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‘From Rebellion to Reform: Representations of Regional and Civic Improvement in the *Aberdeen Journal*, 1747-85’

In November 1745, a prominent Aberdeen Kirk minister wrote the following in his diary:

‘Poor Chalmers, the printer, is from home, not yet able to walk with his strained leg he got jumping a window to escape the ruffians.’ The Rev. John Bisset continued, ‘[T]hey have committed great outrages in his house, breaking open an outer door, when not let in, setting fire to an inner door, when let in, scattering his types, searching his house, burning papers, and breaking presses and drawers.’¹ This presumably strategic Jacobite raid on the printing house of James Chalmers II, the City and University printer for Aberdeen, did not succeed in shutting down his journalistic presence during the Jacobite Rebellion.²

In April of 1746 Chalmers published an eye-witness account of the Battle of Culloden that was his second report on the Rebellion.³ He titled these broadsheet bulletins as ‘News Schedules’, which were well regarded by Aberdeen’s civic leaders, and provided a crucial test case for the success of his newspaper, the *Aberdeen Journal*, whose first number was published less than twenty months later with a subvention from the British government.⁴

One reason for this delay could be that grateful city leaders appointed him as an Official Receiver of Aberdeenshire estates forfeited after Culloden, which occupied him until September 1747, a few months before the first number of his new newspaper appeared.⁵ It is fitting that the founding editor and publisher of the *Aberdeen Journal* was so closely involved with the resolution of the political and military conflict which would shape the material, social, and cultural modernization of the northeast of Scotland over the next four decades.⁶ Indeed, Chalmers’ newspaper became a key intelligence hub for the

material development of northeast and north-central Scotland and principal vehicle for publicizing regional civic, educational, infrastructural and commercial improvement initiatives, and in the mid 1780s it was a primary means for transmitting the principal arguments for the burgh reform campaign in Aberdeen. From the newspaper's third number it initiated a format that juxtaposed a regular diet of local news, notices and advertisements from Aberdeen and the wider north of Scotland region, alongside strategic digesting of military, political and economic reports from the London and Edinburgh newspapers.⁷ This format from the first Scottish newspaper north of Edinburgh provided its readers with a firm sense of the north of Scotland's material and cultural integration within a political Union that had experienced its gravest challenge just a few years earlier.

The present article attempts to frame how the *Aberdeen Journal* transmitted this regional and civic improvement agenda after Culloden, in part by providing a stable print platform to a range of stakeholders intent on maximizing the economic, cultural and social modernization of Aberdeen and the northeast of Scotland. In its pages key regional improvement initiatives were given a public iteration from a range of economic, educational, and local government bodies, including, amongst others, Aberdeen Town Council, the Commissioners of Supply, Marischal College, the Board of Trustees for Fisheries, Manufactures and Improvements in Scotland, the British Linen Company, and the Aberdeenshire Society for the Encouragement of Agriculture and Manufactures. When examined collectively in the column inches of the *Aberdeen Journal*, the reports, announcements, advertisements, and correspondence from these stakeholders provide a

kind of ideological prospectus for the modernization and integration of the northeast of Scotland's land-based economy into contemporary British and Scottish capitalism, with Aberdeen acting as a cultural and informational hub.

This regional integration with British and Scottish capitalism, however, should not imply that the currents of improvement mapped in this article were the inevitable—and essential—consequence of a Whig erasure of Jacobite participation in this wider process of modernization after the Rebellion. What Christopher Whatley notes as ‘the pacification and prosperity of Scotland, including the crushing of Jacobitism, which would in part be achieved through the implantation of “industry” north of the border’, included the involvement of key bodies like the Board of Trustees, British Linen Company and the Annexed Estates Commission, which together, according to Whatley, ‘embarked on a series of measures designed to establish textile manufacturing from Perthshire northwards’.⁸ But it needs be noted that the multifarious project of modernization mapped in the *Aberdeen Journal* was a complex and uneven process of wider regional integration into British capitalism that also reflects the role played by improving Jacobite landowners, discussed later in this article with regards to agricultural improvement in particular.⁹ As Allan MacInnes argues: ‘Caution must also be exercised in accepting a triumphalist Whig interpretation of modernity that overplays the causal relationship of political revolution to commercial revolution and underplays the engagement of Jacobites and Tories in commercial enterprise.’¹⁰ The process of land reform presented in the newspaper, discussed in part four of the article, highlights how an issue framed in the *Aberdeen Journal* as a pre-requisite to regional commercial

improvement was also used as a means to potentially undermine improving Jacobite landowners, thus alerting us to the partisan ways that ‘improvement’ was deployed in a key regional print platform from this period. The contested political modernization of Aberdeen, as an historically Episcopal burgh and key Jacobite stronghold during the 1745 Rebellion, may make another useful case study for this complex process of regional integration and improvement.

What is perhaps less contentious is that this wider social and economic transformation facilitated by the newspaper led to demands for political reform by those new stakeholders in Aberdeen—like the prosperous burgesses and incorporated trades—‘pursuing an improved burgh politics which would match its function as the commercial centre of the north’, as Andrew Mackillop has noted in an important recent article.¹¹ The founding of the Aberdeen burgh reform committee in 1783, according to Mackillop, ‘heralded a major realignment of civic interests and underscores the northern burgh’s capacity for early and conspicuous involvement in politically innovative tactics’.¹² These tactics extended to strategic deployment of the improving print platform provided by the *Aberdeen Journal* to publicize the campaign to expand the social base for civic governance in Aberdeen, where, as Mackillop argues, the key civic roles ‘constituting the burgh community were intensely debated, contested and redefined’.¹³

The article will conclude with an analysis of this campaign transmitted in the *Aberdeen Journal* as a means to mark one kind of political terminus in the ideological and material trajectory of improvement in Aberdeen and the northeast of Scotland in the forty years

after the Jacobite Rebellion. This concluding analysis will be used to frame how this episode of ‘unpredictable civic politics’ played out in the newspaper’s pages in the 1780s tested the limits of four decades of civic and regional improvement after Culloden.¹⁴ It is hoped that this examination of reform discourse in the *Aberdeen Journal* can serve as one barometer for calculating the degree to which the northeast of Scotland’s economic, social, material, cultural, and political improvement in this period contributed to a distinctive post-Culloden, Enlightenment identity in the region. Enlightenment identity is being used here as an ideological framework for ‘the values and attitudes it nurtured towards modernity and Scotland’s enfolding within that modernity’, as Bob Harris and Charles McKean argue in their magisterial recent survey of Scottish urbanization in the second half of the eighteenth century *The Scottish Town in the Age of the Enlightenment*.¹⁵

The background to commercial improvement in the northeast

To frame the material context for this modernization process in Aberdeen and the northeast facilitated by the communications hub of the *Aberdeen Journal*, it will be helpful to briefly engage with the region’s social and economic structures in the first half of the eighteenth century. Iain Whyte has noted that the lowland Aberdeenshire rural landscape taken from the Military Survey of 1747-55, ‘hardly seems to have changed from medieval times with only isolated islands of enclosure amid the seas of waste and open-field cultivation’.¹⁶ This aspect of Aberdeenshire’s economic topography was set against a wider Scottish agricultural system that raised significant challenges to the kind of modernization that would encourage industry. ‘The trouble with improvement in the

first half of the century,' observes T. C. Smout, 'was that it was trying to replace a low input, low output agricultural system with a high input, high output system in an economic climate where demand was sluggish and prices flat.'¹⁷

The structure and practice of land tenure also proved to be a barrier to increasing agricultural production and encouraging economic modernization in the Highlands and rural northeast. These barriers to regional improvement were reflected in the 1747 Act abolishing heritable jurisdictions in Scotland. '[T]he phrase "improving the Highlands" in the abstract of the Act,' according to George Caffentzis, 'simply meant that by changing the conditions of land tenure (from the feudal and communal arrangements prevalent before the '45) and using rents to increase the education of the next generation of farmers, agricultural productivity should increase'.¹⁸ He argues that the 'act was meant to transform the Crown (via its representatives and agents, the Commissioners) into an improving landlord' that 'would serve as a model on the annexed estates for the remaining Highland lairds by displaying the kind of estate management necessary to integrate their properties...into the agrarian capitalist system of Britain'.¹⁹ It is important to note that the northeast, including Aberdeenshire, was included as part of the Highlands in the earlier Disarming Act of 1746, which defined the region as: 'Dumbarton, such parts as lie upon the east, west and north side of Lochleven, to the northward of that part where the water of Leven runs from Lochleven, Stirling, north of the Forth, Perth, Kincardine, Aberdeen, Inverness, Nairn, Cromarty, Argyll, Forfar, Banff, Sutherland, Caithness, Elgin, and Ross'.²⁰ But as Annette M. Smith notes in her study *Jacobite Estates of the Forty-Five* in reference to the Annexing Act of 1752, the one

annexed estate in Aberdeenshire, Monaltrie, was ‘quite disjointed and so small [that] one wonders if the only reason for annexing it was to obtain a foothold in a strong Jacobite area’.²¹

This process of state-directed improvement of the Highlands after 1746 was set against the backdrop of a British military presence in the northeast after the first Jacobite rising in 1715, which tended to entrench the power of traditional Episcopal heritors. The ideological persistence of Scottish Jacobitism in the northeast, Margaret Sankey and Daniel Szechi note, was partly a consequence of Episcopal landowners’ ability to invoke, ‘what was, in effect, overwhelming force in the shape of government military and judicial intervention’ that ‘kept the Episcopalian community in a mirror-image, siege-like state of hostility and tension with its Presbyterian neighbours’. ‘In such circumstances,’ they write, ‘it is not surprising to find that the power to command their tenants traditionally enjoyed by the heritors of the north-eastern Lowlands was considerably enhanced’, allowing them to ‘maintain a role more associated with landownership in previous centuries’.²² Where ‘the protective aspect of land-ownership was increasingly being abandoned in favour of strictly economic relations’ in other parts of Scotland outside of the Highlands, ‘this change was slower in coming in the north-eastern Lowlands’.²³ It should be noted, however, that such relations between heritors and their tenants in the region did not preclude local efforts of agricultural improvement in the second half of the eighteenth century, as discussed later in this article.

