make the people, as well as your own souls, sensible of the sin which hath procured this unto them, & of the lose they do sustain thereby[?]” He also confessed his own failings as a Minister in Rotterdam, reproaching himself for “the wrongs I had done my Master & the souls of his people by my unserious trifling in the matters of Gods glory, & the everlasting concerns of men” and begged the Session to “by all manner of prayer & supplication seek from the hearer of prayer that great Giver, a broken & bleeding heart, as my bosome companion to the grave upon this account”.¹²⁶

In consideration of the sad providence that so many godly Ministers had been removed by death, he asked whether “the people

¹²⁴ GAR/SCR/2, p. 28 (17th June 1677).

¹²⁵ GAR/SCR/2, p. 28 (17th June 1677).

¹²⁶ GAR/SCR/2, p. 29 (17th June 1677).

been belaboured by all of you [the Session] to impress them suteably with the sin of despising the Gospell, which hath brought on this desolation; or have you endeavoured to make them sensible of their loss, by having so many great Ambassadors for Christ recalled from negotiating a peace betwixt God & their souls by death? Oh! When I remember that burning & shining light worthy & warme Mr Livingstone, who used to preach, as within sight of Christ, & the glory to be revealed; acute & distinct Nevay, judicious & neat Sympson,¹²⁷ fervent, serious & zealous Traill, when I remember I say, that all these great shining luminaries are now set, & removed by death from one people, and out of one pulpit in so short a time, what matter of sorrow presents it self to my eye? But because it is less taken notice of, when eminent Instruments are removed by death, therefore, that he who runs may read displeasure for a dispised Gospell, gone out against us, some must be thrust from you in another manner.” Not only had the Lord removed these great men by death, but he had removed Brown of Wamphray who, like McWard, was banished from Rotterdam due to the malevolence of Charles II. “The Lord hath suffered men to rob you of Mr Brown, of whom I have confidence to say, for a conjunction of great learning, soundness in the faith, fervent zeal for the interests of Christ, & the souls of men, together with his unwearied painfulness, while, upon the brink of the grave, spending his life to give light to others, & laying out his great receivings for the vindication of precious truth, Contradicted & blasphemed by Adversaries, I know no Minister alive (though the residue of the spirit be with him) that would fill his roome, if he were removed.”¹²⁸

Moving on from these considerations of the Lord’s past mercies to the Congregation, McWard enquired about the Session’s prayers for

¹²⁷ James Simson graduated M.A. at the University of Edinburgh on 25th July 1635. He was ordained by the Presbytery of Dalkeith as chaplain to Lord Sinclair’s Regiment, then in Ireland in 1642 and admitted to Sprouston (Roxburghshire) in August 1645. He was called to a Presbyterian congregation, perhaps at Newry (Ulster). He was translated and admitted to Airth (Stirlingshire) in 1650. He joined the Protesters and was deposed on 30th July 1651, but still continued to exercise his ministerial duties. Subsequently in 1654 he was one of those named by Cromwell and the Council for visiting the universities, and taking care “that none but godly and able men be authorised to enjoy the livings appointed for the ministry in Scotland”. He was arrested at Portpatrick in 1660 on his way to settle in a congregation in Ireland, and was imprisoned in Glasgow and afterwards in Edinburgh Tolbooth, by order of the Committee of Estates, who sequestrated his stipend on 25th September that year. He was liberated on 5th July 1661, on condition of leaving the kingdom, his life being spared on the intercession of Archbishop Sharp. He went to Holland, resided in Leiden, and died at Utrecht in 1666. *FES, Vol. IV*, pp. 289-90.

