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## INTRODUCTION

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#### I: PREAMBLE

This book has various aims. The second part of the Introduction will specify them more explicitly. However, the overarching one is to help enhance the contour of Scottish Reformation studies and increase awareness of them on the larger map of the European Reformation of which it was umbilically a part. It might well be that the Reformation in Scotland is a particular illustration of the wider increasingly “lost Reformation.” However, this collection aspires to help put a brake on the deletion by stealth of the Scottish authentic version of what was generally “once a visible landmark on the mental or spiritual horizon of both Protestants and Catholics.”<sup>1</sup>

The “civil society” of modern Scotland attempts to ride two horses in search of a mean between a declared multi-culturalism on the one hand and an undeclared, French-style *laïcité* on the other. While keeping trappings of its earlier statutory profile, the reunited (Reformed) Church of Scotland mutated in 1930 from being an historically “established,” quasi-state Church to a free “national” one by courtesy. There are unflattering statistics about church membership and attendance, and the now near equal but also declining strength of the Roman Catholic Church following Irish and other immigration since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This means that the country obviously shares in the modern secularization typical of western Europe but not of the bulk of the rest of the world. Hence, ideas, study, and practice of

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<sup>1</sup> Bruce Gordon, “History and Memory,” in *The Oxford Handbook of The Protestant Reformations*, edited by Ulinka Rublack (New York, 2017), 765–786 (here: 766).

religion in its current and historical Christian forms have a diminishing appeal due to alienation, perceived morbidity, or casual indifference. Further, in urban centres, redundant churches and synagogues have closed or been pulled down, while fine mosques and Sikh temples have sprung up. In this changed landscape, invoking the “Reformation” in the Scottish “public” sphere arouses various levels of awareness. First, a genuinely religious and Church tradition among other religions and denominations, but believed to be declining. Second, recycling of an old cultural and national identity increasingly detached from spiritual dimensions. Third, endlessly recurrent and problematic motifs in literary culture and the arts such as Knox, “Calvinism,” Mary queen of Scots and Jenny Geddes, the perennial favourites. Fourth, heritage trails with Reformation resonance (martyrs, Covenanters, and Catholic sites as well) for tourists and family or clan history societies. Fifth, anachronistic traces of both street and closet religio-political sectarianism that still linger as occasional nuisance factors, but usually not more than that.

A combined effect of all this in Scotland within the modern secularized context has been a perceptibly increasing inhibition about formally and publicly commemorating the Reformation, general or Scottish. Exceptions have been special-interest local manifestations and academic colloquies glad to have a topical theme. In recent years, the traditional annual “Reformation Day” service in churches recalling 31 October 1517 has mostly lapsed. However, 2017 did see Scottish participation, ecclesiastical and academic, at home and abroad, in that quincentenary, but only with dim awareness nationwide.

In 1960, there had been public commemoration of the Scottish Reformation event of 400 years previously, when the old Scottish Parliament passed legislation abolishing Catholicism and adopting a Protestant confession of faith. This ushered in the beginning of a new Scotland spiritually linked to parallel new alignments abroad. The 1960 occasion was relatively low-key, organized mainly by the Church of Scotland and included royal and civic

presences. Any potential for triumphalism ceded to the contemporary ecumenical atmosphere, since the meeting of the Second Vatican Council was imminent. Anyway, the leadership of the Church of Scotland at the time, a liberal, evangelical, and Scoto-Catholic coalition, had little interest in the existential battles and apparently sterile dogmas of yore, also perceived by the bulk of the political classes as “the arcane, inflammatory religious struggles of the Reformation.”<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, the “celebration” was firmly historicized. The first monarch since James VI to address the Kirk’s General Assembly recalling the event, Queen Elizabeth II took counsel and struck the preferred keynote. She referred to the Reformation as “a distant turning point in the nation’s life.” At the time – and even more so now – that reflected the view in the mainstream political and ecclesiastical establishments as well as in wider public opinion. The Reformation had become an ancient ancestral landmark. In educated circles, the old Whig view of history was prevalent, seeing the Reformation as a stepping stone of progress from obscurantism to “civilized” modernity (overlooking the British Isles civil wars, the French Wars of Religion, and the Thirty Years War).

In 2010, events and non-events surrounding the 450th anniversary of the Scottish Reformation generated an understanding leading to remarkable conceptual confusion. The Church of Scotland declined to head any kind of “national” celebrations, seen by her as somehow indiscreet in modern circumstances. Instead, she confined itself to intramural and low-key religious services of commemoration, although still public. This inhibition not only provoked complaints from traditional and committed Protestant voices but also other cries of “scandal.” These came from what one might call the professional custodians of an atmospheric cultural and national identity or tradition to be proud of. This disaffection had nothing to do with a yearning for the fundamental and epochal theological insights of the

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<sup>2</sup> Michael Lynch, “Reformation,” in *The Oxford Companion to Scottish History*, edited by Michael Lynch (Oxford and New York, 2001), 500.

Reformation. The Scottish Reformation was indeed a good thing, they said, and ought to be more publicly celebrated. This was largely due, however, to what it did for education (if in fact only aspirational) but chiefly to its perceived role as preparing the way for the Scottish Enlightenment. This view gained publicity at the time, endorsed by some few scholars, public intellectuals, pundits and a few Church leaders, but less so by historians of ideas, church historians and Reformation historians.

Various secondary features of the Reformation were indeed progressive. One can cite: free access to Scriptures, enhanced and especially female literacy, desacralization of religious institutions and buildings, scepticism of authority exercised by individuals, critique of traditions, abolition of spiritual hierarchies, lay participation in the running of the institutional Church, poor relief strategies, sanctification of ordinary secular vocations and work, input on equity in jurisprudence and law, and others. But sometimes there has been an element of amnesia about primary Reformation principles, which are less comfortable for modernity. Their basis was in exclusive divine revelation (*sola scriptura*), all-pervasive theocratic assumptions and their implementation, divine rather than human rights, negative views of human nature and reason, predetermined faith, and divine election, as well as mandatory public uniformity and compliance in religion. This was radically alien to enlightenment notions of optimistic anthropology, a high view of “natural theology,” individualistic freedom of conscience, human autonomy in the soteriological sphere (faith optional), permissible religious dissent and tolerance, independent ethical choices, religious scepticism, privatized religion, and an offstage Deity.