This background gives a sense of the structural and ideological contexts for the regional improvement networks represented in the pages of the *Aberdeen Journal* during its first four decades. After Culloden the range of commercial and industrial activities in Aberdeen burgh intensified, aided by ongoing efforts of organized improving initiatives, like the Society of Improvers in the Knowledge of Agriculture (1723), that ‘pressed the government to encourage Scottish industry in general and linen manufacture in particular’, according to Whyte.²⁴ The Board of Trustees for Fisheries and Manufactures (1727) was also a key player in this process of regional economic improvement, linked to the Edinburgh-based British Linen Company (1746), which played a key role in developing the network of bleachfield operators in the northeast, whose presence was reflected in a steady stream of advertisements in the *Aberdeen Journal*. Aberdeen burgh itself was, after 1750, becoming an important regional hub for ‘new sectors such as paper-making, linen and cotton manufacturing, granite quarrying, brewing, distilling, sugar refining and shipbuilding’, as Tom Donnelly has observed. These commercial initiatives, in turn, ‘led to increasing activity in the local property market, transport and communication improvements, a physical expansion of the city, and the growth of banking, insurance and other commercial facilities’, also reflected in the pages of the *Aberdeen Journal*.²⁵ These key activities were joined by agricultural improvement efforts in the region during the second half of the century, as John S. Reid has noted, where ‘land drainage, stone clearance and cultivation developed Aberdeenshire into the premier cattle breeding county and raised the living standard considerably above the poverty level of the mid-eighteenth century’.²⁶ Perhaps reflecting the key role of the Scottish linen industry to the wider effort of economic modernization in the region, it is

unsurprising that Patrick Barron and John Ewen, leaders of Aberdeen's burgh reform movement, were, respectively, a prominent local linen and bleach processor who established the city's first large scale cotton mill in 1779,²⁷ and a merchant who inherited a thriving local stocking concern and then diversified with investments into regional bleachfield operations and the Aberdeen property market.²⁸

The Chalmers press: print and civic improvement in Aberdeen

Printing and publishing were key regional commercial activities in their own right, in part due to the efforts of James Chalmers II, who in 1747 founded the *Aberdeen Journal*, and his son, James Chalmers III, who took over its proprietorship at his father's death in 1764. Their canny positioning of the family printing firm within the civic and administrative structures of Aberdeen ensured that the newspaper became not only the 'primary advertising medium for the North of Scotland', as Iain Beavan notes in a 1998 article for *Northern Scotland*, but also a key means to the region's economic, infrastructural, social and cultural improvement.²⁹ Crucially, the success of the Chalmers' printing firm was tied to the city elite's post-Culloden ambitions to make it an informational hub for the region's material and social improvement. 'The growth of eighteenth-century Aberdeen, and its social and administrative undertakings,' Beavan observes, 'are reflected in the considerable quantity of civic printing that was undertaken, again almost exclusively by the Chalmers press in their semi-official position of Printers to the Town.'³⁰

The founding publisher and conductor of the *Aberdeen Journal*, James Chalmers II, was appointed as Town Printer in 1736. His remit included the printing monopoly for the Commissioners of Supply for Aberdeenshire, and he subsequently became printer to another key civic stakeholder, Marischal College, where his father, James Chalmers I, was Professor of Divinity in the early part of the century.³¹ These three civic printing roles, in addition to his firm's publication of key religious texts like a *Shorter Catechism* for the General Assembly in 1737, gave Chalmers II a unique perspective on the role of print as a vehicle for civic, economic, educational and infrastructural improvement.³² Iain Beavan has noted how this multiple printing monopoly provided the Chalmers press with a steady stream of institutional clients that introduced it to some of the key networks in Aberdeen and regional civil society regularly featured in the newspaper: 'Chalmers' firm undertook a great deal of civic work, including announcements and notices for the Council, local clubs and societies, the two Colleges, and various ad hoc bodies set up in the town and country.'³³ In this active (and prosperous) role of civic printing the firm revitalized the traditional *Aberdeen Almanack* under James Chalmers III in 1771, with a format that made it an essential institutional anatomy for the city and region, surviving until the mid-twentieth century.³⁴

With this impressive print service to the administrative and civic elite it is important to keep in mind the challenging ideological environment post-Culloden Aberdeen presented to the newspaper that became the central publishing project for Chalmers II and his son. 'Under the direction of these two exceptional men, the *Aberdeen Journal* easily established itself as the one great newspaper of the north', Mary Craig observes in her

1931 study of the Scottish periodical press in the second half of the eighteenth century. ‘That it did so is the more remarkable in that it was unmistakably an anti-Jacobite organ,’ she notes, ‘whereas the community in which it was seeking to make a place for itself was strongly Jacobite and Episcopalian in sympathy.’ This point perhaps underplays the essential material role of eighteenth-century newspapers as improving platforms for their local readerships via advertisements and notices. It is significant that Chalmers II and III were able to maintain their newspaper’s relationship with a range of cultural constituencies in this regard, including those Jacobite and Episcopal landowners that were part of the modernization of the northeast of Scotland in the second half of the eighteenth century. Craig notes that the success of the *Journal* ‘was undoubtedly due to the high standard which it maintained during the period, and to the progressive spirit which marked the course of its development from 1750 to 1789’.³⁵ It should be added that the distinctive institutional role for printing in Aberdeen civil society exploited by Chalmers II before the founding of the newspaper was as crucial as this exceptional personal context to the *Journal*’s success, as was the economic modernization of the city and region after 1750, which encouraged ‘the progressive spirit which marked the course of its development’ during this period.

**‘A Place well employed for the Business, in dying, walking and dressing Cloath’:
linen processing and regional commercial improvement in the *Aberdeen Journal***

For a newspaper that pioneered local and regional news coverage for Aberdeen and the north of Scotland, the first number was essentially a digest of the London newspapers

from the end of 1747, leading with European reports from the *London Gazette*.³⁶ This kind of digesting was common for eighteenth-century British newspapers, but carried a more distinctive ideological purpose for a new periodical in the north of Scotland only a few years after the defeat of the Jacobite Rebellion. Indeed, the staunchly Whig Chalmers could have been signalling to his local readers that the nascent *Aberdeen's Journal* was to be a principal cultural vehicle for integrating the region with the rest of the British state and economy, in part through the sharing of news reports from London, and, in later numbers, the two key Edinburgh newspapers, the *Caledonian Mercury* and *Edinburgh Evening Courant*.

These two national Scottish newspapers digested in the *Journal* reflected how Chalmers sought to balance Whig and Jacobite framing of public events for its audience in the north of Scotland in the years after Culloden. The Whiggish *Courant*, as W. J. Couper has noted, 'took up a position of violent hostility to the Pretender', publically celebrating when he and his Highland army left the Scottish capital in the autumn of 1745.³⁷ The *Caledonian Mercury* also pursued a partisan political approach to the century's most severe challenge to the Union of 1707 by providing 'an essentially Jacobite gloss to the proceedings' of the 1745 Rebellion, according to Murray Pittock.³⁸ This Jacobite agenda landed Thomas Ruddiman junior, the editor of the newspaper, in Edinburgh Tollbooth in December 1746 for the newspaper's criticism of British government policy.³⁹ But beyond this balancing of ideological differences in the new newspaper it is also important to keep in mind the pragmatic material imperatives driving the digesting of periodicals, which, for the first newspaper north of Edinburgh, could be used to highlight crucial regional

business intelligence for its audience, like a report from the *Edinburgh Courant* in the second number detailing shipping schedules from Aberdeen, Banff, and Fraserburgh ports.⁴⁰

The advertisements listed in the weekly four page newspaper, along with the 'DOMESTICK OCCURRENCES' section dedicated to local news and civic initiatives, give a focused sense of how the region was being transformed by commercial practices like linen manufacturing and processing. For example, as early as the third number in January 1748 an advertisement for available business accommodation at Miln of Bourty in the Inverurie area notes that it is 'A Place well employed for the Business, in dying, walking and dressing Cloath'.⁴¹ In the ninth number of March 1748 an advertisement for cloth bleaching and linen weaving services from Hugh McVeagh's 'Manufactory in Strathbogy' in Aberdeenshire indicates that cloth was to be taken in by a regional network of intermediaries in north-central and northeast Scotland, including merchants, a stamp manufacturer, and a Malster from places like Elgin, Inverness, Banff, Forres and Aberdeen.⁴²

The Scottish linen industry was a crucial means for modernizing the infrastructure of the region, directed by economic improvement bodies like the Board of Trustees for Fisheries, Manufactures and Improvements in Scotland. The Board had its origins in a committee of the Society of Improvers in the Knowledge of Agriculture in Scotland, which in 1726 lobbied the Convention of Royal Burghs for a new body 'touching the improvement of the manufactures of Scotland and other matters of importance to the

nation in general'.⁴³ The Scottish linen industry's output of cloth rose seven-fold between 1730 and the end of the century,⁴⁴ fulfilling the hopes of Edinburgh merchants immediately after the Union settlement that 'it may well be remembered that the great inducement made use of to engage Scotland in this Union was the prospect of improving and vending our linen Manufactories'.⁴⁵ While the Board's Highland manufacturing stations of the 1750s were not a success, it trained and dispersed a network of stamp-masters—including across the northeast of Scotland—to ensure quality control in the region's nascent linen production and processing practices.⁴⁶ There was also clearly a political dimension to this strategic investment in the north of Scotland, as Alastair J. Durie has noted, when negotiations over the bounty for Scottish coarse linens in the 1750s highlighted the case from Scottish agents that 'the extension of coarse spinning into the Highlands...would keep them peaceable'.⁴⁷

Perhaps more crucial to regional infrastructure development after the recent military conflict was the Board's subsidies for large scale commercial bleaching; an adjunct of the textile manufacturing process where cloth was whitened by sunlight and bleaching solution washed out.⁴⁸ These services, as the *Aberdeen Journal's* bleachfield advertisements indicate, often involved a network of agents in different towns of Aberdeenshire, Perthshire and Invernesshire requiring better transportation links and the rebuilding of bridges. Transportation-related infrastructural initiatives were evidenced in discussions by the Aberdeenshire Commissioners of Supply from the first half of the 1750s.⁴⁹ The Commissioners of Supply were crucial material stakeholders for the region, given notice in the *Aberdeen Journal's* 'DOMESTICK OCCURRENCES' section in

1748 for an election of its Clerk and Collector of revenues to commence improvement activities ‘incumbent upon them, as prescribed by the late Act of Parliament’.⁵⁰ Taken as a whole, commercial linen processing was responsible for one of Scotland’s first major industrial successes, as Durie has observed: ‘By the late eighteenth century, not only had the practice of sending Scots cloth for finishing outwith Scotland ceased, but Irish cloth in increasing quantity was starting to come to Scottish bleachfields, a clear indication of how radically things had turned round.’⁵¹

