Katie Barclay and Deborah Simonton
Introduction

Women in eighteenth-century Scotland: intimate, intellectual and public lives, 2013 / Barclay, K., Simonton, D. (ed./s), pp.1-13

Introduction

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> The women too, emulous of glory and praise, were by these writings, stimulated to great and virtuous actions. They inspired the men to ascribe to them noble deeds and sentiments, and they acted and thought nobly, that they might not falsify the inspirations they had given birth to. Hence these times produced more extraordinary women, than have ever at any other period appeared in Europe. William Alexander, *The History of Women*, 3rd edn (2 vols, London, 1782), p. xiii.

One of the more novel contributions to come out of eighteenth-century Scotland was its histories of women. In these texts, Enlightenment philosophers turned their attention from the public deeds of well-known men to the position of women in society. Yet, far from imagining women as historical actors, such writers viewed women as the passive embodiment of civilisation. Women were formed by nature and when placed in the right conditions, created by their male counterparts, they flourished, allowing their innate sensibility to emerge.[1] Yet, as this collection uncovers, eighteenth-century Scottish women were not passive, but active agents of historical change, shaping Scottish society during a key transitional period.

The eighteenth century looms large in the Scottish imagination. It is a century that saw the doubling of the population, rapid urbanisation, industrial growth, the political Union of 1707, the Jacobite Rebellions and the Enlightenment – events that were intrinsic to the creation of the modern nation and to putting Scotland on the international map. The impact of

[1] J. Rendall, 'Clio, Mars and Minerva: the Scottish Enlightenment and the Writing of Women's History', in T. M. Devine and J. R. Young (eds), *Eighteenth Century Scotland: New Perspectives* (East Linton, 1999), pp. 134–51; M. C. Moran, '"The Commerce of the Sexes": Gender and the Social Sphere in Scottish Enlightenment Accounts of Civil Society', in . F. Trentman (ed.) *Paradoxes of Civil Society: New Perspectives on Modern German and British History* (New York, 2003), pp. 61–84.

the era on modern Scotland can be seen in the numerous buildings named after the luminaries of the period – Adam Smith, David Hume, William Robertson – the endorsement of Robert Burns as the national poet/ hero, the preservation of the Culloden battlefield as a tourist attraction, and the physical geographies of its major towns. Yet, while it is a century that remains central to modern constructions of national identity, it is a period associated with men. Until recently, the history of women in eighteenth-century Scotland, with perhaps the honourable exception of Flora McDonald, remained unwritten. Over the last decade however, research on women and gender in Scotland has flourished and we have an increasingly full picture of women's lives at all social levels across the century. As a result, this is an appropriate moment to reflect on what we know about Scottish women during the eighteenth century, to ask how their history affects the traditional narratives of the period, and to reflect on the implications for a national history of Scotland and Scottish identity.

While recent historiography has reminded us of the importance of continuities over time, the eighteenth century remains a century of change. The three centuries before 1700 saw the development of universities, the creation of a formal, unified and nationwide legal system, the introduction of the printing press, the unification of the thrones of Scotland and England in 1603, growing trade and political links with Western Europe and tentative steps into the rest of the world. The Protestant Reformation in 1560 brought more formal schooling, increased literacy, as well as a very politically and socially influential church.[2] While the early decades of the eighteenth century still saw clan warfare; cattle raids on other Scots and the English; the devastation of famine and disease; religious conflict and battles on Scottish soil; kidnapped heiresses; and political and legal nepotism, over the course of the eighteenth century, Scotland was increasingly politically stable, influenced in part by the political union with England of 1707. This removed Scotland's parliamentary independence

[2] The best survey for this period is T.C. Smout, *A History of the Scottish People, 1560–1830*, (Fontana Press, 1985).

and created a common market throughout the newly formed Great Britain, although it guaranteed the sovereignty of the Scottish church and law courts. With it, political power moved in its entirety from Edinburgh to London, where it had in part resided since the union of the crowns.