True, 2010 was a couple of years before Brad Gregory’s controversial bestseller muddying the waters further: *The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society* (2012). This caused dismay among those who appreciated the Reformation on religious grounds, or at least understood well its primary motivations. For

Gregory was saying that the Reformation (as a consequence of its impact or reception history) was ultimately a bad thing. This was due to its unpremeditated outcome of forming a symbiosis with the later Enlightenment. This opened the sluice-gates of secularization and the implosion of western Christendom and Christianity. The Reformation had unwittingly spawned rudderless “hyperpluralism,” the bane of modernity. In a later essay, Gregory reiterated that the long-term but accidental effect of the Protestant Reformation was

the disembedding of Christianity from the rest of life ... the emergence of the familiar concept of “religion” as something separate ... from public life ... regarded essentially as a matter of individuals’ interior beliefs plus their preferred worship and devotional practices ... Resolute confessionalizing efforts [Protestant and Catholic] ... would provide a crucial part of the background for the dominant liberationist narrative of modernity, viewed as a trajectory from oppressive premodern religious restrictiveness to modern national secular autonomy, first forged in different national Enlightenment contexts and no less evident today in various postmodern manifestations.<sup>3</sup>

Such a monocausal analysis (blame the Reformation) has met opposition. For example, there was a reminder that the seeds of secularization were already in Renaissance humanism preceding the Reformation; the latter was also in part a reaction against the former. Thus, if public discourse in 2010 Scotland projected a joyful link between the Reformation and the Scottish Enlightenment, it was hardly in the sense of Gregory’s logic. Nor was it in the sense of the key figure of the Scottish Enlightenment, David Hume. For him, the Scottish Reformation was a really bad thing but only in its implementation, personnel, and style devoid of reasonableness. The Anglophile Hume’s visceral excoriation of not only the Scottish Reformation, but also the Scottish people of the time as coarse, rough, culturally challenged, and maladroit in everything, has had influence ever since among

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<sup>3</sup> Brad S. Gregory, “Disembedding Christianity: The Reformation Era and the Secularization of Western Society,” in *Reformation und Säkularisierung: Zur Kontroverse um die Genese der Moderne aus dem Geist der Reformation*, edited by Ingolf U. Dalferth (Tübingen, 2017), 25–55 (here: 37, 44).

articulate, though ill-informed strains of public opinion. His perception, rather than old Catholic polemical tradition, accounts largely for the ultra-negative image of Knox and his fellow-ministers. This has always had wide circulation in Scotland and elsewhere among denigrators practised in hyperbolic rhetoric. Yet part of Hume's instincts was right. No Enlightenment, modern or postmodern thinker can live with the Reformation's super-Augustinian negative anthropology, comprehensiveness of original sin and distrust of reason; yet one did not have to be "barbaric" to subscribe to that.<sup>4</sup>

Overall, therefore, there are obvious hazards in the current politically correct association between the Scottish Reformation and the Scottish Enlightenment. Moreover, the slightly surrealist aspect of the 2010 occasion was enhanced by what was also the year chosen by the Scottish Catholic Church for the Pope's invited visit Scotland. The event was certainly in an ecumenical spirit, as one would expect from a German Pope with informed respect for the Reformation. Indeed, in the invented "St Ninian's Day Parade" staged by the Catholic organisers and which included a procession of illustrious Christian figures from Scotland's past, John Knox was among them. Not only that. He (played by an actor) was also available "for interview."

And then there was the period around 2014/15. This was at least notionally the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of John Knox's birth of which there were no prominent public commemorations or even conferences apart from small gatherings. The apparent grounds for public reticence at the time were that since a Scottish independence referendum was imminent (2014), such profiling of Knox, still culturally *déclassé* anyway, might help disturb the socio-political equilibrium with sectarian overtones. Yet the statues of Knox in Edinburgh and Glasgow were not at risk. Such angst is in contrast to comfortable Reformation commemorations of all

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<sup>4</sup> For choice forgotten quotations from Hume's writings, see W. Ian P. Hazlett, *The Reformation in Britain and Ireland* (London & New York, 2003), 117–121.

kinds that take place intermittently in other countries and rarely with hard-edged confessional or factional dimensions. While declared or undeclared religious preferences of individuals are perfectly legitimate, all of Scotland's religious past across the spectrum belongs to everyone in a sense (not just "ours" or "theirs"). One might wish that it had been different or better, and give further reflection to semantic distinctions between "marking," "honouring," "commemorating," "celebrating," "recognizing" and "acknowledging" such occasions. Such a word-choice issue has continually come up in Scottish public conversation since 1960. Modern Knox narratives like the recent low-temperature one by Jane Dawson may help resolve that, as may also cathartic effects of the spin-dryer approach to select traditions of Scottish Reformation and Counter-Reformation historiography by David Manning in this volume.

The rest of this Introduction has two parts. The first is discussion relating to the Reformation in Scotland and how it has been, and may be, approached almost half a millennium later. The second is a brief guide with commentary on the contents of this book.