¹²⁸ GAR/SCR/2, p. 29 (17th June 1677).

success in having a Minister settled over them. “Let me ask you [. . .] whether in your extraordinary dayes, this thing hath been mentioned on purpose to be extraordinarily humbled for the cause of your present distress, & a lamenting after the Lord, & over your selves in these solemnities, till he supply by a person of his own sending your want. Nay, whether publickly in the congregation, & also at some hours set a part on purpose for praying together for this matter, as well as in your families & private retirements you have been wrestling with God for a wrestling workman, a Jacob to come amongst you, & that he who hath the hearts of men in his hand, would shine upon, & second the endeavours used for your supply, or rather that he would be remarkeably seen in pitching upon the person himself, & perswading him with a strong hand to come over, & watch with you over souls. Oh, many prayers sent to heaven from souls bleeding in the remembrance of former misimprovment, might make him, who is Lord of the harvest, thrust forth & send you over such a Minister, as might make many praises be sent to heaven out of Rotterdam. O! that he would be intreated yet concerning this, & condescend to send such a Labourer, & accompany him so at his work, as it might appear he is indeed a worker together with God.”¹²⁹ In making this enquiry McWard acknowledged: “I have often assayed to lift up a prayer, & present my supplication to God for a pastor to you from him, according to his own heart, who may feed that people with knowledge & understanding.”¹³⁰

The disappointment of James Kirkton declining the call did not, however, shake McWard’s conviction that the Session should send a further call to him. He asked the Session to homologate his choice, either by unanimity or majority decision. “I intend [. . .] to write again to Mr Carstairs, & within his to write also to the other & deale earnestly with him without any longer delay he come. And to the end he may if it be possible, be the more certainly overcome to a compliance with our Call, I judge it both proper, expedient & necessary that the Session homologat the invitation given with a Line from themselves subscribed by all, or some at the Sessions order and that you may both with the greater cheerfulness concurre, & with the greater patience wait on, & with the greater fervour wrestle with God to incline his heart to embrace.”¹³¹

¹²⁹ GAR/SCR/2, p. 29 (17th June 1677).

¹³⁰ GAR/SCR/2, p. 30 (17th June 1677).

¹³¹ GAR/SCR/2, p. 30 (17th June 1677).

To deal with the contingency that Kirkton would again decline the call, McWard simultaneously sent a blank call, which Carstares could issue at his discretion to another suitable candidate, and asked the Session to send a blank duplicate of their own letter of homologation: “[. . .] this leads me to the rest of the overture, viz upon the sad supposition that Mr Kirktown will absolutly refuse, I intend to write another letter equally person to a blanck person, leaving it to Mr Carstairs (within whose I resolve to send it) to be endorsed & delivered by him, if need be, and do you also send alongst with it your homologating of the same invitation, which needs be no other, but a just double of what you send Mr Kirktown, only Mr Carstairs, as I have said, if yours & mine come to be made use of, must indorse both.”¹³²

McWard suggested that the Session should formally acknowledge the diligence of Carstares in handling their affairs: “though I will not take upon me to prescribe to you what is convenient, yet I judge it will not be amiss, nay more, I judge it worthy of you to write a line of thanks to Mr Carstairs for the great pains he hath been at, & what he must further do in order to your being planted.”¹³³

McWard closed his first letter with “a few words”¹³⁴ which covered the following matters: the duties of elders in assisting a minister (particularly as Col. Wallace, their indefatigable elder, had been banished along with McWard and Brown of Wamphray), the need to encourage John Hoog in his work of the ministry, and the need for harmony in the Session, together with vigilance against satanic opposition to the work of the Gospel.¹³⁵

The Session meeting ended with a resolution to follow McWard’s advice: “The Session ordained a letter to be written to Mr John Carstairs, & another to Mr James Kirktown, & a third of the same tenour to a blanck person, as they are advised to do by the said Mr Mcward in homologation of the call given by him to them. And to meet at Mr Russells house upon Saturday next the 19th currant at 9 a clock in the forenoon for prayer for a good success in their said call,”¹³⁶ and this duly

¹³² GAR/SCR/2, p. 30 (17th June 1677).

¹³³ GAR/SCR/2, p. 30 (17th June 1677).

¹³⁴ GAR/SCR/2, p. 31 (17th June 1677). In a letter of over 6000 words, his “few words” amount to over 1100 in long, complex sentences.