In its absence, Scottish civil society flourished. Intellectual clubs, coffee shops, libraries, lectures and other forms of 'polite society' developed in Edinburgh, and in the later part of the century, Glasgow, Aberdeen, and the provincial towns. Book sales dramatically increased and the middling sorts had libraries in their homes. For those who could not afford to buy books, circulating libraries, newspaper and periodical press and cheap ephemera provided reading material. The intellectual curiosity of the Scots was epitomized in the Scottish Enlightenment, which placed Scotland on the international map as a place of academic excellence. These developments were complemented by a growing economy, particularly in the areas of banking, agriculture, coal and manufacturing textiles; population growth and urbanisation. The population doubled to over two million in 1820, by which date 25 per cent of the population lived in towns of over 10,000. Yet, change should not be overstated. The majority of the population still continued to live rurally and work in traditional agricultural occupations.[3]

Far from being passive observers, women were at the heart of these developments. This edited collection brings together thirteen chapters from scholars across a variety of disciplines and methodologies to explore the role of women in the making of the modern Scottish nation during the eighteenth century and into the early nineteenth century as eighteenth-century developments come into fruition. It has been divided into three sections, intimate, intellectual and public lives, selected to provide an overview of women's

[3] Smout, *A History of the Scottish People*, pp. 240–7.

experiences in different areas of eighteenth-century life, but also to engage with the most vibrant areas of current research in European women's history.

Intimate Lives

An earlier generation of scholars would have titled this section 'private lives', but this term has been problematized, both when referring to women's role within the family and domestic sphere, and in its implications for selfhood. That people, and particularly women's, lives in the domestic sphere were not enclosed behind doorways unseen by the public and community, and that 'public' activities, including work, politics and civil society, were still performed within 'private' households, has destabilized the definition of private.[4] Moreover, the growing interest in selfhood, identity and emotion, once seen as the 'private' workings of the body and mind, has asked us to reconceptualize these keys ideas, forcing us to consider the centrality of performance to constituting self, the key role played by 'outward' markers such as clothing and the body to our identities, and the socially-constructed nature of emotion, now understood to be developed from and informed by wider society as well as the internal workings of the body.[5]

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[4] A. Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (London, 1998); J. Popiel, *Rousseau's Daughters: Domesticity, Education and Autonomy in Modern France* (London, 2008); Jessica Kross, 'Mansions, Men, Women, and the Creations of Multiple Publics in Eighteenth-Century British North America', *Journal of Social History*, 33/2 (1999): pp. 385–408; Tim Meldrum, 'Domestic Service, Privacy and the Eighteenth Century Metropolitan Household', *Urban History*, 26/1 (1999): pp. 27–39; Amanda Vickery, 'An Englishman's Home is his Castle? Thresholds, Boundaries and Privacies in the Eighteenth-Century London House', *Past and Present*, 199 (2008): pp. 147–73; Nancy Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: Woman's Sphere in New England, 1780–1835* (London, 1981); Karen Harvey, *The Little Republic: Masculinity & Domesticity in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford, 2012).

[5] Penny Summerfield, 'Culture and Composure: Creating Narratives of the Gendered Self in Oral History Interviews', *Cultural and Social History*, 1 (2004): pp. 65–93; Michael Roper, 'Slipping Out of View: Subjectivity and Emotion in Gender History', *History Workshop Journal*, 59 (2005): pp. 57–72; Katie Barclay and Sarah Richardson, 'Introduction: Performing the Self: Women's Lives in Historical Perspective', *Women's History Review*, 22/2 (2013); Kathleen Canning,

The embodied nature of experience is increasingly central to analyses of women's lives, where 'touch' and what Kathleen Brown refers to as 'body work', that is the labour of caring for another's body, becomes central to our understanding of how intimacy is created.[6] This has also required a refocusing on the gendered nature of the bodily experience, moving our attention to such intimate topics as menstruation, breast-feeding, birth and reproductive technologies, as well as sickness, aging and death.[7] In Chapter 1, Anne Cameron contributes to this debate through her medical history of maternity rituals. The experience of giving birth, during a period of high mother and infant mortality, was charged with emotion, as expectant mothers coped with their fears, made their peace with God and fate, and anticipated the joys of a new, healthy child. In the context of the increasing professionalization of midwifery and the growing use of male medical practitioners, women still clung to traditional rituals, passed down in their communities, as well as incorporating new medical techniques, to help them cope with both the uncertainties and physical pain of childbirth. Such women relied on their

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'The Body as Method? Reflections on the Place of the Body in Gender History', *Gender & History*, 11 (1999): pp. 499–513; Karen Harvey, 'The Century of Sex? Gender, Bodies, and Sexuality in the Long Eighteenth Century', *Historical Journal*, 45 (2002): pp. 899–916; Beverly Lemire, '"Second-Hand Beaux and 'Red-Armed Belles": Conflict and the Creation of Fashions in England, c. 1660–1800', *Continuity & Change*, 15/3 (2000): pp. 391–417; Amanda Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England* (London, 2010).