## II. APPROACHING THE REFORMATION IN SCOTLAND

Despite the reported death of chronology, the evaporation of narrative history, and the loss or recession of the Reformation in general, 24 August 1560 is still with hindsight a significant date and major fissure in the history of Scotland.<sup>5</sup> What came to be a seismic shift was part of

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<sup>5</sup> Convenient orientations for some past and present themes, approaches, issues, persons and perceptions relating to the Reformation in Scotland include: Michael Lynch, "Reformation," in *The Oxford Companion to Scottish History*, edited by Michael Lynch (Oxford and New York, 2002), 500–504; Michael Lynch, "In Search of the Scottish Reformation," in *Scottish History: The Power of the Past*, edited by Edward J. Cowan and Richard J. Finlay (Edinburgh, 2002), 74–94; Hazlett, *Reformation in Britain and Ireland*, 121–133; Jenny Wormald, "Reformed and Godly Scotland," in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Scottish History*, edited by Thomas Devine and Jenny Wormald (Oxford and New York, 2012), 191–204; Keith M. Brown, "Early Modern Scottish History: A Survey," *Scottish Historical Review* 92, no. 234 (2013): 5–24; and now especially John McCallum, "Introduction," in *Scotland's Long Reformation: New Perspectives on Scottish Religion, c.1500-c.1660*, edited



a politicized pro-Reformation surge in parts of western Europe at the time. It affected England and Ireland, France, the Rhineland Palatinate and presently the Netherlands. This was the “Second Reformation,” part of a wider process of the “confessionalization” (Protestant and Catholic) of regions, nations, states, and kingdoms of Europe and as a mutation of what existed before. While at the religious level in Scotland, as elsewhere, there were pre-existing Lutheran, Zwinglian, Erasmian, Catholic reform and old dissenting streams, the orientation of the favoured doctrine now was predominantly to “Geneva,” as one often reads. This centre was traditionally called “Calvinist” (a word repugnant to Calvin). But even by the 1560s, that simplistic designation ceded to the broader concept of “Reformed.” This followed from the accommodation that had taken place between theologies of Geneva, Zurich, and Heidelberg, was obvious in learned Scotland at the time. Yet a body of Lutheran literature also flourished in Scotland well after 1560.

On 17 August “Year of God” 1560, the unicameral Parliament of Scotland ratified a confession of faith diverging in various fundamentals from the traditional national religion, the *fides catholica*. There followed the abolition of papal authority and the Roman Mass in the country a week later, on 24 August. This announced the proscription of public Catholicism. This was similar to procedures which had taken place much earlier in Zurich, Berne, Strasbourg, other parts of Germany, Geneva and England. The Scottish legislation was not so much in response to popular public opinion but (like everywhere else) a clear

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by John McCallum (Leiden, 2016), 1–26. A convenient mapping of Scottish Reformation studies and trends since 1960 is by Kenneth J. Stewart, “The Early Scottish Reformation in Recent Research: Literature Since 1960,” *Haddington House Journal* 17 (2017): 122–130. On the wider contextual frame of reference and for modern climate changes which have taken place within general Reformation research (and that also impinge on the Scottish branch) see, for example, Marc Foster, Bruce Gordon, Joel Harrington, Thomas Kaufmann and Ute Lotz-Heumann, “Forum: Religious History beyond Confessionalization,” *German History* 32, no. 4 (2014): 579–598.

statement of a top-down “magisterial Reformation” in which rulers and churchmen cooperated to impose a revised Christianity and restructured Church. But in contrast to other confessionalizing countries, institutional forms of the new state religion in Scotland were mostly provisional and deferred.

The new situation did not achieve legality until 1567 due to the understandable refusal of the Catholic monarch, Mary Stewart, to assent to it. In the famous tradition of misquoting a remark by St Jerome in something of an analogous context 1200 years earlier, one wonders how many Scots woke up on 25 August 1560 to learn that they were now Protestant, or at least no longer Catholic.<sup>6</sup> The image is good melodrama, but bad history. In his influential book on the Scottish Reformation in a long-standing tradition of Protestant “anti-Calvinism,” Gordon Donaldson observed:

From many points of view the year 1560, the conventional date of the Scottish Reformation, is not very significant, and must have been much less definitive in the eyes of contemporaries than it has come to be in the textbooks. Many changes had already taken place before 1560; contemporaries might have been hard put to it to define exactly what changes, if any, had been legally and constitutionally made in 1560; and after 1560 offices and emoluments remained substantially in the hands of those who had enjoyed them before.<sup>7</sup>

Discuss. That sort of statement initiated a generation of debate between Donaldson and writers like M. Lynch, J. Kirk, and I. Cowan about continuity and discontinuity in the Scottish Reformation. This related tacitly to what in general Reformation historiography appeared as a process of upgrading the *pre-Réforme* to a common “reform” and “reformation” endeavour which had a long history behind and in front of it.

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<sup>6</sup> Referring to the heterodox Arian hijacking of the Western Church Council of Rimini around 360, Jerome remarked: “Ingemuit totus orbis, et Arianum se esse miratus est” [The entire world groaned and was amazed to find itself Arian]; Jerome, “Altercatio Luciferiani et orthodoxi” 19, in *Patrologia Latina* 23, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne (Paris, 1883), col. 181B.

<sup>7</sup> Gordon Donaldson, *The Scottish Reformation* (London, 1960), 74. For a brilliant and still relevant review article on the book by A.C. Cheyne, see *SJT* 16, no. 1 (1963): 78–88.

There have also been more emotive ways of viewing 1560. The most enthusiastic one saw the date as one of liberation and exodus. This was from Babylonian spiritual bondage climaxing in deliverance to the promised land of a Scottish Israel shaped by the Evangel and directed by godly monarchs rather than a profane aristocracy, a secularized Church and the see of anti-Christian Rome. This culminated, according to accounts, in the erection of a redoubtable “fortress of Calvinism,” to outsiders a mostly negative trope still beloved to this day by various writers. That apart, the deliverance concept as well as commitment to rescuing pure worship in the Church and nation from papal confinement were subjectively true for sincere people at the time. Yet things did not quite turn out like that, as testified by the lamentations and depressions of John Knox, by Kirk general assemblies and James VI from his perspective of wishing to reform the limping Reformation. If there were secular disasters and afflictions, that was God’s punishment of an unrepentant nation. The Protestant Reformation in Scotland may well have produced individuals and groups who without coercion were indeed regenerate, righteous, and exemplary. Yet the goal of corporate sanctification of society through evangelical (or sacramental) grace was not realized any more noticeably than it had been anywhere else, Protestant (or Roman Catholic). The disillusionment was common, and victories were often Pyrrhic. Ways of understanding it at the time differed widely depending on the theological analysis. The re-Christianization of an apparently sub-Christian population had only limited effect. This is contrary perhaps to over-optimistic views on early-modern European evangelization as part of the ancient project of the “Christianization of Christianity.” Such optimistically transformative goals had been highlighted in the last generation by Jean Delumeau, historian of religious mentalities. However, responsible for a degree of disappointment was either passive resistance, or exaggerated expectations associated with the quest for collective sanctification (the new

Protestant and Catholic visions of asceticism-for-all), or flaws in the messaging.<sup>8</sup> It is not clear that corporate public fasts in Reformed Scotland improved anything. And in 17<sup>th</sup>-century Scotland as elsewhere, there began a pietist retreat from the failed godly society of the external world to enthusiastic search for the divine internally in the sphere of the individual soul. A number of essays in this volume allude to this adjustment.