Advertisements offering bleachfield services in the *Aberdeen Journal* were a staple for the newspaper in its first twenty years.⁵² These services were an important means for establishing regional commercial networks across the north of Scotland. For example, a March 1748 bleachfield advertisement in the *Aberdeen Journal* for services in Elgin featured commercial intermediaries in Inverness and the Highland seaport of Cromarty.⁵³ Another bleachfield advertisement in 1759 for the Gordon’s Milns Company demonstrates how this commercial network had spread, with a manufactory in Aberdeen, and merchants in Montrose, Turriff, Banff, Inverness, Fraserburgh and Peterhead, amongst other locales. The advertisement also illustrates how this process was firmly focused on the quality and increasing diversity of the end product. The range of linen on sale from its ‘Warehouse in the Head of the Green, Aberdeen’, included ‘Scots Hollands of different Prices and Breadths’, ‘Fustians, bordered Lawn Napkins’, and ‘Cotton and Linen Checques and Handkerchiefs of all kinds’.⁵⁴ The advertisement highlights how the ‘proliferation of lower-priced linens for clothing and furnishing...must have resulted in part from a deepening of domestic demand’ in Scotland.⁵⁵ The 1759 advertisement ends

with a note that ‘commissions addressed to Leys, Still and Company, will be carefully obeyed’—a reference to Aberdeen’s first large-scale linen manufacturer founded ‘by some of the principal citizens’ of the city in 1749.⁵⁶ ‘By the spirited exertions of the partners,’ reports the 1818 *Annals of Aberdeen*, this pioneering regional company ‘soon brought the business to perfection, established the character of their commodities, and gradually extended their trade’, including to ‘the principal market’ of London, ‘where they found a ready sale’.⁵⁷ It is worth noting that by 1765, six years after this advertisement appeared, over half the estimated total value of stamped Scottish linen was directed to the London market.⁵⁸

The knock-on effect for regional development from this commercial process was highlighted in another advertisement from 1764 for the feuing of tenements in Turriff, a town listed in the bleachfield commercial network from the 1759 advertisement discussed above. The 1764 advertisement notes how the housing scheme is set within ‘new Streets which are marked upon the Ground in regular and commodious Manner’ in a town ‘very pleasantly and commodiously situated on the Post road between Banff and Aberdeen’, and ‘very fit for accommodating Merchants and all kinds of Tradesmen and Manufacturers; and particularly well adapted by Nature for Bleachfields’.⁵⁹ This kind of residential development targeted at those active in regional linen commerce reflects how the growth of a key adjunct to the linen industry stimulated ‘increasing activity in the local property market’, as Tom Donnelly has observed of the post-1750 industrialization of the Aberdeen city region.⁶⁰ These property developments were also a key means for enhancing the commercial integration of communities like Banff, as a 1762 civic notice

relates for an auction of lots in the Gallowhill area, with its featuring of the ‘Seatown Lands of Banff, which lay adjoining to the Harbour of said Burgh being now finished’.⁶¹

This form of regional commercial improvement also appeared in the *Aberdeen Journal*’s ‘DOMESTICK OCCURRENCES’ section. It was reported here in 1751 that ‘George Gordon Senior, Stamp-master, informs us that, on the third of October next, there is to be held at Aberdeen, a Competition for Prizes on brown Linen Cloth, and for Linen Yarn of different sizes, spun of Scotch Flax, at Isobel Swan’s, Spinning-mistress at the Factory of Edinburgh in Putachy side’.⁶² Innovation in the linen manufacturing process was advertised in a 1765 notice from the Board of Trustees office in Edinburgh, listing the advantages of three new machines for dressing flax and hemp. Of particular interest here is the role of the ‘commissioners of annexed estates’ who have ‘agreed with the inventor, to give these improvements to the country’, indicating how the Board worked with those administering forfeited Jacobite estates to further develop Scottish industrial practices nearly twenty years after Culloden.⁶³ Indeed, records from the Board of Commissioners for the Annexed Estates indicate that two years after this notice was published, in 1767, the Board for the Annexed Estates requested investment of 900 pounds a year for a three year period to encourage the linen industry in the north of Scotland, which was approved by the Government.⁶⁴

In 1766 the *Aberdeen Journal* published a serialized essay from the *Edinburgh Journal*, ‘OBSERVATIONS on the present State of the LINEN and HEMPEN MANUFACTURES of SCOTLAND, and the Grievances under which they labour’. The

first article was an opportunity to review the progress of linen manufacturing—referred to as ‘the staple of Scotland’ in the third instalment—as a motor of national commercial improvement and the beneficial role of institutions like the Board of Trustees in this process.⁶⁵ ‘The Manufacture of Linen, and the various other branches of Manufactures for which Flax and Hemp serve as materials’, it opens, ‘have been long established in this country; and as they employ by far a greater number of hands than any other branch of business, and also lay the foundation for a great part of our most valuable Commerce, the fate of them has now become an object deeply interesting to the public.’ ‘[E]specially since the institution of the Honourable Board of Trustees for the Improvement of Fisheries and Manufactures’, it notes, ‘their advances have been much more considerable than at any former period of time’, and ‘many of our Manufacturers have now attained a degree of skill in their profession, which sets them upon a footing with the best foreign artists’. But the notice argues that ‘these Manufactures are far from having reached the utmost possible limits to which they may be carried’, or ‘have they even attained that degree of improvement, which the encouragement of the legislature, the favour and expectation of the public, and above all the great utility, and almost inexhaustible demand for the commodities themselves seemed to promise’.⁶⁶ This important qualification suggests that organized Scottish industrial policy still had an important role to play in the next stage of linen manufacturing development, which was particularly relevant to the industrial stakeholders of the northeast with their unique infrastructural needs and distance from the main Scottish urban centres of the Central Lowlands and, of course, the principal market of London.

The two follow up articles in this series introduced the issues of soil diversity and improved parliamentary representation as essential adjuncts to the future of linen manufacture in Scotland. Both were key topics for the *Aberdeen Journal* at different times during its first forty years. The second article discussed the ‘very alarming prospect’ of import shortages of essential raw materials for linen manufacture like flax and hemp, leaving the industry ‘in which the welfare of this nation is so deeply interested...entirely at the mercy of foreign powers’.⁶⁷ Alastair Durie has noted that ‘the price of imported flax steadily climbed in the 1760s, and the wages of spinners seem to have risen as well, with the inevitable result that yarn prices climbed’, thus ‘encouraging the search for technological change’.⁶⁸

This second *Aberdeen Journal* article in the series proposes soil diversity as a potential response, with the growth of ‘several sorts of Flax and Hemp which are best fitted to all the various purposes of the most extensive Manufactures’, and ‘some suitable encouragement upon the persons concerned in this species of culture’, including the use of a ‘parliamentary bounty granted for every quantity raised within the island of Great Britain’.⁶⁹ This argument for direct government incentives to aid Scottish linen manufacturing is revisited in the concluding article in the series, where ‘parliamentary encouragement’ is sought to facilitate the next stage of development for the industry, as it was so crucial via institutions like the Board of Trustees for the first stage. ‘The most effectual method to ensure the success of this application,’ the essay relates, ‘seems to be, that it should come to Parliament, seconded as powerfully as possible, especially by those bodies of men, whose situation leads them to be most deeply interested in the fate of

these Manufactures’, including petitions from ‘the several counties in Scotland, as well as from the Royal Boroughs’.⁷⁰ This need for enhanced parliamentary support for the linen industry in Scotland would be revisited in the pages of the *Aberdeen Journal* in the 1780s, when the issue of improved parliamentary representation in Scottish burghs like Aberdeen was championed by local linen manufacturers like Patrick Barron, discussed in the conclusion to this article.

Land reform and agricultural improvement in the *Aberdeen Journal*

The partnership between those directing Scottish industrial policy and the administrators of annexed estates illustrated in the 1765 Board of Trustees notice highlights the interrelated issues of land reform and agricultural improvement featured in the pages of the *Aberdeen Journal*. In the same number of the *Journal* advertising the flax and hemp dressing machines we find a lengthy report from a meeting of the Freeholders and Commissioners of Supply for Kincardine, held in Aberdeenshire. The report lays out a discussion of a proposal by the Faculty of Advocates for a parliamentary petition to amend the law of entails for heritable estates in Scotland—an issue of great relevance to those supporters of agricultural industry in the north of Scotland, with its combination of large estates, paucity of credit mechanisms, and limited commercial opportunities for smallholders.

The performance of the Board for the Annexed Estates must also be noted as another impediment to the development of agricultural industry in the north of Scotland during this period. ‘Lack of time and lack of adequate funds were handicaps against which the

commissioners found themselves struggling throughout,' as Annette M. Smith has observed, 'the latter affecting their activities from the earliest stages of annexation.'⁷¹ Indeed, Smith notes the comparative lack of investment into overall industrial development in the Highlands in the 1750s via the Board for the Annexed Estates, when assessed against the more generous seeding funds allocated by the Board of Trustees for Manufactures and Fisheries in its targeted approach to Scottish industrial development in areas like linen manufacture.⁷² Smith observes: 'What never seemed to be realised was the large sums that were necessary, far beyond the resources of the estates, if some of the visionary schemes were to be sustained once they were beyond embryonic form.'⁷³

This lack of direct and sustained subsidy for agricultural improvement by the Board for the Annexed Estates no doubt created demands for other funding mechanisms by local regional stakeholders. This is evidenced in a 1765 *Aberdeen Journal* report from the Aberdeenshire meeting of the Freeholders and Commissioners of Supply. The freeholders and commissioners argued that the 'perpetual limitations upon property' through the power of entail, 'daily hastens and tends to annihilate the credit and commerce of our property altogether', creating a situation where 'improvements and industry fly from every entailed estate in the kingdom' and thus foreclosing the possibility 'that villages or towns can be erected or extended upon them'.⁷⁴ Anticipating the partial reforms of the Entail Improvement Act of 1770, which, according to Tom Devine, introduced a 'degree of financial flexibility...into the system...when considerable resources were needed for costly programmes of agricultural improvement', the *Aberdeen Journal* report critiques inflexible heritable landowning structures that in Aberdeenshire often served Episcopal

heritors with Jacobite sympathies.⁷⁵ From the perspective of this Whig newspaper, traditional landholding structures represented an impediment to the kind of regional industrial development—as evidenced in the linen industry—that by 1765 had provided the basis for much of the *Aberdeen Journal*'s commercial advertising.