[6] Laura Gowing, *Common Bodies: Women, Touch and Power* (London, 2003); Kathleen Brown, 'Body Work in Antebellum United States', in Ann Laura Stoler (ed.) *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History* (Durham, 2006), pp. 213–39; Carolyn Steedman, 'Intimacy in Research: Accounting For It', *History of the Human Sciences*, 21/4 (2008): pp. 17–33.

[7] Patricia Crawford, 'Attitudes to Menstruation in Seventeenth-Century England', *Past and Present*, 91 (1981): pp. 47–73; Lisa Forman Cody, *Birthing the Nation: Sex, Science and the Conception of Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford, 2004); Hannah Newton, *The Sick Child in Early Modern England, 1580–1720* (Oxford, 2012); Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, 1993); Lynn Botelho and Pat Thane (eds) *Women and Ageing in Britain since 1500* (London, 2000); Lucinda M. Becker, *Death and the Early Modern Englishwoman* (Aldershot, 2003).

connections with others in their community and their support during this central event in their lives.

Women's attitudes to childbirth were in part informed by their wider social status, whether they were married or single, and whether the child was a wanted heir, an extra mouth to feed from limited resources, or a badge of shame. Such feelings were informed by the wider social implications of births and how local communities would respond to parents and their children.[8] Svetla Baloutzova takes up this theme in Chapter 3, where she explores attitudes towards unwed motherhood and illegitimacy in Scottish balladry. She highlights the complex and multiple responses to unwed motherhood, from women filled with penitence and remorse to those who angrily refuse to be shamed. She also points to the emphasis laid on both male and female sexual desire in explaining why couples were willing to overlook community and religious norms that prohibited premarital sex.

The centrality of sexual desire, and its physical effects on the body, are also discussed by Katie Barclay in Chapter 2. Using a combination of balladry, court cases and correspondence, her discussion of understandings of love within courtship across the eighteenth century reminds us of the importance of the embodied nature of the emotional experience, perhaps most radically demonstrated by the belief within Scottish popular culture that the act of sexual intercourse, even when forced upon women, could create love. Like Baloutzova, however, Barclay reminds us that individual action and emotion happened within a wider social context, where the more 'pragmatic' (but no less emotionally-charged)

[8] Jean R. Freedman, 'With Child: Illegitimate Pregnancy in Scottish Traditional Ballads', *Folklore Forum,* 24/1 (1991): pp. 3–18; Ólöf Gardarsdóttir, 'The Implications of Illegitimacy in Late-Nineteenth Century Iceland: the Relationship Between Infant Mortality and the Household Position of Mothers giving Birth to Illegitimate Children', *Continuity & Change*, 15/3 (2000): pp. 435-461.

concerns of economic security and family ambition were always present.[9] As Barclay argues, romantic love could be used to emotionally tie couples to their communities, reinforcing their investment in wider social norms.

This complex interaction between the intimate world of female bodies, sex and love and the wider social environment that gave female experiences meaning, as well as the community that both monitored female behaviour and provided support, belies any straightforward division between the intimate, or private, and public spheres of life. This is perhaps demonstrated most aptly in Jane Rendall's discussion of the eighteenth-century author, Margaret Cullen's novel, *Home.* Rendall describes how Cullen used her novel to politicize and give voice to her sense of injustice at being disinherited, together with her sisters, in favour of her elder brother. In doing so, Cullen publicized, if under the guise of fiction, her family life, bringing the public into her private affairs. Moreover, her novel asks for similar interventions from the state in family life, engaging in a debate about the appropriate place of women in society and advocating for greater rights, particularly with regard to property, for women within the family. For Cullen, the nature of family life was a product of wider social relationships; the intimate was born of the public.