One can exemplify another even more pessimistic pole with the disconsolate words of an exiled Scottish Catholic writer. In a writing (composed abroad) aimed at a general European and Catholic audience, George Thomson wrote of dystopian religious and national chaos in Scotland following its apostasy:

From that time [the open defection of 1560] the kingdom was on fire with civil war, was so polluted with massacre and bloodshed that nought else seemed to exist but a permanent shambles ... and a whirlpool of misfortune ... a kingdom sadly degenerate.<sup>9</sup>

That was apocalyptic hyperbole, but whatever debacle there was not everlasting, at least not beyond the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Earlier, a Scottish Jesuit complained of “the actions of the “ministers of Calvin, the sole cause of every disaster and misfortune of our poor country.”<sup>10</sup> A recent essay has highlighted further such sentiments of Hay. In a letter of dedication to the Reformed orthodox King James VI, prefacing his unpublished “Apologia” of 1598 (over 1000 pages that failed to get an imprimatur from the Catholic authorities), Hay wrote hopefully: “you should easily perceive that the doctrine of the Calvinists is the most hideous

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<sup>8</sup> See, for example, the last chapter of Scott H. Hendrix, *Recultivating the Vineyard: The Reformation Agendas of Christianization* (Louisville, KY, 2004).

<sup>9</sup> Georgius Thomsonus, *De antiquitate Christianae religionis apud Scotos* (Rome, 1594); English trsl., *The Antiquity of the Christian Religion Among the Scots*, ed. Henry D. Law (Edinburgh, 1904), 131.

<sup>10</sup> John Hay, *Certaines Demandes Concerning the Christian Religion and Discipline, Proponed to the Ministers of the New Pretended Kirk of Scotland* (Paris, 1580), 3. There was also a French translation.

monster formed for a large part out of the most pernicious heresies of the ancient heretics.”<sup>11</sup> Both binary poles, Catholic and Protestant, were embedded in one or other utopian religious orthodoxy of traditional apocalyptic discourses and in both cases represent clerical perceptions.

Scotland as a whole was an asymmetrically defined country, topographically and meteorologically challenging and accompanied by marked political, social, and economic imbalances. Like elsewhere, the population outside the main towns and the limited political nation had hardly much sense initially of what was going on. It was only after about three generations that the majority in the territory became identifiably Protestant after various trial-and-error processes of re-education, inculcation, peer-pressure, and government direction in coordination with the Church. The context was the traditional one of a Christian nation belonging to transnational Christendom. A recognizable date of birth of the Reformation in Scotland has its advantages for writers and learners. It puts Scotland on a par with those Continental reformations with clearly defined “beginnings.” This is in contrast to the neighbouring English Reformation’s delivery sequence over a quarter of a century, namely: “maybe yes – maybe no – yes – no – yes.” That shifting-sands example does not make historiographical procedure easier. As observed by one writer: “Historians now cannot decide when the [English] Reformation occurred.”<sup>12</sup> As for Scotland, that is not so much the question as: when did the Scottish Reformation get off the ground in a manner that everyone could feel at home and relax? – particularly in the spheres of evangelization, Church management and housekeeping.

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<sup>11</sup> In Jan Machielsen, “A History of Early Modern Catholicism in a Single Object: John Hay's Manuscript *Apologia* (c.1598),” *British Academy Review* 26 (2016): 64–68 (here: 65 and n. 22).

<sup>12</sup> Rosemary O’Day, *The Debate on the English Reformation*, 2<sup>nd</sup> rev. edn (Manchester & New York, 2014), 267.

One may also distinguish between the Protestant “Reformation in Scotland” as conveying a religious vision, theological ideas, structural programmes, devotional practices, and pieties on the one hand, and a more diffuse “Scottish Reformation” as an all-inclusive term embracing “church and society” or (nowadays) “religion and society” on the other. In the latter, the “Reformation” was more the swaddling clothes of a rapidly mutating nation and “state.” However, this book is more tilted to the idea of “Reformation in Scotland,” while acknowledging that during the era interaction with all aspects of society was ineluctable. Accordingly, following an exponential growth of innovative methodologies, diagnostic analyses and agenda-settings in both general and Reformation history, studies on the “Scottish Reformation” since the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have evolved from being predominantly reflections on the origins and evolution of Scottish Protestantism, or on the failure of Scottish Catholicism, to something different. The habit had been to characterize this transformation as a departure from mono-dimensional religio-political history along with the other so-called “traditional” approaches of ecclesiastical history and history of doctrine. These are sometimes associated with hints of confessional bias and partisanship, or at least narrowness. The modern aspiration (ideologically neutral?) has been to a comprehensive, value free, and disinterested advance into a new land of opportunities embracing the entire context of Scottish appropriation of the Reformation and its results. Consequently, the quest for the historical Reformation in Scotland (like the Reformation elsewhere) has become integrated with the drive to illuminate its total experiential and environmental history in all its ramifications. This expanding moss-gathering stone relates not just to the Church and religion, but also the kingdom or nation or state or society or national identity in their multiple contexts, formats, cultures, institutions, and processes.<sup>13</sup> The impact of the multi-

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<sup>13</sup> Points of departure are, for example, Roger A. Mason, “Usable Pasts: History and Identity in Reformation Scotland,” *SHR* 76, no. 201 (1997): 54–68; Michael Lynch, “A Nation Born Again. Scottish Identity in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” in *Image and Identity:*

dimensional approach to history and time associated originally with the *Annales* school has been significant.