¹³⁵ GAR/SCR/2, p. 31 (17th June 1677).

¹³⁶ GAR/SCR/2, p. 32 (17th June 1677).

took place, with copies of the letters engrossed in the record and arrangements made for the letters to be sent to Scotland.¹³⁷

Call to Robert Fleming

The Consistory records contain no record replies from Carstares or Kirkton. However, ten weeks later, on 30th August, the Session was convened to learn the contents of a further letter newly received from McWard “shewing them that after much paines taken in giving a Call to some Ministers to come hither for supplying his place during his exile, he had at last prevailed with Mr Robert Fleeming sometimes Minister at Cambaslang, & that the said Mr Fleeming was now at London & that the said Mr Mcward had written him to haste himself over, & that the Session would probably send some person thither to accompany & conduct him hither from thence”.¹³⁸

The Session received this news with great joy, and “desired to bless the Lord for this choice, & for the said Mr Fleemings compliance to come hither, many of them knowing him to be an able, faithfull & Godly Minister of the Gospell”.¹³⁹ The Session then appointed “Mr Charles Gordon, a student in Divinity, now in Town [. . .] to carry their Missive to the said Mr Fleeming” and “to goe with all convenient diligence to London to the said Mr Robert Fleeming, & to present to him their missive, & conduct him hither from thence with all due diligence, & to pay the charges of his going, coming & abode at London in that affair, if he would undertake the same”.¹⁴⁰

The following day the Session met as arranged. The Minister (John Hoog) and eight office-bearers signed the following letter to Mr Fleming and arranged that Charles Gordon would deliver it personally to Fleming in London. Omitting the circumstantial contents relating to the bearer of the letter, the substance of the letter relating to the call is as follows:

We having understood from that worthy person, by whom our Call was to be transmitted unto you, that he had used all diligence to convey the same to your hands. And understanding likewise by another particularly concerned in that affair, that you had received

¹³⁷ GAR/SCR/2, pp. 32-33 (19th June 1677).

¹³⁸ GAR/SCR/2, p. 36 (30th August 1677).

¹³⁹ GAR/SCR/2, pp. 36-37 (30th August 1677).

¹⁴⁰ GAR/SCR/2, p. 37 (30th August 1677).

our Call and were resolved to come over we judged it indispenseably duty, first to let you know, that we did with much satisfaction of soul hear the account that was given us, & look upon our selves as under an obligation to bless him, who hath the hearts of all men in his hand, for determining you unto this compliance with our call. And we are hopfull, that the same Lord, who by many things which have emerged in this affair, seems particularly to have pointed at you, & pitched upon you, as the man, by whom he will serve himself amongst us, will also to our advantage, & the rejoicing of your own soul, let you see & find he will accompany you, hold your hand, & help you as a worker together with himself, & that by your Ministry Jesus Christ shall engage some poor strangers to him, & confirme and edify those that are engaged, & so see of the travell of his soul & be satisfied, & give you cause also, as often he hath given you, of triumphing in Christ Jesus; for being helped to make manifest the savour of his knowledge amongst us. [. . .]

Reverend Sir, this is all we have to acquaint you with at present, only our desire to see you amongst us, & the Confidence we have that you shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospell of Christ, makes us intreat you will make all possible haste to come over unto us, assuring you, that as our longings after you are great, so we hope you shall find our endeavourings, that your hands may be strengthened, while you work the work of the Lord, shall witness how dear you are unto us, & how much desired by Your affectionat brethren, who long after you in the Lord.¹⁴¹

The Rotterdam Council insisted on its customary procedure of asking for a list of three names, even though the Session had only Fleming in mind.¹⁴² Hence the Session was obliged to add the token names of Carstares and Kirkton to that of Fleming: “The said Mr Russell & Mr Gordon having shewed the Lords that the Session was to choose a second Minister in the vice of Mr Mcward, & till his returne to this place again, The Lords had desired to see a list of such Ministers two or three, out of which the Session might afterward choose one. which taking into

¹⁴¹ GAR/SCR/2, p. 37 (31st August 1677).