This, of course, does not indicate that Episcopal Aberdeenshire landowners were absent from improving initiatives, and it is interesting to note that it was Chalmers' rival publishers, like Francis Douglas, who catered to this niche within the Aberdeen book market.⁷⁶ As this example of the persistence of partisan print after Culloden reminds us, the call for land reform in this 1765 report highlights how deeply politics and economics were intertwined in the newspaper's representations of regional improving initiatives. One of the unspoken consequences of removing 'perpetual limitations upon property' in the northeast of Scotland would be to weaken regional Jacobite stakeholders while promoting the material—and political—interests of Whig loyalists in bodies like the Commissioners of Supply. This was added to a longer time decline in the landholding class of Aberdeenshire in the eighteenth century, from 621 landowners in 1667 to 250 in 1771.⁷⁷

Agricultural improvement was a key issue in Chalmers' newspaper, and featured in reports, notices and letters that sought to encourage innovative practices in the region. Like land reform, however, we must keep in mind that representations of agricultural improvement in the *Aberdeen Journal* also had clear material implications for the wider balance of ideological and material interests in the northeast of Scotland. Very early in

the newspaper's history the 'DOMESTICK OCCURRENCES' section features a 1749 report on a meeting of a Society of 'honest Farmers residing in the Counties of Banff and Aberdeen' considering 'what might be the proper Methods to cultivate and improve Grounds of different Soils, that may be in the Places where they reside'. The tenant farmers from the Findlater and Seafield, Banff, Bracco, Montblairy, Moncoffer, Premnay, Colinard, and Castletown estates extended an invitation to their society to 'the Gentlemen of the neighbourhood, to concur with them in this Affair'.⁷⁸ This item demonstrates the imperative for coordinated efforts of agricultural innovation amongst tenant farmers of the large estates in Banffshire and Aberdeenshire less than three years after the Battle of Culloden, and a decade after the Scottish harvest crisis of 1739 and 1740.⁷⁹

The next year saw the publication of a number of letters from a 'Scotus' in Aberdeen reviewing the state of manufacturing, morals, and agriculture.⁸⁰ The latter sector featured in a March 1750 letter citing what it called the 'grand Reasons of our Deficiency', in particular, 'the Want of public Spirit, Luxury, Poverty, and oppressive Turns of our Landlords, or Heritors, together with the Indigence of our Farmers, and their stupid, obstinate Attachment to the old, however irrational or unsuccessful Manner of their Predecessors'. The moral limitations of heritors are cited as the key reason for the lack of agricultural innovation, with their 'criminal sensual Indulgences' encouraging a temptation to 'impose upon and oppress the poor Farmers, and let at Rack rent for a short Term, their small Possessions, without any Regard to the Industrious, the Improvement of their Ground, or the Benefit of their Posterity'. 'What shall be done?', Scotus asks his readers in the *Aberdeen Journal*. 'Let the Heritors become religious and virtuous, give up

with Luxury and Extravagance, which will ruin them in both Worlds, lower their Rents, and grant Leases for three Nineteen Years, or three Lives, and thus enable their poor Tenants to improve, and direct them in it', he urges.⁸¹ Again, this moralistic critique of the contemporary landholding structures cannot be separated from a wider ideological animus towards heritors as a class, which in the northeast had an identifiable Episcopalian and Jacobite identity.

This image of Jacobite landowners as an obstacle to agricultural improvement was challenged by a lengthy notice published in a number of the *Aberdeen Journal* from October 1760. The notice was signed by a major rival to Chalmers, the Aberdeen bookseller and printer Francis Douglas, and sought to encourage regional agricultural improvement by progressive landholders. Together with his partner William Murray, Douglas attempted to break Chalmers' newspaper monopoly with his *Aberdeen Intelligencer*, which ran for five years from 1752 as a periodical more receptive to the improving Jacobite landowners of the region than Chalmers' Whig and Unionist oriented newspaper.⁸² The 1757 consolidation of the two newspapers was shepherded by the Commissioners of Supply for Aberdeenshire in an effort by regional stakeholders to save on advertising expenses, compelling Douglas, Murray and Chalmers to publicly acknowledge their 'due Regard to the Interest of the Country', as reported in the *Journal*.⁸³ But the consolidation also effectively eliminated a key periodical print platform for Jacobite landowners and stakeholders to publicise patriotic schemes for agricultural improvement and, conversely, was a major victory for Chalmers' newspaper that meant it was the only advertising medium for the region. William McDonald has

observed in 1969 article that this notice in the newspaper is headed by a device ‘with the clasped hands and flaming heart’ from William Guild’s *Limbo’s batterie*, printed by Edward Raban in 1630, used 127 years later, ‘as a symbol of concord and goodwill’ by Chalmers.⁸⁴

This immediate history adds an element of ideological complexity to Douglas’ notice in Chalmers’ newspaper, and demonstrates a focus on agricultural improvement and manufacturing that cut across contemporary regional political factions. Douglas announces that ‘A Number of Gentlemen in the County of Aberdeen...have formed themselves into a SOCIETY for the Encouragement of AGRICULTURE and MANUFACTURES’, and ‘have subscribed a Sum of Money to be given in Premiums for that Purpose’, with Douglas as Clerk. Acknowledging the increasing integration of key regional linen manufacturing and processing centres, Douglas emphasises the ‘great Connexion between the Counties of ABERDEEN, BANFF, AND MEARN’S’, and, as the notice makes clear, is intent on promoting the society as a coherent body for improvement for this part of the northeast of Scotland. Attempting to strike a new kind of improvement-based patriotism in a region still divided by confessional and political differences, the notice also appeals ‘for the Patronage and Assistance of every good Man’ and encourages ‘all Lovers of their Country’, ‘whether Subscribers or not’, ‘to transmit to their Clerk...such Notices as they may think of Importance for the Improvement of Agriculture, Arts or Manufactures’.⁸⁵

Specific subsidies from this regional agricultural improvement society were outlined in a January 1762 notice from Douglas published in the *Journal*. With ‘sown Grasses and Winter Turnip’ featured ‘in last Year’s Premiums’, ‘the next most effectual Article to be promoted is the fallowing of Ground, in order to clear it of Weeds and natural Grasses, which are known to be great Enemies to all Crops’. In the most recent meeting, ‘It was therefore resolved, That the Society should give to every Tenant, or Subtenant (occupying Lands of the Property of any of the Subscribers, and being locally in any of the said three Counties) who should in Summer 1762 sufficiently Summer-fallow an Acre of his In town Ground... the Sum of ten Shillings sterling’. The notice ends: ‘Copies of the above Advertisement are ordered to be printed, and sent to all the Parish Churches wherein the Subscribers have Interest, to be read for the Information of the People’. This action is an appeal for those regional ‘Heritors as have not yet subscribed’ to the scheme for agricultural improvement.⁸⁶

The response from local farmers to this kind of directed publicity was apparent in a December 1760 letter to the *Aberdeen Journal* citing the structural obstacles to small-hold cultivation in the region. ‘Having the pleasure, by one of your late journals, to be informed,’ the correspondent relates, ‘that several publick-spirited gentlemen had subscribed for a fund to be applied in premiums for the encouragement of AGRICULTURE within this county; and I having opportunity to fall in with a number of substantial farmers, met in obedience to your advertisement to give all the aid they could, to the committee that is to meet.’ ‘After much arguing among them,’ the correspondent notes, ‘I could observe, that the greatest obstacle to the improvement of this county is the

present method of letting the farms for a short time, and high heights and gassums, and the next greatest obstruction the scarcity of servants and high wages, and the irregular method of engaging them.’ The ‘FARMER’ appeals to the committee to ‘recommend to the landed interest the giving longer and securer tacks, freer of services and incumbrances than the present practice is, whereby, men of stocks and education may be engaged in farming with a prospect of a becoming livelihood, and the improvement of the country may be enforced by more tempting motives than a small pecuniary reward’.⁸⁷

This appeal for more stable and secure small-hold tenancies and increased and better paid farm labour in the region was running against the ideological currents of other agricultural improvement initiatives published in the newspaper. ‘With pleasure I see improvements in agriculture diffuse themselves through the kingdom of Scotland’, observed a letter to the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* re-published in a September 1760 number of the *Aberdeen Journal*. The correspondent, writing from his ‘Smith and Wright work factory near the foot of Leith walk’, offered ‘proprietors of land’ a service from ‘an experienced farmer, who might leave directions in writing what would be the most beneficial way of employing the different soils, and the most effectual method of culture’, before ‘the ground was cast into regular farms’. ‘If this scheme takes,’ the writer added, ‘it will not only be of great service to those gentlemen who have a taste of improvements, by directing the proper culture of the various soils; but if his advice is followed, will like-ways greatly lessen the expense of labour, by reducing the number of servants and cattle, especially in the north and west parts of Scotland’.⁸⁸ This promise to ‘greatly lessen the expense of labour, by reducing the number of servants’ reminds us of

the role of agricultural improvement schemes like this in the extended and brutal process of forced human relocation in Scotland known as the Clearances, which as Tom Devine's recent history illustrates, was not confined to the Western Highlands.⁸⁹ What these notices and letters in the *Aberdeen Journal* clearly reflect was a material imperative from modernizing landowners and farmers in the northeast of Scotland to reform land use and to develop more efficient agricultural practices that could best complement 'that degree of improvement' in manufacturing encouraged by bodies like the Board of Trustees.⁹⁰ Again, this was not an ideologically neutral process of modernization in the north and northeast of Scotland, as those mechanisms targeted for reform—like annual leases—were often the means for reinforcing more paternalistic models of landowner-tenant relations going back to the seventeenth century and earlier.⁹¹

Civic and educational improvement in the *Aberdeen Journal*

Civic development in Aberdeen proper was also featured in the newspaper, often as a means to better position the city to maximize trading and commercial opportunities, or to enhance existing facilities like the Aberdeen Royal Infirmary. Two notices from 1758 highlight civic efforts to expand the city's public hospital, first opened in 1742. The first is a lead, front page advertisement from September 1758 that announces an 'annual CONCERT, FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE INFIRMARY, to be held in the Town hall', where, 'it is hoped, a very numerous assembly of ladies and gentlemen will chearfully embrace that opportunity of shewing...their taste for musik, and their sympathy for real objects of distress'.⁹² This use of music as a means to showcase civic progress can partly be traced back to efforts by James Chalmers II to establish the Aberdeen Musical Society

in 1748, described by R. H. Carnie as ‘a society which consolidated the long-standing pursuit of musical pleasure by citizens and academics of Aberdeen’.⁹³ A notice in the ‘DOMESTICK OCCURRENCES’ section a few months later reported on benefactions received ‘towards building the intended west-wing’ by ‘gentlemen managers’ who ‘may soon be enabled to put into execution, this new-concerted, noble and useful plan’.⁹⁴

These relief efforts, it should be noted, were also part of a wider contemporary effort in Scottish burghs to classify and regulate their poor and vagrant populations, and where Aberdeen was a forerunner, being consulted by the town clerk of Montrose in the 1770s for its scheme to regulate the ‘begging poor’.⁹⁵

Improving the physical infrastructure of Aberdeen reflected the need for dedicated areas of commerce that would mark the city’s increasing maturity as an international exporter of textiles. A notice from Aberdeen Town Council in 1767 called for qualified Tradesmen to tender for the construction of a bridge to be built over Virginia Street as part of a new commercial district in the reclaimed Shorelands area of the city, near the Harbour.⁹⁶ The new network of streets was constructed in 1768, and included such names as Commerce Street and Sugarhouse Lane, indicating the aspirations of civic leaders for making Aberdeen a hub for transatlantic trade to colonial North America. Scottish linen in particular was in steady demand in these new overseas markets from producers like the British Linen Company, which had a strong regional presence in the northeast through manufacturing subsidies provided by the Board of Trustees.