Intellectual Lives

As Cullen's novel suggests, women and men used their intimate experiences to shape the public imagination through their intellectual efforts. Following Habermas' influential thesis on the significance of print culture in creating a public sphere during the eighteenth century, studies of women's writing have been viewed as a central way to gauge the influence of

[9] Joanne Bailey, *Parenting in England 1760–1830: Emotion, Identity and* Generation (Oxford, 2012); Katie Barclay, *Love, Intimacy and Power: Marriage and Patriarchy in Scotland, 1650–1850* (Manchester, 2011); Leonore Davidoff, *Thicker than Water: Siblings and their Relations, 1780–1920* (Oxford, 2012).

women as historical actors in the making of modern democratic society.[10] Female education was technically always a priority of the Post-Reformation Kirk, although female literacy rates lagged behind their male counterparts, but it became increasingly important with the growth of the Scottish Enlightenment and commercial society and the emphasis placed on women as readers and correspondents within the 'polite' world.[11] As Katherine Glover's seminal book points out, the concept of politeness was increasingly central within Scotland for those of middling rank and above.[12] Emerging from a preoccupation within eighteenth-century Scotland with demonstrating the 'civilized' nature of commercial society, central to claims of equality within the Union as well as supporting colonial expansion, politeness was a code of behaviour that incorporated certain manners, engagement in the consumer world and the display of the correct fashions and goods, a level of literacy and familiarity with a shared reading culture, and an outward looking, cosmopolitan perspective with a commitment to national improvement.[13] Within the polite world, behaviour was strictly demarcated by gender and education was central to ensuring that women learned to be polite.[14]

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[10] Kathryn Shevelow, *Women and Print Culture: The Construction of Femininity in the Early Periodical* (London, 1989); Elizabeth Eger, *Bluestockings: Women of Reason from Enlightenment to Romanticism* (Basingstoke, 2010); Karen O'Brien, *Women and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge, 2009); Dena Goodman, *The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment* (Ithaca, 1996).

[11] Robert Allan Houston, *Scottish Literacy and the Scottish Identity: Illiteracy and Society in Scotland and Northern England, 1600–1800* (Cambridge, 1985); Katherine Glover, *Elite Women and Polite Society in Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (Woodbridge, 2011).

[12] Glover, *Elite Women and Polite Society*.

[13] For a discussion of politeness outside Scotland see: Philip Carter, *Men and Emergence of Polite Society, Britain 1660–1800* (Harlow, 2001); Michele Cohen, '"Manners" Make the Man: Politeness, Chivalry, and the Construction of Masculinity, 1750–1830', *Journal of British Studies*, 44 (2005): pp. 312–29; Lawrence Klein, 'Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century', *Historical Journal*, 5 (2002): pp. 869–98; Paul Langford, 'The Uses of Eighteenth-Century Politeness', *Transactions of the RHS*, 12 (2002): pp. 311–31; Matthew McCormack, 'Dance and Drill: Polite Accomplishments and Military Masculinities in Georgian Britain', *Cultural and Social History*, 8/3 (2011): pp. 315–

Lindy Moore contributes to this debate with her chapter on the provision of schooling for girls. She demonstrates that the growth of schools for girls in eighteenth-century Scotland was motivated by the desire of the urban elite to mark themselves as part of polite culture, which required their daughters to be educated. Moreover, the types of education provided for girls, whilst focusing on 'female accomplishments' including reading, sewing and baking, far from being frivolous corresponded with the requisite skills that women needed to participate in polite society and allowed such women to access this socially and politically powerful group. Similarly, Betty Hagglund provides us with a more personal look at women's experiences of education, focusing on their biographical accounts, and highlighting both the ways they benefited and their frustrations with the limitations placed on them due to their gender.

Mary Somerville was one such woman, forced to educate herself after being irritated at her parents' attempts to limit her to handwriting and needlework. Like a number of other intellectually-able woman, the flourishing print culture of the eighteenth century and the growth of the popular science movement gave her the opportunity to access an education denied to many in previous generations. In Chapter 7, Margaret Carlyle and James Wallace discuss the way Somerville used this opportunity to explore her interest in mathematics and astronomy, before turning her hand to the socially-acceptable and female task of 'translating' a French mathematical text for a popular audience. Her 'improvements' to this text marked out her mathematical ability and brought her public fame, but as Carlyle and Wallace demonstrate, her success was built on the work of many other intellectual women, who had

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30; Helen Berry, 'Polite Consumption: Shopping in Eighteenth-Century England', *Transactions of the RHS*, 12 (2002): pp. 375–94.

[14] Anthony Fletcher, 'Courses in Politeness: the Upbringing and Experience of Five Teenage Diarists', *Transactions of the RHS*, 12 (2002): pp. 417–30.

challenged preconceptions about women's 'natural' abilities, and because she managed to carefully balance her intellectual achievement with an appropriately feminine persona as motherly educator.