¹⁴² In the past this requirement had not been universally applied, a point not lost on the Consistory in 1676 when they wished to call the first collegiate minister. GAR/SCR/2, p. 6 (8th January 1676).

consideration, They all in one voice did unanimously pitch upon these three Mr John Carstairs, Mr James Kirktown, & Mr Robert Fleeming which three they commissioned the saids Mr Russell & Mr Gordon to present to the Lords for their approbation, that thereupon the Session might thereafter choose one to serve in the ministry as aforesaid.”¹⁴³

Shortly before McWard’s appointment in 1676 the Council of Rotterdam had made it clear “that they would not allow any maintenance from the Town. whereupon the saids Commissioners from the Session answered, that at present they would desist from any suite therein”.¹⁴⁴ However, in prospect of finding a replacement for McWard as collegiate Minister, the Rotterdam authorities responded in an encouraging manner to initial approaches on the subject, without indicating any reason for their change of position. On 1st October the Session authorised two of the elders to write a formal petition, and encouraged all Session members to lobby the authorities to achieve this: “It was there represented to them by the said Mr Russell & Mr Gordon, that they having spoken to the Burgo Masters, & severall other Lords of the Town for a tractament [stipend] to be payed to a second Minister in absence of Mr Mcward, & that there was some probability of obtaining the same for the encouragement of some godly & able Minister in time coming, which the Session taking into consideration, did nominat & appoint the saids Mr Russell & Mr Gordon to cause draw up a petition to the Lords for that effect, & to present the same with all due diligence.”¹⁴⁵ In addition to the formal request, the elders were encouraged to use social contacts with officials to press the Session’s case.¹⁴⁶ Four weeks later the elders reported that “the Towns Tractament for a second Minister is receipt the Vruitschap Chamber, but according to custome it was to be revised & read again at their next dyet, whereupon the Session commissioned them again to prescribe the same, till they obtaine it fully granted & to take the assistance & concurrance of any other member of the Session in the said matter for

¹⁴³ GAR/SCR/2, p. 39 (15th November 1677).

¹⁴⁴ GAR/SCR/2, p. 6 (17th January 1676).

¹⁴⁵ GAR/SCR/2, p. 38 (1st October 1677).

¹⁴⁶ “It was likewise recommended to every one of the session, to sollicite & deale with such of the Lords or Councill as they best knew, or had any influence upon, to befriend the said matter, when the same should happen to come before them, which would require diligence in procuring, in regard they do expect from London Mr Robert Fleeming every hour.” GAR/SCR/2, p. 38 (1st October 1677).

bespeaking the Lords to put it to a close”.¹⁴⁷ Just over two weeks later, on 15th November, the elders were able to report a satisfactory outcome in this matter: “It was [. . .] reported, that in obedience to the Sessions commission to them in dealing with the Lords of the Town for a Tractament to a second Minister, that the same was granted.”¹⁴⁸

4. Robert Fleming (1630-25th July 1694) – Minister of Rotterdam 30th December 1677-25th July 1694

Robert Fleming’s father was James Fleming (1590-1653), minister of St. Bathan’s (known informally as Yester) in the Presbytery of Haddington.¹⁴⁹ James Fleming was the son of an Edinburgh merchant and graduated with M.A. from the University of Edinburgh in 1610. In 1625 he was presented to the parish of St. Bathan’s by John, Lord Yester, and installed as minister by the Archbishop of St. Andrews. Despite his admission to the ministry by an Archbishop in the degenerate times of Episcopal ascendancy, James Fleming was a supporter of the Covenant and was a member of the Glasgow General Assembly of 1638 which overturned Episcopal rule.¹⁵⁰ His first wife was a daughter of John Knox¹⁵¹ and his second wife, Jean Livingston (mother of Robert), was a cousin of John Livingstone (1603-1672) under whose preaching the famed revival took place at Kirk o’ Shotts in 1627.