The mutual coinherence of all these elements within what was still an overarching religious and Christian framework justifies an expanding concept of Scottish Reformation history, with two provisos alerting against a new reductionism. First, that there is no enhanced marginalization of the ecclesiological, theological, and philosophical dimensions of these narratives as epiphenomena or jettisoned as passé and beyond the concerns of post-Enlightenment and of modern, largely post-Christian educated people. One might indeed justifiably complain to church historians and historians of theology and philosophy about the risks of “flight from history.” Similarly, socio-political historians should not evade intellectual thought-worlds, including theology, as inaccessible holy (or alien) ground. Second, that an interdisciplinary rather than a co-disciplinary modus operandi does not elbow out the religious “Reformation” in a complex landscape of multiple cultural identities and evanescent contingencies. If one views early-modern Christianity, genuine or nominal, as one identity badge alongside a range of others in a society which still perceived itself as part of “Christendom”, the picture will be hazy. For before the Enlightenment, the Christian religion in Europe was omnipresent and bearing on all aspects of individual and collective life. Its use of ancient distinctions between spiritual and secular, godly and ungodly, holy, and profane, did not detract from that.

Understandably, there is a tendency among modern civil and cultural historians to consider “religion,” but more particularly “theology,” to be an enigma triggering academic distancing. Those words, like “doctrine,” have had negative connotations. But airbrushing

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*The Making and Re-making of Scotland Through the Ages*, edited by Dauvit Broun, R.J. Finlay and Michael Lynch (Edinburgh, 1998), 82–104. See also chapter 25 by Arthur Williamson in this volume.

religious thought out of the big picture will hardly enhance its authenticity or totality; rather it signals “a hopelessly ahistorical position.”<sup>14</sup>

However, second thoughts have been evident, suggesting that one cannot leave them alone completely. One commentator has noted in relation to Reformation Scotland that “the focus of study is moving away from ecclesiastical politics and structures to religious belief and practices.”<sup>15</sup> On reflection, one might not be initially sure that “religious belief” here means theology – biblical, dogmatic, or philosophical – rather: empirical religious manifestations. These include collective popular piety, individual devotional expressions, religious politics (or the new politics of religion), forms of social care, learned and unlearned Christian cultures to name but a few, that is: lived religion or phenomenology of religion.<sup>16</sup> This has activated a socio-cultural history-of-religion methodology akin to the school of *l’histoire des mentalités* and its associated case studies and microstudies in the pursuit of “total history.” Such opening up of the socio-religious and cultural life of the people in various contexts has also affected Scottish Reformation studies positively, also now increasingly elastic.<sup>17</sup> It will, however, work best when intensive analysis of records is not

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<sup>14</sup> Heiko A. Oberman, *The Reformation. Roots and Ramifications* (London and New York, 2004), 204. For incisive and balanced discussion of the whole issue, see *ibid.*, 201–208.

<sup>15</sup> Brown, “Early Modern Scottish History,” 12–13.

<sup>16</sup> Corresponding to what Brown seems to have anticipated, there has indeed in recent years been a flowering of studies in the history of thought and ideas – see n. 24 below.

<sup>17</sup> For example, Margo Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland* (New Haven and London, 2002) and other of her writings also alluded to in this volume. Examples of other themes involving religion in pursuit of the totality are represented recently by Elizabeth Ewan and Janay Nugent, eds, *Finding the Family in Medieval and Early Modern Scotland* (London, 2018); Michelle D. Brock, *Satan and the Scots. The Devil in Post-Reformation Scotland, c.1560-1700* (London, 2016). Apart from demonology, there is also a genre of productive studies on witchcraft and its persecution by state and church that was pioneered by Christina Larner’s *Enemies of God* (Oxford, 1983); a section of chapter 20 by Elizabeth Ewan in this *Companion* devotes some attention to the topic. And in the wider public sphere, for an important study on Kirk-managed social welfare grounded in realigned religious imperatives binding on, and for the benefit of, the whole community, not just merit-



wholly divorced from the sources and reception of the underlying formative ideas and doctrines. It is hardly profitable to replace articulations of belief in a divine presence and providence that functioned at the time *exclusively* with exposure to the mystery and brutal arbitrariness of contingency as imagined centuries later – so what?

New angles and viewpoints have, then, opened and broadened the whole field,<sup>18</sup> with impact on Scottish Reformation studies as well.<sup>19</sup> Modern research increasingly focuses on them and there are reflections of that in this book. Was there success or failure and how can one measure it? As for the dynamics of Reformation processes: how far was it popular and pressed for from below? How slow or fast? How far was it proactively ushered in by the upper echelons of society and coercively imposed, or just let to optimistically drip down?<sup>20</sup> How far did things change and how far did they remain the same? Did, for example, the dogged persistence of presbyterian ideas and corporate decision-making in the Scottish Kirk reflect a radicalized vein of continuity with the late-medieval Scottish Catholic Church's partiality for conciliarism? Was the "annual" Communion service de facto accommodation to medieval popular habit? Regarding women: did things become better or worse with first: the desacramentalization and reconfiguration of marriage into something hallowed by mutual love and not just a vehicle of procreation; second: encouraging female literacy and affirming spiritual equality but then reducing vocational options outside marriage and thereby

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seeking individuals, see John McCallum, *Poor Relief and the Church in Scotland, 1560-1650* (Edinburgh, 2018); this book is best taken together with Esther Chung-Kim, *Economics of Faith: Reforming Poor Relief in Early Modern Europe*. Oxford Studies in Historical Theology (New York, 2021).

<sup>18</sup> A good example of the panoply of possibilities is in Rublack, *Protestant Reformations*.

<sup>19</sup> The Reformation in Scotland "is now the subject of a rapidly developing and rich historiography;" Felicity Heal, "The English, Irish and Scottish Reformations," *ibid*, 233. See also n. 4 above and nn. 27 and 28 below (citing collected rather than monograph studies).