As well as providing opportunities for reading and self-education, as Somerville's success makes clear, eighteenth-century print culture also opened up a space for women to participate in the public sphere. As Barclay and Carr point out, opportunities for Scottish women to publish in Scotland were limited before 1800 (unless on 'domestic' topics), but many Scottish women took advantage of the more inclusive English literary marketplace, publishing books that were then circulated more widely.[15] As Corey Andrews explores in Chapter 9, one such woman was Maria Riddell, who wrote an account of her travels to Madeira and the Caribbean, intended, she claimed, for private circulation, but published by a friend on the open market. Like many Scots, Maria's family held plantations in the Caribbean; Andrew's account highlights the way that Scottish women, like their male counterparts, were implicated in the (sometimes ambivalent) imagining of the Scottish Empire.[16] He compares her *Journal* with a similar piece of writing by Janet Schaw, who kept an unpublished account of her journey to the West Indies. As Katherine Glover notes, women's travel accounts, whether for personal use or publication, marked them as part of a cosmopolitan and outward-looking polite society, who, through such writings, aligned themselves with the Enlightenment's agenda of 'patriotic improvement' and Empire-building.[17] Such imaginings were central to shaping how the Scots interacted with those

[15] Katie Barclay and Rosalind Carr, 'Women, Power and the Scottish Enlightenment', *Working Paper* Publication Forthcoming; P. Perkins, *Women Writers and the Edinburgh Enlightenment* (Amsterdam, 2010); Douglas Gifford and Dorothy McMillan (eds), *A History of Scottish Women's Writing* (Edinburgh, 1997).

[16] For discussion see: Benedict Anderson, *Imagining Communities: Reflection on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (Verso, 2006).

[17] Glover, Elite *Women and Polite Society*, pp. 156–7.

beyond their own borders, implicating women, like men, in nation-building, colonialism and slavery.[18]

From a reverse perspective, Pam Perkins explores how women in turn were concerned with the imagining of the Scottish nation. Looking at travel accounts of tours of Scotland, in Chapter 8, Perkins highlights the role of female writers in shaping how Scotland was depicted and interpreted. Moreover, she notes that within such literature, written by both men and women, lower-ranking Scottish women, especially poor Highland women, became the embodiment of a romanticized Scottish culture, symbolizing the 'exoticness' of Scotland beyond its fashionable urban centres and so its location as a desirable tourist destination and distinct nation in the Union.[19] Women, therefore, were central to the shaping of how Scotland was imagined and imagined itself; yet, reflecting another imagining around ideal gendered behaviour that informed female education and social roles, the way women participated in both print culture and in the public sphere more broadly was informed and restricted by understandings of appropriate femininity.

Public Lives

The restrictions of gender are a key theme of the final section of the collection. Whether through necessity or agency, despite the increasingly compelling rhetoric of domesticity during the eighteenth century, women were not absent from the public sphere, nor was their

[18] Kathleen Wilson, 'Citizenship, Empire, and Modernity in the English Provinces, c. 1720–1790', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 29/1 (1996): pp. 69–96; Jane Rendall, 'The Condition of Women, Women's Writing and the Empire in Nineteenth-Century Britain', in Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose (eds), *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 101–21; Deirdre David, *Rule Britannia: Women, Empire and Victorian Writing* (Ithaca, 1995).

[19] For a comparative example see: Jenny Sharpe, *Allegories of Empire: the Figure of Woman in the Colonial Text* (Minneapolis, 1993).

participation restricted to publishing in socially-acceptable ways.[20] As Deborah Simonton and Louisa Cross explore in their respective chapters, women were a vital part of the Scottish economy. As Cross explores, the growth of a consumer culture as well as the importance of fashion as a marker of polite identity created a market for fashionable clothing.[21] Women, as well as men, were major consumers, supporting a growing industry, which offered work for numerous women, who put to use the needlework skills that they had learned in their youth. As active agents in the market, the women who sold such goods emphasized their 'connections' to the central fashion centres of Edinburgh, London and Paris, reinforcing a sense of cosmopolitanism, politeness and ultimately national identity even in Scottish provincial towns and rural areas.[22]

Simonton reminds us that fashion merchants made up only a small part of the female workforce.[23] Focusing on women in urban areas, she demonstrates the centrality of women to

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[20] Ingrid H. Tague, *Women of Quality: Accepting and Contesting Ideals of Femininity in England, 1690–1760* (Woodbridge, 2002). Irene Brown, 'Domesticity, Feminism and Friendship: Female Aristocratic Culture and Marriage in England, 1660–1760', *Journal of Family History*, 7/4 (1982): pp. 406–24. Karen Harvey, 'Men Making Home: Masculinity and Domesticity in Eighteenth-Century Britain', *Gender & History*, 21/3 (2009): pp. 520–40. Michael McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity: Public, Private and the Division of Knowledge* (Baltimore, 2005).