Robert Fleming was born at Yester in 1630. He entered the University of Edinburgh aged fifteen and graduated MA with distinction on 26th July 1649. Subsequently, like Robert McWard, he studied divinity at St. Andrews under Samuel Rutherford. He was ordained in Cambuslang in 1653. Fleming had delicate health in childhood and had nearly lost his sight from a blow with a club. In Cambuslang he

¹⁴⁷ GAR/SCR/2, pp. 38-39 (28th October 1677).

¹⁴⁸ GAR/SCR12, p. 39 (15th November 1677).

¹⁴⁹ The parish was known as St. Bathan’s and became known formally as Yester about 1675. See: *FES*, Vol. I, p. 398.

¹⁵⁰ *FES*, Vol. I, p. 399. See an earlier footnote in this paper for details of the Glasgow Assembly of 1638.

¹⁵¹ Scott’s entry for James Fleming states that the name of his first wife was unknown. However, in the entry for Robert Fleming, Scott draws attention to a common misapprehension about Robert’s mother, “his mother being Jean Livingston not, as sometimes stated, Martha (daugh. of John Knox), who was James Fleming’s *first* wife”. *FES*, Vol. I, p. 399.

continued to be sickly, his health being described as “so bad that it seemed hopeless”. He was deprived of the ministry by an Act of the Scottish Parliament on 11th June 1662 and Decree¹⁵² of the Privy Council on 1st October that year. For the next ten years he remained in Scotland, preaching when he had the opportunity. On 3rd September 1672 he declined to be indulged at Kilwinning, disobeyed a citation to appear at the Privy Council, and fled to London, “where his Scottish speech somewhat marred his usefulness”. He returned to West Nisbet, Roxburghshire, in 1674.¹⁵³ He was once more resident in London when he received the request from the Rotterdam Session on 31st August 1677 to come to the United Provinces.

The date of Fleming’s arrival in Rotterdam is not recorded. However, it is clear from his own account that he preached on a number of occasions, the phrase “at severall times” perhaps indicating that he was not the sole preacher during this period.¹⁵⁴ The Session were satisfied with him and formalised their choice: “The Session did all in one voice nemine contradicente [Latin: with nobody contradicting, i.e., without dissent.] Elect & choose Mr Robert Fleeming, now in Town to be their Minister, & to officiat in the vice & place of Mr Robert Mcward their Minister, till the Lord in his mercy & goodness to this Congregation, shall be pleased to bring him back again from his exile. which being done, they appointed the Minister, John Fleeming & Mr Russell & James Gordon to signify to the Lords the Sessions election at their best conveniency, as also to give intimation to the said Mr Robert Fleeming of their Election of him, & to deale effectually with him to accept of their Call in manner aforesaid.”¹⁵⁵ Curiously the Session notified the Council before they informed Fleming of their action. This may indicate that the independence of the Rotterdam Church in spiritual matters was gradually being eroded by Dutch ecclesiastical practice imposed by the Rotterdam Council’s Lords.

The Session’s letter to Fleming of 31st August 1677 specifically mentioned that there was a “call” to him, not once but three times.

¹⁵² A decret is “the judgment or sentence of a court of law whereby the question at issue is decided” (www.dsl.ac.uk).

¹⁵³ *FES, Vol. III*, pp. 236-237.

¹⁵⁴ GAR/SCR/2, pp. 39-40 (25th November 1677). “The said Mr Fleeming answered, that upon their missive he had come over to visite them here, & that at severall times since his coming hither, he had preached at the Ministers desire.”

¹⁵⁵ GAR/SCR/2, p. 39 (18th November 1677).