Marischal College was an important civic stakeholder in Aberdeen, and an institution with close personal ties to the Chalmers press.⁹⁷ As part of his remit as printer to the local University, James Chalmers II printed in 1755 a *Plan of Education in the Marischal College and the University of Aberdeen, With the Reasons of It, Drawn up by Order of the Faculty*.⁹⁸ This ambitious plan for curricular reform of the Arts MA degree initiated by Marischal's principal Thomas Blackwell and minister and moral philosophy professor Alexander Gerard, as Ronnie Young notes in a recent article on the Aberdeen Enlightenment, 'instituted a practical system of studies that would prepare students more effectively for the modern world'.⁹⁹ Chalmers reported the main aspects of this major curricular reform in the 'DOMESTICK OCCURRENCES' section of the *Aberdeen Journal* in December 1752, informing his readers 'that the following ACT and STATUTE was lately unanimously made and established in this UNIVERSITY, which we doubt not will give satisfaction to Lovers of Learning and Judges of right Education'. The summary of the reformed Arts course emphasizes the social utility of the Marischal degree, to both 'render the Study of the Sciences more natural and progressive, and to fit their Students to be *useful* in LIFE'.¹⁰⁰ Published directly below this item on curricular reform is the following piece on a recent fair held in Aberdeen, reminding readers of Chalmers' newspaper of the collective civic and commercial aspirations to improvement that this kind of enlightened education should seek to foster: 'On Tuesday and Wednesday last St. Nicolas' Fair held on the Stockethed, where a good deal of Business was done; and, by the Countenance and Encouragement given by the Magistrates, the Merchants, and others, 'tis hoped in Time, it will answer the most sanguine Expectations

of all concerned in our Manufactures, and the Well wishers to the Prosperity of this City.’¹⁰¹

In 1785, the *Aberdeen Journal* helped publicise a further stage of this civic-educational project for useful learning, and one that reflected how the region’s industrialization had widened the base for mechanical knowledge. In 1783, Patrick Copland, Professor of Natural Philosophy at Marischal College, received a grant to help him ‘illustrate the application of mechanical principles to industrial and agricultural practice’.¹⁰² Two years later he used the *Journal* to advertise a course of evening classes in Aberdeen designed for those directly involved in the application of machines for their labour, some twenty years after the newspaper had published its series on the future of the linen industry. The advertisement appealed to the new ‘mechanical professions, or to such gentlemen as are inclined to renew their acquaintance with those studies’, and listed ‘the Principles of Mechanics, Hydrostatics, Electricity, Magnetism and Astronomy’ as features of the course.¹⁰³

At this time, evening classes in chemistry were also featured in the *Aberdeen Journal* from a ‘Mr. French, Chemist and Apothecary in the Upperkirkgate’ area of the city.¹⁰⁴ These mechanical classes were initiated in 1782, and later advertised in the *Aberdeen Journal* with Marischal College as the venue, and promising interested students to illustrate ‘the application of Chemistry to Manufactures, Arts and Agriculture’.¹⁰⁵ John S. Reid notes that Copland and French were delivering these innovative mechanical education lectures ‘during a period of immense improvement to the City of Aberdeen and

the County of Aberdeenshire'. 'In town, there were major projects to improve the water supply, sanitation, roads, paving, street-lighting, harbour buildings and other public amenities,' he observes, 'in the countryside, land drainage, stone clearance and cultivation developed Aberdeenshire into the premier cattle breeding county and raised the living standard considerably above the poverty level of the mid-eighteenth century.'¹⁰⁶ Copland and French 'provided in Aberdeen an education for the expanding class of skilled workers, both manual and professional', who were also, along with wealthy burgesses like the linen manufacturer Patrick Barron, demanding improvements in parliamentary representation and civic administration.¹⁰⁷ The *Aberdeen Journal* became a key platform for the articulation of this reform movement that would test the political limits of the city and region's trajectory of improvement.

Limiting political improvement: the burgh reform crisis in the *Aberdeen Journal*

The burgh reform movement in Aberdeen was partly a response to calls in Edinburgh for a national movement to address the limitations of the parliamentary representation system in Scotland, which gave magistrates and councils an effective monopoly on who was sent to Westminster. The medium for this protest was initially the *Caledonian Mercury* newspaper in the capital, via a series of letters in late 1782 and early 1783 signed by 'Zeno', the pen name for the Edinburgh lawyer Thomas McGrugar, whose final letter in February 1783 called for a national convention of like-minded Scottish burgh reformers to address the issue.¹⁰⁸ The *Aberdeen Journal* responded to Zeno's print call with a letter

published in the 6 January, 1783 number from ‘Civis’, a pseudonym for the Aberdeen merchant and political reformer John Ewen.¹⁰⁹

‘Though we daily complain of its abuses,’ Civis wrote, ‘there is nothing with which we are less acquainted than the political constitution of our burghs.’ Using Scottish history as an ideological vehicle supporting the restoration of burgesses as the ‘*true and ancient Commons* of the kingdom’, Civis argued that ‘gross abuses have crept in since the establishment of communities and corporations, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries’, leading to the present system in places like Aberdeen, where ‘the Magistrates and Council of a burgh are no more the representatives of the inhabitants, than the Parliament of Paris, or Divan at Constantinople’. Civis contrasted ‘the constitution of Great Britain’ — ‘the emblem of freedom’ — with that of the contemporary burgh: ‘impure in its principles, inconsistent with liberty, and the disgrace of the country in which it exists’. This contrast between British freedom and ancient Scottish common rights, on the one hand, and the corrupted burghal constitution, on the other, had a particular anti-Jacobite inflection, with ‘the present arbitrary system’ originating ‘in the wretched plan of Court policy adopted by the Stuart family, whose constant aim was to render every thing agreeable to their principles of high prerogative and absolute government’. Civis located the ‘free and independent burgess’ as the basis for a reformed civic community, where ‘a proper application of the public funds’ can be developed and ‘a sound police’ established—key issues for growing Scottish commercial conurbations like Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen that were in the vanguard of the burgh reform movement.¹¹⁰

As Civis' *Aberdeen Journal* letter makes clear, the northern burgh had its uniquely local post-Jacobite contexts for reform. David Findlay and Alexander Murdoch argue that the 'power of the idea of awakening, from a "feudal Jacobite" past into a modern age where personal liberty guaranteed the security of property from excessive taxation, had a particular impact in Aberdeen.'¹¹¹ This anti-Jacobite inflection to burgh reform in the *Aberdeen Journal* again remind us of the particular ideological framing of topics like industrialization, land reform and agricultural improvement in the newspaper, discussed earlier in the article, where older systems of social and political relations in the northeast of Scotland were implicitly regarded as fundamental barriers to the modernization of the region. Given this context to the city and region's trajectory of material improvement, it is perhaps appropriate that the burgh reform movement was led by two linen merchants, John Ewen and Patrick Barron, 'with sympathetic support from the *Aberdeen Journal*,' as Findlay and Murdoch observe, where 'considerable pressure was exerted on the existing magistracy'.¹¹² There was also the issue of loyalty to the Hanoverian regime in a post-Jacobite context, which, as they note, was often regarded as a means to deflect practical critiques of administrative efficacy, 'until the changes that swept British politics from 1783, in the aftermath of the American War of Independence'.¹¹³ Andrew Mackillop has argued that 'Ewen and Barron and the individuals they represent sought the restoration of what were deemed to the "ancient" liberties of burgesses to hold the council to account at the annual head court and a right to vote on whatever additional tax assessments were levied over and above the statutory obligations due from the burgh'.¹¹⁴

The ‘idea of awakening’ to this precipitous moment of political reform for Aberdeen’s commercial leaders was given voice by Ewen in a March 1783 letter signed ‘A CITIZEN OF ABERDEEN’ and published in the *Aberdeen Journal*, addressed ‘To the BURGESSES OF ABERDEEN’.¹¹⁵ In it he recounted the local response to ‘the proceedings of the citizens of Edinburgh, in a matter in which the town of Aberdeen, and all the Burghs in Scotland, are equally and deeply interested’. The resolutions passed by the members of the Aberdeen reform committee—whose names are listed above the letter—‘contain a clear and simple proposition’ that the ‘council of Aberdeen are not our representatives, for we have no voice in their election, nor any controul upon their proceedings’. ‘We are not, in any case,’ he argued, ‘consulted relative to any matter of public concern’. In an innovative argument that ‘deftly balanced ideals of ancient legitimacy imparted by an older Scottish legal framework with a subtle sense of Edinburgh as a natural metropole,’ as Mackillop has noted of the Aberdeen reformers’ strategy,¹¹⁶ Ewen stressed that the ‘Burghs of Scotland claim no new privileges’, but instead ‘request the restoration of ancient rights’, when in ‘past periods your representatives in the council of the Burgh were chosen by the community: not self-selected, as they are now’. ‘Our situation is so different now,’ he related to his fellow burgesses, ‘that we are amazed at the change, and awake, as from a dream, to find ourselves so fallen.’¹¹⁷ Findlay and Murdoch argue this moment for reform in 1783 was partly a consequence of the ‘transition from Jacobitism to a Whig regime’ that ‘had involved so much state intervention [that] pressure for political reform in Scotland seemed to appear quite suddenly’.¹¹⁸

Ewen ended the letter with a pointed declaration of the competence and commitment of his fellow Aberdeen reformers, as manifested in the commercial progress of the region in the last generation. Ewen's ideological position here does tend to underplay the degree to which this progress was a consequence of strategic state-led infrastructural and industrial investment from bodies like the Board of Trustees and the British Linen Company. 'The citizens of Aberdeen have been long distinguished for their public spirit,' Ewen argued, 'and it would be extremely wrong to suppose that, on this occasion, they could be wanting to themselves.' 'Your commerce is increasing,' he noted, asserting that the 'labour produced by one branch of your manufactures' is responsible for 'three-fourths of the rents in the county where you live', making them the principal material stakeholders in the burgh.¹¹⁹ Despite this major contribution to the improvement of the city and region, Ewen reminded his fellow burgesses that they are shut out of the administration of the community in which they reside. The Aberdeen burgh reform committee was established in March 1783 by those local burgesses 'who sympathised with Ewen's letters in the *Aberdeen Journal*', as Findlay and Murdoch note.¹²⁰

This equating of commercial progress with a need for expanded political responsibility was a principal theme of an 'An Address to the Burgesses of Aberdeen' serialised in a pair of letters published in the *Aberdeen Journal* from June of 1783, with Ewen writing as 'A BURGESS of Aberdeen'.¹²¹ The letters strategically gloss the aims from the new Aberdeen burgh reform committee published in the *Aberdeen Journal* in March,¹²² and attack the anti-reform case with a focus on the role of commercial improvement—not 'the present system of burgh government'—in the 'prosperity of the burghs of Scotland'.