<sup>20</sup> Themes in the Scottish context discussed in some of Michael Lynch's writings; for an English comparison, cf. O'Day, *The Debate*, 152–154, 161–164,

enhancing patriarchy? – rather like Luther’s reported saying that women’s world was “church, kitchen, and children.” How far were the preachers autonomously inspirational (like Patrick Hamilton, George Wishart, Knox, or John Craig) and how far were they spiritualized mouthpieces of new, increasingly vested and clashing interests? Example of these are centralizing nation-state builders, essential for the process of confessionalization; land-grabbing classes seeking legitimacy; a state-capturing nobility; a rising and anti-ecclesiastical bourgeoisie embodied in assertive craft guilds, jurists and “civil servants;”<sup>21</sup> allegedly Calvinist but failed capitalism (hard work, interest rates, strict time-keeping); groups of often displaced and exploited agricultural labourers seeking the justice that the Old Testament prophets often called for? Or how far was the Reformation in any of its formats, including the Catholic Reform or Counter-Reformation, also an adaptation to prior Renaissance and Christian humanism among the cosmopolitan educated minority who were also churchmen? Cardinal David Beaton, David Lyndsay, George Buchanan, and Andrew Melville were all in diverse ways Renaissance humanists among other identities.

There is also the prickly question of national identity or patriotism. Did Protestant Scots feel more “Scottish” than they had been in the earlier Catholic dispensation, as happened speedily in their southern neighbour? Moreover, how far was the “Scottish” Reformation quintessentially Scottish in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, bearing in mind continued and expanding networking with Continental, English, and Irish spheres? Or was it simply the Scottish expression of a pan-European movement in church and society that in one way or other, openly, mutely, or clandestinely, had a meteorological presence on the entire Continent from Crete to Iceland, from Seville to Cracow, Florence to Galway? The Reformation predisposition was always mutually recognizable, the passwords and ciphers

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<sup>21</sup> As an antidote to the conventional praising (or blaming) the nobility, see the now virtually forgotten essay by W. Stanford Reid, “The Middle Class Factor in the Scottish Reformation,” *Church History* 16, no. 2 (1947), 137–153.

were religious and cultural but not inherently stapled to national or ethnic identities. It was in later eras that confessional and patriotic identities became more obviously intertwined right across the religio-political spectrums.

This leads to the next conundrum. 1560 apart – when was the Scottish Reformation set in motion? Easy to answer if official dates are the criteria, but otherwise a matter of debate if one includes prior movements or manifestations. And not so much: when did it end? as: how long did it take to become a vibrantly established, institutionalized tradition as part of the national tapestry before fading? Such questions are, of course, raised about the Reformation in general. And since they involve not only chronological issues, but also semantic ones, the old secure sluice-gates which used to determine diachronic orientation are now completely open. Just as the German Reformation used to begin in 1517 and ended in 1555, so the Scottish Reformation began around 1557 and seems to end with the Second Book of Discipline in 1578. In the meantime, everything has changed utterly and terribly. What was previously “short” has become “long.” With that, certain keywords changed their meaning as well. “The Reformation” used to mean the “Protestant Reformation.” The convention was to represent the Catholic side of things by “Catholic Reform” (pre-Trent) merged with the “Counter-Reformation” (Tridentine). All that seemed to work well, despite some awareness that the expression “*reformatio ecclesiae*” as applied to an ailing Church originated in medieval Catholic circles. It went back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century canonist, Guillaume Durand, and later adopted by 15<sup>th</sup>-century conciliarist reformers (supported by the Old Scottish Church) as a signature tune. This helps to make sense of the modern deconfessionalization of “Reformation.” There is no longer exclusive entitlement to it. Equal rights prevail, so that the current usages are “Catholic Reformation” and “Protestant Reformation” – allowing for the fact that there are problems with the words “Catholic” and “Protestant” as well.

A recent essay stimulated the process of conceptual demythologizing by tantalizingly suggesting that the Scottish Reformation was not Protestant.<sup>22</sup> The aim was to show that the Reformation in Scotland was part of a continuum of reform and reformation impulses of Catholic origins since the late-medieval era, which is to say, a desire to reform abuses, malpractices, and Church government as well. Holmes's article echoed, among other things, themes in a piece by Hans J. Hillerbrand a decade previously: "Was there a Reformation in the Sixteenth Century?"<sup>23</sup> There were some sighs of relief when the answer was affirmative, but with new questions: Was the Reformation a radical departure with the past? What was the "Reformation era?" Were 16<sup>th</sup>-century changes in church and society less dramatic than previously thought because they were not in fact especially new? – due to a belief that "coming events cast their shadows before."<sup>24</sup> For the Scottish context this recalled points raised by Gordon Donaldson over 50 years previously, as mentioned above. In regard to the Reformation overall, it also echoed the work of Bernd Moeller in Tübingen since the 1960s. He had helped Reformation historians rediscover a "late middle ages" beyond the old paradigm of dissenting pre-Reformation forerunners. Much of the continuity-change debate now also seems to hinge on whether one uses upper or lower case: Reformation or reformation? As already said, the word had been in circulation for centuries. That said, there is hardly any doubt that the Scottish Parliament sensed something completely different when in 1525 and thereafter it banned the import of Lutheran books into the country.

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<sup>22</sup> Stephen M. Holmes, "The Scottish Reformation was not Protestant." In *Perspectives on the Church in Scotland*, edited by David Brown, Special Issue of *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 14, no. 2 (2014): 115–127.

<sup>23</sup> *Church History* 72 (2003): 525–552.

<sup>24</sup> Thomas Campbell, "Lochiel's Warning," in *The Poetical Works of Thomas Campbell* (London, n.d.), 137.

However, it is not only a question of the genesis of the Reformation in Scotland, but also its duration, or when it became “settled.” The continuum has become elastic at both ends. The traditional narratives usually ended sometime between 1560 and 1578. But quasi-permanent ecclesiastical instability has justified the increasing trend of pushing the terminus ad quem forward to various dates between 1592 and 1690. Following the title of John McCallum’s book,<sup>25</sup> the expression of “long Reformation” has currency in regard to Scotland. There is no consensus about an endpoint, but this trend coincides with another one which is shifting the centre of gravity of Scottish Reformation studies to the 17<sup>th</sup>-century and to the new “British (and Irish) dimension” from the union of the three Crowns in 1603 onwards. That changed the playing field in not only the British, but also the wider European context.