Despite the apparent clarity of this, the Session sent Mr Hoog with Andrew Russell “to urge the said Mr Fleeming with all the Arguments they could to accept of the said Call, which was done presently that same night at Mr Russells house where the said Mr Robert Fleeming did lodge. who having laid out before him the Sessions Call together with some hints of reasons, why they did not signify to him sooner what they formerly aimed at by their missive sent to him while he was at London”. Fleming was somewhat piqued, particularly as the Session had already notified the magistrates, answering “that upon their missive he had come over to visite them here, & that at severall times since his coming hither, he had preached at the Ministers desire, but was now surprised that they do give him a Call to be one of their Ministers, & wished they had let him know their mind here in, before they had proceeded so far, as to present their Election of him to the Lords of the Town, that he might have given them some reasons in the contrair, it being a matter of very great weight, upon severall Considerations, to undertake the Charge of the Minister in this place, & therefore was at present very unclear to accept of the call”.¹⁵⁶

Fleming’s response was a blow to the Session as they had not only notified the election to the Rotterdam Council but had also made arrangements to inform the States General.¹⁵⁷ Furthermore, they “replied, that their necessities being so great, if he should absolutely refuse, they could not see how they could be helped by any. but yet the matter being of so great import, they would referre the same to his second thoughts, & would wait for his answer at some other convenient season, which he promised to do after serious seeking counsell of God for his further clearing therein”.¹⁵⁸

In the meanwhile, as Fleming was prayerfully considering the situation, a second letter from McWard arrived, and Mr Hoog read this to the Session on 9th December. From exile in Utrecht McWard expressed his delight that Fleming had come to Rotterdam: “I have been more specially comforted, not only that another minister hath a suteable maintenance, but that by the coming of that eminently pious & faithfull

¹⁵⁶ GAR/SCR/2, p. 40 (25th November 1677).

¹⁵⁷ GAR/SCR/2, p. 40 (25th November 1677). “The said day, the Session appointed Mr Fleeming & Mr Gordon to goe to the Hague to represent to the Committee of the States Generall sitting there, their call of the said Mr Fleeming to be their Minister in the vice & place of Mr Mcward, & to cause the same to be booked.”

¹⁵⁸ GAR/SCR/2, pp. 39-40 (25th November 1677).

Minister of Jesus Christ Mr Fleeming, there is bread enough now in this house amongst you, you have plenty of manna, & meat for your souls, your streets run to an overflowing with wine & milk while many of the people of the Lord mourne for want of water, & because their bread for their soul is not brought into his house.” He was concerned that he had not heard of Fleming formally being admitted as Minister, and stated: “I hope, yea, I am very confident, that the same God, who hath brought the matter this length, will give such weight to your perswadings, that he dare neither withstand your desirings, nor add to your sorrow, by deferrings & delayings to come under that relation to you.” The Session “finding the said letter to have come very opportunely to hand, whilst Mr Robert fleeming seems yet unclear to comply with their Call, it was judged convenient to let him see the same, & in order thereto appointed all the Session to meet at Mr Russells house that same night at 5. a clock, to shew him the same, & withall to press again upon him the acceptation of their Call, who meeting all there as was appointed, at the command of Mr Hog Minister the Clerk read the said letter in the audience of the said Mr Fleeming & of all the members of the Session, & there after given to him to be considered, whereupon he said, he would take the whole affair to consideration, & very shortly returne them his answer”.¹⁵⁹

Two weeks later, on 23rd December, the Session convened once more and received the following acceptance from Fleming:

To the Reverend and worthy the Minister & remanent Members of the Consistory of the Scots Congregation in Rotterdam.

Having with some seriousness considered your Call, & the case you are now in, what ever difficulties I have otherwise had to wrestle with; yet upon the interest of my blessed Master & for his works sake in this place, I do accept & consent thereto, to exercise my ministry for some time amongst you, with this provision, untill the Lord shall clear my way & duty otherwayes and this I desire may be insert in your Register, as it is here expressly qualified.¹⁶⁰

The Session then “appointed intimation to be made the next Lords day, that the said Mr Robert Fleeming is to be received upon thursday next after sermon and admitted Minister in this congregation”. The congregation was informed that “it hath pleased the Lord to incline

¹⁵⁹ GAR/SCR/2, p. 41 (9th December 1677).