Like previous pro-reform letters in the *Aberdeen Journal*, these from Ewen amplified developments that were particularly salutary for its readers in Aberdeen and the north of Scotland intent on the commercial modernization and political and social integration of the region, and, crucially, who viewed the former as a key consequence of the latter. ‘The progress of improvement in agriculture, manufactures, and commerce, have, in Scotland,’ he asserted, ‘been more rapid in the last thirty years, than for centuries before.’ ‘To what has this been owing?, Ewen asked. ‘To the almost total annihilation of feudalism, by the act for abolishing heritable jurisdiction; the more extensive influence of mild and equal laws; and, in spite of the most deep rooted prejudices, that happy intercourse which has been opened and maintained with our fellow subjects in the southern parts of the island.’¹²³ Interestingly, Ewen added a pointed note to the act abolishing heritable jurisdiction in the above list of improvement: ‘This, by the by, was a material innovation!’, thus amplifying his case for reform based on those material developments which had expanded commercial opportunities in Scotland, not least in the northeast region.¹²⁴ This position can also be viewed in the wider context of an anti-Jacobite ideological orientation in the newspaper that framed older systems of landowning as fundamentally incompatible with the region’s material modernization. With this in mind we can identify a distinctive partisan inflection to ‘the more extensive influence of mild and equal laws’ that Ewen presented as naturally emerging from ‘that happy intercourse which has been opened and maintained with our fellow subjects in the southern parts of the island’.

The second letter highlighted the commercial-political case for burgh reform, and made an appeal for the role of incorporated trades in an improved constitutional settlement. ‘It is perhaps an indisputable fact,’ Ewen opened, ‘that corporations, on limited principles, are unfriendly to commerce and manufactures’. ‘But if we must have corporations let them be on the most liberal footing,’ he argued, ‘where each individual by suffrage shall have some share in the common interest.’ Ewen’s confident mode of address to his fellow Aberdeen burgesses both reflected and sought to bolster their collective sense of material consequence and moral autonomy within an increasingly urbanized and commerce-driven burgh community: ‘Independent by circumstances, and connections, your resolutions on this subject are the effects of the most thorough conviction.’ The ‘improvements introduced by commerce, manufactures, and the consequent polish of a more enlightened period’, reflected in key regional industries like linen manufacturing and processing, Ewen argued, call for an extension of political rights for burgesses—like Ewen and fellow reform leader Patrick Barron—who played a crucial material role in these developments. ‘[Y]our future conduct, I am fully convinced,’ Ewen asserted, ‘will clearly prove that you have carefully attended to the most ample establishment of these important things, which it is the duty of good citizens, by every honest means to secure’.¹²⁵

In the letter’s conclusion Ewen made a case for the essential role of burgesses in the material well-being of the civic community of this northern burgh. Such a position would most likely have found an enthusiastic reception amongst those commercial leaders and agents whose advertisements had provided a key means for the flourishing of the

Aberdeen Journal from its inception in 1747. The ‘list of the guildry at Aberdeen’ and the ‘names of the gentlemen who have subscribed the petition, and previous resolutions’, Ewen pointed out, ‘are by a large and decided majority of the *real* burgesses, men actually in business, as merchants and manufacturers, who contribute largely...to every public burthen, and to support government in every department of taxation’. Attacks on their case for political reform, for Ewen, was also an attack on the ‘character of a set of men, many of whom, by diffusing industry and commerce thro’ the various districts in which they live, merit every privilege which a free country can bestow’. This modernizing civic community extended to the ‘incorporated tradesmen’ who ‘are now only known by their uncommon attention to a well managed fund, the produce of which is equally a blessing to age, and infancy’—the latter a reference to this group’s material contribution to civic well-being through their subscriptions for grain relief in the burgh, as Ewen makes clear in a footnote.¹²⁶

In December of 1783, Barron and Ewen published a circular letter in the *Aberdeen Journal* on behalf of the local burgh reform committee, appealing for regional consultation about movement strategy related to the aims of a proposed national reform convention in Edinburgh. The letter demonstrated how the newspaper was being used to extend the communicative reach of the movement, with a note that the ‘As the address from the Edinburgh Committee is intended for all the Burgesses and heritors of the Royal Burghs of Scotland, without distinction, copies will be delivered, *Gratis*, to those of Aberdeen, and to the Northern Districts, by applying to the Secretary of the Aberdeen Committee.’¹²⁷

Council attempts in 1784 to shut down the efforts of Barron and Ewen to mobilize local burgh history highlighted what Mackillop calls ‘the “ancient” basis of Aberdeen’s good governance’, and necessitated, he argues, ‘a deliberately expansive and ambivalent political vocabulary’.¹²⁸ This included a 26 September 1785 petition for parliamentary electoral reform that solicited signatories from ‘traders’, as well as ‘burgesses’ and ‘manufacturers’, publicized in the *Aberdeen Journal*.¹²⁹ The next day this conflict between reformers and the council intensified, as a committee of burgesses convened a mass meeting in Aberdeen to draw up a list of resolutions that the authorities characterised in the *Journal* as ‘very unconstitutional and wrong’.¹³⁰ The council’s position was challenged by Ewen in the same newspaper, who affirmed the inclusive identity of the movement in support of these resolutions, from ‘the trades convenor and deacons’ and ‘the greater part of the whole body of the incorporated trades, with a majority of the guildry and many of the inhabitants’.¹³¹ Once again, the commercial orientation of the movement was invoked as a principal basis for its constitutional demands, with an added claim on Aberdeen’s civic identity more generally.

Conclusion

The unrest in Aberdeen that followed from this local constitutional confrontation, on 17 and 18 October 1785—described by Mackillop as ‘one of post-union Scotland’s most serious political riots’—provides one end point to the trajectory of urban and regional improvement mapped in this article.¹³² Mackillop argues that Barron and Ewen’s reform strategy during this episode was part of an expanding and experimental political culture

in Aberdeen that utilized ‘national and even international events for local civic purposes’, and he places it within a radical reformist trajectory in Scotland that extends to the mid-1790s.¹³³ Just as importantly, he also notes that ‘these new ideas of political reform’ in the burgh were used ‘to confirm its status as a provincial metropole in the Scottish and increasingly British urban hierarchy’.¹³⁴

As well as being the primary periodical source for much of the political communication during this movement for reform, the *Aberdeen Journal* was also the principal print platform for the key projects of material improvement in the city, county and wider region from its inception in 1747 that was often invoked as the basis for political reform in the 1780s. In the process the newspaper helped to recalibrate the northeast of Scotland as an increasingly integrated region of North British capitalism, with Aberdeen as a distinctive cultural agent for Enlightenment. The *Journal* helped to facilitate this through a discourse that often projected material modernization as implicitly incompatible with the structures of landownership associated with the region’s Jacobite-Episcopal heritors, thus illustrating how economics and politics often overlapped around representations of material and, latterly, constitutional improvement in the newspaper’s pages. The strategic role played by government agencies in this process was no doubt crucial, with the Board of Trustees and the British Linen Company working to initiate key regional industries like linen manufacturing and processing which created the infrastructural contexts that supported the *Aberdeen Journal* through advertising revenue, while also enabling its distribution in north central and northeast Scotland. In turn, James Chalmers and his son used their newspaper as a key hub for transmitting the essential organizational

information for ‘enfolding’ Aberdeen and the north of Scotland within a trajectory of post-Jacobite regional modernity in the four decade period after the Battle of Culloden.¹³⁵

NOTES

¹ ‘Diary of the Rev. John Bisset for 22 November, 1745’, in *The Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, (Aberdeen, 1841), vol. 1, no. 3, 355.

² James Chalmers II (1713-1764) founded the *Aberdeen Journal* in 1747, and his son, James Chalmers III (1742-1810), took over proprietorship of the newspaper at his father’s death in 1764. James Chalmers I (1686-1744) was appointed as Professor of Divinity at Marischal College in Aberdeen in 1725.

³ See Robert Wilson, *An Historical Account and Delineation of Aberdeen* (Aberdeen: James Johnston, 1822), 168.

⁴ See Norman Harper, *First Daily: A 250-year celebration of the Press and Journal* (Aberdeen, 1998), 12.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Chalmers was also appointed as an assistant commissary in the Royal Army from 1746. See William Kennedy, *Annals of Aberdeen, From the Reign of King William the Lion, to the End of the Year 1818* (Aberdeen: A. Brown, 1818), vol. 2, 193. The precipitous material development of the northeast can be seen in the region’s textile industry with the quadrupling of the stocking trade from 1743 to 1793, and the doubling of the overall value of the industry in Aberdeenshire during this period, which also led to the employment of some thirty thousand, ‘mainly female knitters’. See Christopher A. Whatley, *Scottish Society 1707-1830: Beyond Jacobitism, towards industrialization* (Manchester, 2000), pp. 114, 231. By the end of the eighteenth century the region and its urban centre of Aberdeen were marked by major social improvements, as noted by John S. Reid, and discussed in the present article: ‘In the town there were major projects to improve the water supply, sanitation, roads, paving, street-lighting, harbor buildings and other public amenities; in the countryside, land drainage, stone clearance and cultivation developed Aberdeenshire into the premier cattle breeding county and raised the living standard considerably above the poverty level of the mid-eighteenth century.’ See John S. Reid, ‘Late Eighteenth-Century Adult Education in the Sciences at Aberdeen: the Natural Philosophy Classes of Professor Patrick Copland’, in Jennifer J. Carter and Joan H. Pittock, (eds), *Aberdeen and the Enlightenment* (Aberdeen, 1987), 168-179, at 175-6.