[21] Maxine Berg and Elizabeth Eger (eds), *Luxury in the Eighteenth-Century: Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods* (Basingstoke, 2003); John Styles, *The Dress of the People: Everyday in Fashion in Eighteenth-Century England* (London, 2008); E. Claire Cage, 'The Sartorial Self: Neoclassical Fashion and Gender Identity in France, 1797–1804', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 42/2 (2009): pp. 193–215; Cissie Fairchilds, 'Fashion and Freedom in the French Revolution', *Continuity & Change*, 15/3 (2000): pp. 419–33.

[22] Bob Harris, 'Cultural Change in Provincial Scottish Towns, c.1700–1820', *Historical Journal*, 54/1 (2011): pp. 115–21.

[23] There is a massive literature on women and work, especially in towns. For recent publications on England, see Hannah Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern English Towns, 1760–1830* (Oxford, 2006); Amy Louise Erickson, 'Married Women's Occupations in Eighteenth-century London', *Continuity & Change*, 23 (2008): pp. 267–307; Nicola Phillips, *Women in Business, 1700–1850* (Woodbridge, 2006); Pamela Sharpe, 'Gender in the Economy: Female Merchants and Family Businesses in the British Isles, 1600–1850', *Histoire sociale/Social History*, 34 (2001): pp. 283–306; Rosemary Sweet

the urban economy, both in the physical placement of their businesses in the centres of towns, and in the way they operated in key trades, including inns, bakeries, millinery and printing shops. As she points out, women were as entrepreneurial as their male counterparts, taking out advertisements in the press, forming commercial partnerships and taking on apprentices. Despite this, women were often restricted to niche markets associated with their 'feminine natures', such as teaching, fashion and provisioning, through the regulation of male-dominated corporations and guilds. Moreover, women were unable to translate their economic successes into political power in town governance, like their male counterparts, limiting the level of authority they held within the urban community. Nevertheless, their centrality to the towns, both physically and economically, contributed to women shaping towns as nodes that serviced the urban centre and its hinterlands.

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and Penelope Lane (eds), *On the Town: Women and Urban Life in Eighteenth-Century England* (Aldershot, 2003). Key English language publication on women's work in Europe include, Clare Haru Crowston, *Fabricating Women*: *The Seamstresses of Old Regime France, 1675–1791* (Durham, N.C, 2001) and 'Women, Gender and Guilds in Early Modern Europe', in Jan Lucassen, Tine De Moor and Jan Luiten van Zanden (eds), *The Return of the Guilds, International Review of Social History*, Supplement 16 (2008): pp. 19–44; Dora Dumont, 'Women and Guilds in Bologna: The Ambiguities of Marginality', *Radical History Review*, 70 (1998): pp. 4–25; Angela Groppi, 'A Matter of Fact Rather Than Principle: Women, Work, and Property in Papal Rome', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 7 (2002): pp. 37–55; Daryl M. Hafter, *Women at Work in Preindustrial France* (University Park, PA, 2007); Danielle van den Heuvel, *Women and Entrepreneurship. Female Traders in the Northern Netherlands c. 1580–1815* (Amsterdam, 2007); Nancy Locklin, *Women's Work and Identity in Eighteenth-Century Brittany* (Aldershot, 2007); Elizabeth Musgrave, 'Women and the Craft Guilds in Eighteenth-Century Nantes', in Geoffrey Crossick (ed), *The Artisan and the European Town, 1500–1900* (Aldershot, 1997), pp. 151–72; Sheilagh Ogilvie, *A Bitter Living. Women, Markets and Social Capital in Early Modern Germany* (Oxford, 2003); Ariadne Schmidt, 'Women and Guilds: Corporations and Female Labour Market Participation in Early Modern Holland', *Gender & History*, 21 (2009), pp. 170–89. See also the chapters and bibliography in Anne Montenach and Deborah Simonton (eds), *Gender in the European Town: Female agency in the Urban Economy, 1640–1830* (Routledge, 2013).