¹⁶⁰ GAR/SCR/2, p. 41 (23rd December 1677).

him to condescend to such a full & unanimous call, as our present circumstances put us in capacity to give, & his present circumstance doth suffer him to embrace it upon. And therefore hath appointed that the said Mr Robert Fleeming should be received upon thursday next the penult day of this moneth in the forenoon after Sermon, where all are desired to be present, who have not inevitable avocations with all desiring that if there be any person or persons, who have ought to object, why he may not be received, let them come to the Session upon weddensday next at 3. a clock in the afternoon to give in what they can say in the contrary, where they shall be heard".¹⁶¹

The Session duly met on 29th December and no objections against Fleming were lodged. "The Session conforme to their former ordinance ordained the said Mr Fleeming to be received to morrow the penult day of December after sermon in the forenoon, & for that effect appointed a table to be set before the pulpit covered with a green table cloth at which the said Mr Robert Fleeming with the Elders and Deacons might sit."¹⁶²

Induction of Robert Fleming

It is worth reproducing in entirety the Session minute relating to Fleming's induction as an example of procedure in the Church of Scotland at that time.

After the sermon preached by Mr John Hog Minister, It was by him demanded of Mr Robert Fleeming, conforme to the usuall way in the Church of Scotland in such a case.

First, if the said Mr Robert did believe the Scriptures to be the alone word of God, & rule of faith & life, he answered that he did believe the sacred scriptures of the old & new Testament to be the word of God, & the undoubted standing rule of faith & life.

Secondly, If he owned the Reformation of the Church of Scotland in the doctrine, discipline & government thereof sworne unto by the Covenant, & conforme to the word of God. To which he answered, he did own the reformation of the Church of Scotland in the doctrine, discipline & government thereof sworne unto by

¹⁶¹ GAR/SCR/2, p. 42 (23rd December 1677).

¹⁶² GAR/SCR/2, p. 42 (29th December 1677).

the Covenant to be consonant to Gods word, & that in defence thereof, he hath been put from the exercise of his Ministry in that land, counting it not only his duty to maintain the same, but also his honour to suffer in maintenance thereof.

Thirdly, It was asked at him, that seeing he had got a most unanimous call to the exercise of the Ministry in this Congregation in the absence of Mr Robert Mcward, if he would exercise all the parts of the said function in publick & private, as becomes a Minister of the Gospell having the Charge of souls. To which he answered, that having come hither upon their invitation to help in the work of the Lord in this congregation for a while, he had no intention to enter into the Charge of a Pastor here, but being so called, as said is, after much seeking after the mind of God therein, he was content for a time to officiat in all the parts of his ministry through the Lords assistance, till it should please the Lord more fully to clear his way, conforme to the circumstances wherein he stood at the time, as he had hinted at in a paper he gave in to the Consistory of this Congregation. whereupon the Minister desired him to take by the hand all the members of the Consistory sitting beside him at table in sight of his willingness to accept of the Charge aforesaid, & the Minister coming down from pulpit took him by the hand also. who ascending to the pulpit again, prayed for a blessing on his Ministry and having sung a part of the ps. 132. pronounced the blessing.¹⁶³

Thus Robert Fleming was inducted as the collegiate minister of the Rotterdam Church on 30th December 1677. The Session met again at the beginning of January and after a morning given over to prayer of thanksgiving they reconvened in the afternoon to formally welcome the new Minister. Robert McWard once more wrote to the Session and this further long letter was read to the Consistory on 20th January 1678 and engrossed in the minute.¹⁶⁴

After the Glorious Revolution of 1688 Fleming could have been restored to his congregation at Cambuslang. However, he elected to remain in Rotterdam as collegiate minister. On a visit to London

¹⁶³ GAR/SCR/2, p. 42 (30th December 1677).

¹⁶⁴ GAR/SCR/2, pp. 42-45 (20th January 1678).

in 1694 he died of a fever on 25th July. Thus ended the ministry of the last of the four ministers of Rotterdam during the period of the Covenanter exiles.

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It is intended that a future paper will examine the efforts of the ministers and the Consistory to instruct the flock and to maintain discipline according to the standards of the Church of Scotland.