⁷ Harper, *First Daily*, 13. As the only newspaper in the north of Scotland in this period, the *Aberdeen Journal* necessarily acted as a conduit for commercial and governmental networks that reached across the boundaries of Aberdeenshire and the northeast, to places like Inverness in the Highlands, Highland Perthshire in north-central Scotland, and along the northeastern coast. This wider sense of the north of Scotland was also reflected in post-Culloden legislation like the Disarming Act of 1746, which defined the Highlands as ‘such parts as lie upon the east, west and north side of Lochleven, to the northward of that part where the water of Leven runs from Lochleven, Stirling, north of the Forth, Perth, Kincardine, Aberdeen, Inverness, Nairn, Comarty, Argyll, Banff, Sutherland, Caithness, Elgin, and Ross’. Quoted in Annette M. Smith, *Jacobite Estates of the Forty-Five* (Edinburgh, 1982), 2. It is not the contention of this article, however, that these specific geographical boundaries for the north of Scotland are reflected in the topics and items from the pages of the *Aberdeen Journal*, but instead to emphasize the necessarily porous sense of geo-cultural boundaries like the Highlands and northeast in this period of large scale projects for regional modernization.

⁸ See Whatley, *Scottish Society 1707-1830*, pp. 102, 106.

⁹ Kieran German points to a larger issue within early modern British historiography around the mapping of modernization in relation to Jacobitism. He has noted that the ‘Jacobite risings have been regarded as something of an anomaly within a period characterised by social change, economic advancement and industrial development, an atavistic phenomenon at odds with the general sense of progress in the British Isles’. See Kieran German, ‘Review: 1715: *The Great Jacobite Rebellion*. By Daniel Szechi’, *Scottish Historical Review*, 87. 1 (2008), 159-61, at 159.

¹⁰ See Allan I. MacInnes, ‘Jacobitism in Scotland: Episodic Cause or National Movement?’, *Scottish Historical Review*, 86.2 (2007): 225-252, at 232.

¹¹ Andrew Mackillop, ‘Riots and reform: burgh authority, the language of civic reform and the Aberdeen riot of 1785’, *Urban History*, 44.3 (2017), 402-423, at 422.

¹² *Ibid.*, 407.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 405.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

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- ¹⁵ Bob Harris and Charles McKean, *The Scottish Town in the Age of the Enlightenment, 1740-1820* (Edinburgh, 2014), 6.
- ¹⁶ Iain D. Whyte, *Scotland Before the Industrial Revolution: An Economic and Social History, c. 1050-c.1750* (London, 1995), 146.
- ¹⁷ T. C. Smout, 'A New Look at the Scottish Improvers', *Scottish Historical Review*, 91.1 (2012), 125-149, at 133.
- ¹⁸ C. George Caffentzis, 'Civilising the Highlands: Hume, Money and the Annexing Act', *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques*, 31.1 (2005), 169-94, at 180.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 180-1.
- ²⁰ See Smith, *Jacobite Estates of the Forty-Five*, 2.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, 27.
- ²² Margaret Sankey and Daniel Szechi, 'Elite Culture and the Decline of Scottish Jacobitism 1716-1745', *Past and Present*, 173.1 (2001), 90-128, at 96.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, 96-7.
- ²⁴ Whyte, *Scotland Before the Industrial Revolution*, 302.
- ²⁵ Tom Donnelly, 'The Economic Activities of the Aberdeen Merchant Guild, 1750-1799', *Scottish Economic and Social History*, 1.1 (1981), 25-41, at 26.
- ²⁶ See Reid, 'Late Eighteenth-Century Adult Education in the Sciences at Aberdeen', 175-6.
- ²⁷ See Kennedy, *Annals*, 203; and Donnelly, 'The Economic Activities of the Aberdeen Merchant Guild', 34.
- ²⁸ See Stuart Maxwell, 'John Ewen, of Aberdeen, 1745-1821; merchant, politician, poet and connoisseur', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 114 (1984), 596.
- ²⁹ Iain Beavan, 'Raban and His Successors: Local Printing (1622-1800) Held in Aberdeen University Library', *Northern Scotland*, 18 (1998), 97-104, at 102.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, 101.
- ³¹ See Iain Beavan, 'Aberdeen and the North-east', in Stephen W. Brown and Warren McDougall (eds), *History of the Book in Scotland, vol. 2, Enlightenment and Expansion, 1707-1800* (Edinburgh, 2012), 166-76, at 167.
- ³² Donald W. Nichol, 'Aberdeen, Imprints and the ESTC: Towards a Definitive Bibliography', in *Aberdeen and the Enlightenment*, 309-15, at 311.
- ³³ Beavan, 'Aberdeen and the North-east', 167-8.
- ³⁴ See Iain Beavan, 'The Chapbooks and Broad-sides of James Chalmers III, Printer in Aberdeen: Some Re-discoveries and Initial Observations on His Woodcuts', *Journal of the Edinburgh Bibliographical Society*, 10 (2015), 29-85, at 30.
- ³⁵ Mary Craig, *The Scottish Periodical Press, 1750-1789* (Edinburgh, 1931), 51.
- ³⁶ *The Aberdeen's Journal*, 29 December 1747-1 January 1748.
- ³⁷ See W. J. Couper, *The Edinburgh Periodical Press, Vol. II, Bibliography 1711-1800* (Stirling, 1908), 26, 27.
- ³⁸ Murray G. H. Pittock, *Jacobitism* (London, 1998), 101
- ³⁹ See Couper, *The Edinburgh Periodical Press*, 48.
- ⁴⁰ *Aberdeen Journal*, 12 January 1748.
- ⁴¹ *Aberdeen Journal*, 19 January 1748.
- ⁴² *Aberdeen Journal*, 1 March, 1748.
- ⁴³ *Extracts From the Records of the Convention of Royal Burghs, 1711-1738*, ed. by James D. Marwick (Edinburgh, 1866), 382, quoted in John Stuart Shaw, 'Civic Leadership and the Edinburgh Lawyers in 18th Century Scotland' (unpublished PhD thesis, Stirling University, 1980), 168.
- ⁴⁴ See Alastair J. Durie, *The Scottish Linen Industry in the Eighteenth Century* (Edinburgh, 1979), 158
- ⁴⁵ *Records of the Royal Burgh of Edinburgh, 1701-1718*, ed. by H. Armet (Edinburgh, 1967), 186, qtd in Alastair J. Durie, 'Introduction', in *The British Linen Company, 1745-1775* (Edinburgh, 1996), 1-19, at 1-2.
- ⁴⁶ See Durie, 'Introduction', in *The British Linen Company*, 3.
- ⁴⁷ Quoted in Alastair J. Durie, 'The Markets for Scottish Linen, 1730-1775', *Scottish Historical Review*, 52 (1973), 30-49, at 44.
- ⁴⁸ See Durie, 'Introduction', in *The British Linen Company*, 4-5.

- ⁴⁹ See Aberdeenshire Archives, AC1/1/4, Commissioners of Supply Minute Book, 1st June 1750; Aberdeenshire Archives, AC1/1/5, Commissioners of Supply Minute Book, 1st May 1754.
- ⁵⁰ 'DOMESTICK OCCURRENCES', *Aberdeen Journal*, 21 June 1748.
- ⁵¹ Durie, 'Introduction', in *The British Linen Company*, 4. See also Alistair J. Durie, 'The Scottish Linen Industry, 1707-1775, with particular reference to the Early History of the British Linen Company' (unpublished PhD thesis, Edinburgh University, 1973); and Alistair J. Durie, *The Scottish Linen Industry in the Eighteenth Century* (Edinburgh, 1979).
- ⁵² See *Aberdeen Journal*, 8 March 1748; 20 March 1750; 3 April 1750; 26 March 1751; 2 April 1751; 9 July 1751; 3 March 1752; 7 March 1758; 14 March 1758; 28 March 1758; 20 March 1759; 18 March 1760; 28 March 1763; 16 April 1764; 22 April 1765; 23 March 1767; 19 October 1767.
- ⁵³ *Aberdeen Journal*, 15 March 1748.
- ⁵⁴ *Aberdeen Journal*, 3 April 1759.
- ⁵⁵ Durie, 'The Markets for Scottish Linen', 32.
- ⁵⁶ *Aberdeen Journal*, 3 April 1759. See also Kennedy, *Annals*, 199.
- ⁵⁷ Kennedy, *Annals*, 200.
- ⁵⁸ Durie, 'The Markets for Scottish Linen', 36.
- ⁵⁹ *Aberdeen Journal*, 9 April 1764.
- ⁶⁰ Donnelly, 'The Economic Activities of the Members of the Aberdeen Merchant Guild', 26.
- ⁶¹ *Aberdeen Journal*, 15 February 1762.
- ⁶² 'DOMESTICK OCCURRENCES', *Aberdeen Journal*, 19 February 1751.
- ⁶³ *Aberdeen Journal*, 6 May 1765. A report from a 1766 number of the newspaper notes that 'We are informed, that the money arising from the intended improvements on the forfeited estates in Scotland, will be applied towards repairing the several fortifications in that kingdom, and for the better encouraging the herring fishery.' See *Aberdeen Journal*, 29 December 1766.
- ⁶⁴ See Annette M. Smith, 'The Forfeited Estates Papers, 1745: A Study of the Work of the Commissioners for the Forfeited Annexed Estates, 1755-1784, With a Particular Reference to their Contribution to the Development of Communications in Scotland in the Eighteenth Century' (unpublished PhD thesis, St. Andrews University, 1975), 22. See also, Annette M. Smith, *Jacobite Estates of the Forty-Five*, and Annette M. Smith, 'Annexed estates in the eighteenth-century Highlands', *Northern Scotland*, 3.1 (1977), 25-46.
- ⁶⁵ 'Conclusion of the Essay on the Linen and Hempen Manufactures', *Aberdeen Journal*, 4 August 1766.
- ⁶⁶ 'OBSERVATIONS on the present State of the LINEN and HEMPEN MANUFACTURES of SCOTLAND, and the Grievances under which they labour', *Aberdeen Journal* 21 July, 1766.
- ⁶⁷ 'Observations on the State of the Linen and Hempen Manufactures (continued from our last)', *Aberdeen Journal*, 28 July 1766.
- ⁶⁸ See Durie, 'The Markets for Scottish Linen', 49.
- ⁶⁹ 'Observations on the State of the Linen and Hempen Manufactures (continued from our last)', *Aberdeen Journal*, 28 July 1766. In the 24 February 1766 number of the newspaper there is an advertisement for a pamphlet, *Progress of Flax-husbandry in Scotland*, available from the Edinburgh office of the Board of Trustees for Fisheries, Manufactures and Improvements in Scotland.
- ⁷⁰ 'Conclusion of the Essay on the Linen and Hempen Manufactures', *Aberdeen Journal*, 4 August 1766.
- ⁷¹ Smith, *Jacobite Estates of the Forty-Five*, 228.
- ⁷² *Ibid.*
- ⁷³ *Ibid.*, 229.
- ⁷⁴ 'At a Meeting of the Freeholders and Commissioners of Supply of the County of Kincardine', *Aberdeen Journal*, 6 May 1765.
- ⁷⁵ T. M. Devine, *The Scottish Clearances: A History of the Dispossessed, 1600-1900* (London, 2018), 123. See also Sankey and Szechi, 'Elite Culture and the Decline of Scottish Jacobitism', 96-7.
- ⁷⁶ See R.H. Carnie, 'Scholar-Printers of the Scottish Enlightenment, 1740-1800', in *Aberdeen and the Enlightenment*, 298-308, at 305.
- ⁷⁷ See Whyte, *Scotland Before the Industrial Revolution*, 156.
- ⁷⁸ 'DOMESTICK OCCURRENCES', *Aberdeen Journal*, 31 January 1749.