Since the 1990s, leading names in the forefront of broader discussions on the general issue of the Reformation beginnings and ends also include Bernd Hamm and Heinz Schilling, with questions of periodization having priority. Hamm has highlighted a Protestant theological revolution that was coincidental with major, pre-existing, infrastructural processes of change in culture and society that were independent and centripetal, both universally (in Europe) and locally.<sup>26</sup> Incidentally, this analysis might help explain why the 1560 Reformation in Scotland was unusually dramatic: two simultaneous revolutions, religious and political, with a kind of encore in 1638. Schilling has emphasized that the Protestant Reformation was not a singular, self-contained *event* within approximate dates, but a variation within a long tradition of Church reform in western Christianity. More than that, concepts are now so loose that trends, drifts, and movements in one guise or other seem to

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<sup>25</sup> See n. 4 above.

<sup>26</sup> Berndt Hamm, “Farewell to Epochs in Reformation History: A Plea,” *Reformation & Renaissance Review* 16, no. 3 (2014): 211–245.

have been around, and will resonate, for ages – in the sense of “*la longue durée*.” The tendency towards ultra-flexible beginnings and ends with no obvious place or date of birth appears in a recent book co-edited by Schilling: *The Protestant Reformation in a Context of Global History: Religious Reforms and World Civilizations* (Bologna and Berlin, 2017). The work pleads for more use of the telescope than the magnifying glass, implicitly calling for the restitution of the grand narrative and the transcendental “flow of history.” This might well help rehabilitate the respectability of those Scots who creatively see the Irishman, St Columba, as Scotland’s first Protestant, or the elusive Roman Briton, Ninian, as Scotland’s first Catholic.

### III. ABOUT THE BOOK

The verbal variety of designations for the broad Reformation period of Scottish history in the modern literature has illustrated a hunger and thirst for new categorization and redefinition. Since the 1980s there have been at least half a dozen notable volumes of edited collected studies relevant to Reformation Scotland. These collections are predominantly historical and literary, and their titles include expressions like Renaissance, Reformation, church and society, early-modern Scotland, sixteenth-century Scotland, Scottish religion (Christian) and literature and so on.<sup>27</sup> In the meantime there have been considerable and much needed

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<sup>27</sup> Norman Macdougall, ed., *Church, Politics and Society 1408–1929* (Edinburgh, 1983) – nine of its 12 chaps deal with the late-medieval and early-modern eras; Ian B. Cowan & Duncan Shaw, eds., *The Renaissance and Reformation in Scotland. Essays in Honour of Gordon Donaldson* (Edinburgh, 1983); Alasdair A. MacDonald, Michael Lynch, Ian Cowan, eds, *The Renaissance in Scotland: Studies in Literature, Religion, History and Culture Offered to John Durkan*, Brill Studies in Intellectual History, 54 (Leiden, 1994); Julian Goodare and Alasdair A. MacDonald, eds, *Sixteenth-Century Scotland: Essays in Honour of Michael Lynch*, Brill Studies in Intellectual History, 166 (Leiden, 2008); Luuk Houwen, ed., *Literature and Religion in Late Medieval and Early Modern Scotland. Essays in Honour of Alasdair A. MacDonald*, *Medievalia Groningana* NS, 16 (Leuven and Paris, 2012); McCallum, *Scotland’s Long Reformation* (see n. 4 above).

advances dedicated more exclusively to the history of ideas, culture and religious thought.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, over the last couple of generations there has been welcome progress in the historiographical back garden with a supply of mostly critical editions religious, religio-political, ecclesiastical and theological source texts.<sup>29</sup>

The six edited volumes referred to in n. 27 consist mostly of original research essays on special topics chosen by individual authors and assembled in a manner mostly free of a specific, internal thematic structure – in the conventional manner of Festschriften, as four of them are. They are baskets of different, sometimes exotic, fruits, each piece being of high research value for other specialists, although some are of more general interest. With the notable exception of *Scotland's Long Reformation*, Introductions are either absent or on the life and work of the Festschrift's recipient.

This volume is of a different character. During the evolution of this work, there were occasional alternative whispers suggesting what the book could or should be like – more narrowly restricted to a history-of-ideas genre or more broadly all-inclusive. There is no algorithm prescribing what the specific content or layout of any or a collaborative book on “The Scottish Reformation” should be. However, the nature and format of this *Companion* volume is partly predetermined by the publisher's series to which it belongs: “Brill's

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<sup>28</sup> Examples are: Alexander Broadie, *A History of Scottish Philosophy* (Edinburgh, 2008); Aaron Clay Denlinger, ed., *Reformed Orthodoxy in Scotland : Essays on Scottish Theology 1560-1775* (London and New York, 2015); John T. Slotemaker and Jeffrey C. Witt, eds, *A Companion to the Theology of John Mair*, Brill's Companions to the Christian tradition, 60 (Leiden, 2015); David McOmish and Steven J. Reid, eds, *Neo-Latin Literature and Literary Culture in Early Modern Scotland*, Brill Studies in Intellectual History, 260 (Leiden, 2016); David Fergusson and Mark W. Elliott, eds, *The History of Scottish Theology Volume 1: Celtic Origins to Reformed Orthodoxy* (Oxford and New York, 2019); Alexander Broadie, ed., *Scottish Philosophy in the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, 2020).

<sup>29</sup> Associated with names like C.H. Kuipers, T.F. Torrance, R.L. Thomson, J.K. Cameron, J. Kirk, R.A. Mason, D.W. Atkinson, D. Shaw, W.I.P. Hazlett, W.J.T. Kirby, D.G. Mullan, R.P.H. Green, J. McCallum, A.C. Denlinger and A.A. Macdonald inter alios.