In a real sense, formal political power remained off-limits for women, who, like elsewhere in Europe, were expected to support men in their political ambitions.[24] Yet, as Rosalind Carr argues, one of the major continuities of the eighteenth century was the significance of patronage, particularly that of landed families, to social, economic and political life. Performed under a rubric of 'family interest', women from landed families continued to exercise significant levels of power through their exercise of patronage and through their management of family resources. Such behaviour was considered acceptable due to a wider belief in women's legitimate ability to 'persuade' men to act, rather than to hold power in their own right; yet, as Carr notes, there were a number of heiresses who held estates in their own right, as well as widows and women married to absent men. In these contexts, the 'family' interest could become inseparable from 'female' interest.[25]

If land, wealth and familial power allowed women to exceed the conventional boundaries placed on their sex, at the bottom of the social ladder, the limitations polite society placed on women became less meaningful. Poor women were often particularly visible in the public sphere, running errands on streets, washing laundry in local rivers, acting on the public stage, and involved in crime and prostitution.[26] As is suggested by Barclay and

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[24] Elaine Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life, c.1754–1790* (Oxford, 2005); Glover, *Elite Women and Polite Society*, pp. 110–138; K. D. Reynolds, *Aristocratic Women and Political Society in Victorian Britain* (Oxford, 1998).

[25] Alison Wall, 'Elizabethan Precept and Feminine Practice: the Thynne Family of Longleat', *History*, 75 (1990): pp. 23–38; Jacqueline Eales' 'Patriarchy, Puritanism and Politics: the Letters of Lady Brilliana Harley (1598-1643)', in James Daybell and C. Brown (eds), *Women's Letters and Letter-Writing, 1450–1700* (Palgrave, 2001), pp. 143–58; Jane Couchman and Anne Crabb (eds), *Women's Letters Across Europe, 1400–1700: Form and Persuasion* (Aldershot, 2005).

[26] Garthine Walker, *Crime, Gender and Social Order in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2003); Jenny Kermode and Garthine Walker (eds), *Women, Crime and the Courts in Early Modern England,* (London, 1994); Laura Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words and Sex in Early Modern London* (New York, 1996); Jennine Hurl-Eamon, 'The Fiction of Female Dependence and the Makeshift Economy of Soldiers, Sailors, and their Wives in Eighteenth-Century London,' *Labour History*, 49/4 (2008): pp. 481–501; Joanne Bailey, *Unquiet Lives: Marriage and Marriage Breakdown in England, 1660–*

Baloutzova, lower-ranking women also had different attitudes towards sexual behaviour to their more constrained elite sisters; moreover, the association between being in 'public' and sexual activity made poor women particularly vulnerable to sexual assault and rape.[27] Conversely, as Anne-Marie Kilday explores, while polite society promoted the ideal of the passive women in need of male protection, amongst the lower ranks, many women were prepared to protect themselves! Her exploration of assault cases demonstrates that a large number of women engaged in violent assaults and not just in the context of the domestic sphere. As well as their husbands and children, women assaulted customs officers and authority figures, and fought with their male and female neighbours. While opening themselves to prosecution, it is clear that for this social group violence was one possible method for dispute resolution and expression of grievance. By behaving in this way, such women challenged the ideal of female passivity promoted by their social betters, but, at the same time, such behaviour was used to reinforce preconceptions about the 'uncivilised' nature of the lower orders. Like the poor Highland woman and exotic 'natives' of travel texts, violent lower-ranking women were symbolically used to reinforce the civility of polite, urban society, justifying their political and social authority and used to demarcate 'class'

1800 (Cambridge, 2003); Séverine Lancia, 'The Actress and Eighteenth-Century Ideals of Femininity', in Isabelle Baudino, Jacques Carré, Cecile Révauger (eds), *The Invisible Woman, Aspects of Women's Work in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London, 2005), pp. 131–8; Clare A. Lyons, *Sex Among the Rabble: an Intimate History of Gender & Power in the Age of Revolution, Philadelphia, 1730–1830* (Chapel Hill, 2006); Laura Gowing, '"The Freedom of the Streets": Women and Social Place, 1560–1640', in Paul Griffiths and Mark Jenner (eds), *Londinopolis: Essays in the Cultural and Social History of Early Modern London* (Manchester, 2000), pp. 130–53; Anu Korhonen, 'To See and to be Seen: Beauty in the Early Modern London Street,' *Journal of Early Modern History*, 12 (2008): pp. 335–60.