- ⁷⁹ See Philipp R. Rossner, 'The 1738-41 Harvest Crisis in Scotland, 1738-41', *Scottish Historical Review*, 90.1 (2011), 27-63.
- ⁸⁰ See [Scotus] 'To the Publisher of the Aberdeen Journal', *Aberdeen Journal*, 2 January 1750.
- ⁸¹ [Scotus], 'To the Publisher', *Aberdeen Journal*, 20 March 1750.
- ⁸² See Donald W. Nichol, 'Aberdeen, Imprints and ETSC: Towards a Definitive Bibliography', in *Aberdeen and the Enlightenment*, 309-315, at 312. Douglas and Murray also published a *History of the Rebellion in 1745 and 1746* extracted from *Scots Magazine* accounts that was attacked in the first *Edinburgh Review* for its even-handed narrative of events. See *The History of the Rebellion in 1745 and 1746, extracted from the Scots Magazine: with an Appendix, containing an Account of the Trials of the Rebels; the Pretender and his Son's Declarations* (Aberdeen, 1755); and [John Jardine], 'History of the Rebellion 1745 and 1746', *Edinburgh Review*, 1 (1755), 27-9, at 29.
- ⁸³ *Aberdeen Journal*, 1 February 1757.
- ⁸⁴ William R. McDonald, 'The Aberdeen Journal and the Aberdeen Intelligencer 1752-7: a further note on a Raban device', *The Bibliothek*, 5.6 (1969), 204-6, at 206.
- ⁸⁵ *Aberdeen Journal*, 27 October 1760.
- ⁸⁶ *Aberdeen Journal*, 18 January 1762.
- ⁸⁷ [A FARMER], 'To the Publisher of the Aberdeen Journal', 22 December 1760.
- ⁸⁸ 'To the publisher of the *Edinburgh Evening Courant*', *Aberdeen Journal*, 22 September 1760.
- ⁸⁹ See Devine, *The Scottish Clearances*.
- ⁹⁰ For a discussion of landowner and farmer-led agricultural improvement schemes, see Smout, 'A New Look at the Scottish Improvers', 140-44.
- ⁹¹ See Whyte, *Scotland Before the Industrial Revolution*, 161.
- ⁹² *Aberdeen Journal*, 19 September 1758.
- ⁹³ See Carnie, 'Scholar-Printers of the Scottish Enlightenment', 305.
- ⁹⁴ *Aberdeen Journal*, 26 December 1758.
- ⁹⁵ See Harris and McKean, *The Scottish Town in the Age of the Enlightenment*, 460.
- ⁹⁶ *Aberdeen Journal*, 23 November 1767.
- ⁹⁷ Rev. James Chalmers (1686-1744), the father of the founder of the *Aberdeen Journal*, was a Professor of Divinity at Marischal College, and James Chalmers III was a graduate of Marischal College. See Carnie, 'Scholar-Printers of the Scottish Enlightenment', 304.
- ⁹⁸ See *Plan of Education, in the Marischal College and University of Aberdeen, With the Reasons of It, Drawn up by Order of the Faculty* (Aberdeen, 1755).
- ⁹⁹ Ronnie Young, 'James Beattie and the Progress of Genius in the Aberdeen Enlightenment', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 36.2 (2013), 245-61, at 253.
- ¹⁰⁰ 'DOMESTICK OCCURRENCES', *Aberdeen Journal*, 12 December 1752.
- ¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁰² John S. Reid, 'Late Eighteenth-Century Adult Education in the Sciences at Aberdeen: the Natural Philosophy Classes of Professor Patrick Copland', in *Aberdeen and the Enlightenment*, 168-79, at 169.
- ¹⁰³ *Aberdeen Journal*, 17 October 1785, also qtd. in Reid, 'Late Eighteenth-Century Adult Education in the Sciences at Aberdeen', 169.
- ¹⁰⁴ *Aberdeen Journal*, 28 November 1785.
- ¹⁰⁵ *Aberdeen Journal*, 18 November 1799. See also *Aberdeen Journal*, 18 October 1784; and Reid, 'Late Eighteenth-Century Adult Education in the Sciences at Aberdeen', 170.
- ¹⁰⁶ Reid, 'Late Eighteenth-Century Adult Education in the Sciences at Aberdeen', pp. 175-6.
- ¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 176.
- ¹⁰⁸ See ZENO, 'Letter I. To The CITIZENS OF EDINBURGH', *Caledonian Mercury*, 23 December 1782; ZENO, 'Letter II. To The CITIZENS OF EDINBURGH', *Caledonian Mercury*, 28 December 1782; ZENO, 'Letter III. To The CITIZENS OF EDINBURGH', *Caledonian Mercury* 6 January, 1783; ZENO, 'Letter IV. To The CITIZENS OF EDINBURGH', *Caledonian Mercury*, 22 January 1783; ZENO, 'Letter V. To The CITIZENS OF EDINBURGH', *Caledonian Mercury*, 5 February 1783. For a recent study of this letter series by the present author, see Alex Benchimol, 'Thomas McGrugar's Letters of Zeno: Patriotic Print and Constitutional Improvement in the *Caledonian Mercury*, 1782-1783', *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 47.1 (2021).

¹⁰⁹ Attribution in Mackillop, 'Riots and Reform', 412. A combined edition of *The Letters of Zeno and Civis, On the CONSTITUTION of the BURGHS of SCOTLAND*, was featured in an advertisement in the *Aberdeen Journal*, 5 May 1783. The advertisement listed a network of booksellers across northeast and north central Scotland where the volume was being sold, including Aberdeen, Banff, Montrose, Elgin, Forres, Nairn, Dundee, Inverness, and Perth.

¹¹⁰ CIVIS, 'To ZENO', *Aberdeen Journal*, 6 January 1783.

¹¹¹ David Findlay and Alexander Murdoch, 'Revolution to Reform: Eighteenth-century Politics, 1690-1800', in Patricia Dennison, David Ditchburn, and Michael Lynch (eds), *Aberdeen Before 1800: A New History* (East Linton, 2002), 267-286, at 281.

¹¹² Findlay and Murdoch, 'Revolution to Reform: Eighteenth-century Politics, 1690-1800', 281. Barron was a grain dealer who co-founded Gordon, Barron and Company in 1773, which became one of Aberdeen's leading linen manufacturing and processing firms. See Donnelly, 'The Economic Activities of the Aberdeen Merchant Guild, 1750-1799', 34. Ewen was a hardware, jewelry and silversmith dealer who married into the Aberdeen stocking business through his wife Janet Middleton, and after her death in 1767, diversified with investments into the Aberdeen property market, a bleachfield in Laurencekirk, and a company operating the Aberdeen-Edinburgh stage-wagon service. See Maxwell, 'John Ewen, of Aberdeen, 1745-1821', 596.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 278.

¹¹⁴ Mackillop, 'Riots and Reform', 412.

¹¹⁵ Attribution is assigned by Findlay and Murdoch, 'Revolution to Reform', 281

¹¹⁶ Mackillop, 'Riots and Reform', 415.

¹¹⁷ A CITIZEN of ABERDEEN, 'TO THE BURGESSES OF ABERDEEN', *Aberdeen Journal*, 10 March 1783.

¹¹⁸ Findlay and Murdoch, 'Revolution to Reform', 281.

¹¹⁹ 'TO THE BURGESSES OF ABERDEEN', *Aberdeen Journal*, 10 March 1783.

¹²⁰ See Findlay and Murdoch, 'Revolution to Reform', 281. See also the announcement of the new Aberdeen burgh reform committee in the *Aberdeen Journal*, 10 March, 1783.

¹²¹ See Findlay and Murdoch, 'Revolution to Reform', 278.

¹²² See the announcement of the new Aberdeen burgh reform committee in the *Aberdeen Journal* for 10 March, 1783, in particular its aims to 'join in a petition to Parliament to restore their original and unquestionable rights, the rights of Citizens and Britons, to choose their own magistrates, and their own representatives in parliament'. In a 'DOMESTICK OCCURENCES' item from a May 1783 issue of the *Aberdeen Journal*, it was reported that the 'petition of the Merchant Burgesses of this city, requesting that the selection of the Magistrates and Council, and the representative in Parliament may be vested in the Burgesses at large, was last Wednesday forwarded to Alexander Garden, Esq.; Member for the County, in order to its being presented to the House of Commons'. See 'DOMESTICK OCCURENCES', *Aberdeen Journal*, 12 May 1783.

¹²³ A BURGESS of Aberdeen, 'To the burgesses of Scotland who have declared for the necessity of a reform in the elections of the magistrates and council, and representatives in parliament for the different towns, particularly those of Aberdeen', *Aberdeen Journal*, 16 June 1783.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ A BURGESS of Aberdeen, 'CONCLUSION of the Address to the Burgesses of Aberdeen, in answer to Dion Cassius, from our last', *Aberdeen Journal*, 23 June 1783.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ Patrick Barron and JNo. Ewen, 'The following letter, addressed to the Burgesses of Aberdeen, who have declared for a Reform in the election of Magistrates and representatives in parliament, was last week circulated in town', *Aberdeen Journal*, 1 December 1783.

¹²⁸ Mackillop, 'Riots and Reform', 416.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.* See also *Aberdeen Journal*, 26 September 1785.

¹³⁰ See *Aberdeen Journal*, 3 October 1785, cited in Mackillop, 'Riots and Reform', 417.

¹³¹ *Aberdeen Journal*, 26 September 1785, cited in Mackillop, 'Riots and Reform', 417.

¹³² Mackillop, 'Riots and Reform', p. 422.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ Harris and McKean, *The Scottish Town in the Age of the Enlightenment*, 6.