Companions to the Christian Tradition ... Handbooks and Reference Works on the Intellectual and Religious Life of Europe.” This book prioritizes the Reformation religious reorientation as well as its impact on society which occurred possibly hand in hand with other influences. That is the “Religious Life” bit, which was lived not just inwardly, but also externally in visible political, social, and cultural frameworks. To put it otherwise: a balance is sought between three interwoven perspectives, namely, Bible and theology, socio-political history, and social anthropology as a means of striving for a more realistic understanding. This presupposes that the interpretation of Scotland’s Reformation history is not the exclusive prerogative of any one interest group, discipline, or tendency – *quot homines tot sententiae*, if not all equivalent in value. As was also the case in the Reformation era, in this book there are widely different voices and accents, and there is awareness that there are others.

The book’s cascading architecture reflects a perception of the intention of the Series. The building blocks are: external and internal pressures for change – breakthrough and revolution – key ideas in theology and philosophy – forms of official dissemination – resonances in higher education, legal systems, and public order – sample adaptations in literary and popular cultures – disadvantaged people apart – gestation of new national religious-political ideologies – past accounts and a modern commentary. Among the disadvantaged people apart are those belonging to female gender, designated here as being among the class of “the other.” Doubts were raised about that (not by the author of chapter 20). Considering most women’s actual subordination and many educated people’s Aristotelian perception of female ontological inferiority at the time, it seemed logical to the editor to categorize women in that way and in the tradition of Simone de Beauvoir. The accompanying chapters relating to the Lowland institutional degradation of Scottish Gaels and to continuing semi-underground Catholics reveal how far they too were outsiders, for cultural or religious reasons.



These internal themes form the book's ten "Parts." The specific topics within them are those which authors were invited to introduce, indicate existing research by others or themselves, and maybe offer some further fresh research or re-interpretation of their own. The chapters are, therefore, not just general surveys, but also well-informed guides and investigations. In this volume there are 27 such chapters, meaning 28 companions to the Reformation in Scotland in this instance (one chapter is jointly authored). This figure represents those who came forward out of 34 who were originally invited.

As regards the book's chronological parameters: they are from the 1520s to about 1638, the year of the National Covenant and presbyterian self-assertion, surely both a climax and the point of departure for dramatic new developments, a whole new research world. A first chapter on the late-medieval background had been planned, with a focus on the nature and institutions of the Church in the wide sense including universities, Catholic reform impulses, and manifestations of dissent and heresy brought in by Bohemian and English foreigners.<sup>30</sup> When this did not in the end materialize, it was far too late to engage a replacement.

There are, of course, various other topics that could have enhanced the book. Examples among many others are: martyrology; the under-researched subject of iconoclasm and iconoclasts, beyond its mere reporting; evidences of Erasmian humanism; influence of Zurich, "Zwinglianism" and Erastianism in Scotland; the increasingly well-researched subject of the Reformation in urban Scotland; the religious thought of George Buchanan, such as his consultations with Genevan and Zurich theologians like Théodore de Bèze and Rudolf Gwalter on church-state relations; the theology as distinct from the religious policies of

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<sup>30</sup> Gems of short surveys are by Janet Foggie, "Religious Life, 2: Medieval," in *Oxford Companion to Scottish History*, 510–512, and James K. Cameron, "Schottland," in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 30, edited by Gerhard Müller et al. (Berlin and New York, 1999), 384–402 (there: 386–392).

James VI & I; the French background to the religious coexistence notions of Mary Stewart (e.g., the even-handed Chancellor, Michel de l'Hôpital); the evolution of catechetical literature in both the vernacular and Latin; the shameful battles over General Assembly records; achievements and problems of the Kirk ministry; the Reformation in stage drama; the beginnings of Scottish Protestant incursion into Ireland; the interpretation of the Bible as distinct from the circulation of Bibles (on which there have been exemplary essays;<sup>31</sup> the demarcation lines for Church government and policy in Scotland between the General Assembly, emerging episcopacy, Parliament, the monarch or regent, the Privy Council and so on; religion and the printing press; the burgeoning topics of scholasticism, Reformed orthodoxy and Ramism (some treatment in chapter 8); the irenic theology of the Aberdeen theologians and other forms of theological expression in Reformation Scotland were not included for the following reason: When this book was being conceived and gestating, it was felt unnecessary to duplicate what had been already just published or was being prepared, such as *The History of Scottish Theology Volume 1*, A. Denlinger's edited collection on *Reformed Orthodoxy in Scotland*, or the Brill *Companion to the Theology of John Mair* as well as some other publications. Lastly, there are the major topics of the Scottish Reformation's interaction with England on the one hand and especially with the Continent on the other<sup>32</sup> – in both cases going back well before 1560. Scottish educational and religious traffic with the Continent did not wane with the Reformation. This helps to explain why in its

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<sup>31</sup> David F. Wright, “The Commoune Buke of the Kirke,” in *The Bible in Scottish Life and Literature*, edited by David F. Wright, 155–178 (Edinburgh, 1988) – further literature there; Iain R. Torrance, “The Bible in Sixteenth-Century Scotland,” in *History of Scottish Theology 1*, 160–172.

<sup>32</sup> See Patrick Collinson, “The Fog in the Channel Clears: The Rediscovery of the Continental Dimension to the British Reformations,” in *The Reception of the Continental Reformation in Britain*, Proceedings of the British Academy, 164, edited by Polly Ha & Patrick Collinson (Oxford and New York, 2010), xxvii–xxxviii.

self-understanding and in its interpretation by most later writers, the Scottish Reformation for all its distinctiveness was largely devoid of essentialist or exceptionalist notions apart from its idea of being “purer” than elsewhere, just as the old Scottish Catholic Church had claimed (up to 1529) that she was uniquely free of heresies having any support from within.

In short, the volume does fall far short of the dream of all-inclusiveness. But it should add something to the existing pile of studies on the history of early-modern Christianity in Scotland. In addition, it will contribute a bundle to the even greater heap of wider European Reformation studies. If in both cases, the intangible whole is greater than the sum of the parts, how or why that is the case may have to remain a mystery for the time being.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Cf. Aristotle: “In the case of all things which have several parts, there is a cause that the totality is not, as it were, a mere heap, but that the whole is something besides the parts,” in *Works of Aristotle. Vol. 8: Metaphysics Book VIII*, trans. W.D. Ross (Oxford 1908), 1045a.8–10