[27] Tim Hitchcock, 'Sociability and Misogyny in the Life of John Cannon, 1684–1743', in Tim Hitchcock and Michele Cohen (eds), *English Masculinities 1660–1800*, (London, 1999), pp. 25–43; Kristina Straub, *Domestic Affairs: Intimacy, Eroticism, and Violence between Servants and Masters in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Baltimore, 2008).

distinctions that were becoming increasingly meaningful to the imagining of society.[28] At the same time, such women remind us of the resilience of alternative cultures and ideals of gendered behaviour that coexist in a single society, challenging our preoccupation with the powerful by demonstrating the possibilities of agency in everyday life.

Moving Forward

A real strength of the current state of the history of women in eighteenth-century Scotland is the placement of women into the narrative of transformation to a modern state. As the further reading bibliography indicates, women's role in creating urban, commercial, polite, Enlightened Scotland comes to the fore as we see them at work, in the home and engaging in the public sphere and civil society. As a result, the histories of women as readers and writers, of women's education, and in civic life are flourishing and indeed, in some areas, lead the field in a wider European context. Similarly, although perhaps on a less certain footing, the history of the eighteenth-century family, marriage, love and sexuality is growing, as is the history of women's work. Yet, these histories have promoted a greater interest in literate and urban women than those elsewhere, as it was such women who are associated with the social change of the period. The histories of women in rural Scotland are much less developed, while with the notable exception of work on crime and that arising from folklore and ballad studies, there is little on women from the lower orders, or their role in creating Enlightened society.[29] How such women created familial and political identities, coped with the demands of service and other forms of work, and spent their leisure time are all areas where more work needs to be done. Similarly, while there is now ongoing research on single women, it is

[28] Dror Wahrman, *Imagining the Middle Class: the Political Representation of Class in Britain, c.1780–1840* (Cambridge, 1995); Catherine Hall and Keith McClelland (eds), R*ace, Nation and Empire. Making Histories, 1750 to the Present* (Manchester, 2010).

[29] For a notable exception see: Rosalind Carr, *Gender and Enlightenment Culture in Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (Edinburgh, forthcoming).

concentrated on women of the middling and upper classes.[30] How widows and the unmarried survived and flourished at other social levels, and the nature of their family and intimate relationships are still to be written.

Moreover, as Carr's chapter in this volume suggests, the focuses on change and transformation has distracted historians from the continuities of women's experiences and indeed, tended to draw our focus to the end of the eighteenth century. The early decades are often viewed in terms of 'what came before', but not in their own right. If 'politeness' was the dominant model for social relationships in the latter half of the century, what discourse, if any, predominated before and how did this shape women's experiences. If elite society was not as homogenized during this period, why not and what allowed that process of homogenization to happen? Moreover, did women from other social groups experience similar changes, or was life in rural Scotland marked by greater stability?

At the same time, such histories will require new methodologies as the focus on female subjectivity, emotion and embodied experience, that has posed these questions, has relied heavily on 'narratives of self', that is the letters, diaries and other writings of the literate classes. Yet, as Barclay and Batlouzova's work indicates, an imaginative investigation of oral culture can start to answer these questions, while Kilday's work on court records reminds us that this source is surprisingly underused in a Scottish context. Similarly, the use of visual and material culture can provide a new set of sources and a new dimension to our understanding of the past.[31] Combined with methodologies around space and performance,

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[30] Alison Duncan, 'The Never-Married Gentlewoman, 1740–1835', *Women's History Review*, 63 (2010): pp. 11–18; Stana Nenadic, 'Experience and Expectations in the Transformation of the Highland Gentlewoman, 1680 to 1820', *Scottish Historical Review*, 80 (2001): pp. 201–20.

[31] Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors;* Harvey, *The Little Republic*; Jane Hamlett, *Material Relations: Families and Middle-Class Domestic Interiors in England, 1850–1910* (Manchester, 2010).

women from all walks of life can be given greater dimension and women's lives in eighteenth-century Scotland brought to the fore.[32]

[32] Barclay and Richardson, 'Introduction'; Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Minneapolis, 1994).