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The Wodrow–Kenrick Correspondence 1750–1810 Volume 1: 1750–1783, edited by Martin Fitzpatrick, Emma Macleod, and Anthony Page. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020, xi + 547pp. ISBN: 9780198809012.

Readers of the *Burns Chronicle* will note that this is a work that deals with matters of culture in Scotland and beyond, ending - strictly speaking - three years before Robert Burns appears in print. However, *The Wodrow-Kenrick Correspondence Volume 1* provides fascinating insights into the world that Burns inhabited, including glimpses of many individuals the poet knew or whom he commented on or who would eventually comment upon him. Likewise in terms of relevance, the period of Scottish Enlightenment, of the American Revolution, of British politics in general, of eighteenth-century books, and of Scottish religious affairs, particularly, are all here present with something of the emotional immediacy with which they would have struck Burns and his contemporaries.

University of Glasgow alumni, Dr James Wodrow (1730-1810) and Samuel Kenrick (1728-1811) maintained a lifelong correspondence after forging their college friendship in the 1740s, their letters to one another surviving in a large corpus nearly eighty-five per cent complete and held by 'Dr Williams's Library' in London. This library is an important archive of British dissenting Protestantism (that is, reformed denominations outwith the 'established' Church of England). Wodrow became a Church of Scotland minister in Stevenston, Ayrshire, Kenrick, a private tutor to the Milliken family in Renfrewshire for a decade and a half and then a banker in Bewdley, twelve miles from Birmingham. Incidentally, or perhaps not, we have recorded in the correspondence a deeply touching and quiet friendship at a distance where two minds continuously met and shared experiences, that sharing not in the slightest undercut by the fact that Wodrow and Kenrick were two people who did not always agree with one another. Thoughtful both, Kenrick's enthusiasm for American independence during 1778 is opposed by Wodrow who fears a situation of long strife and bloodiness comparable to the decades that followed what today we might call the seventeenth-century Wars of the Three Kingdoms (or more traditionally, the 'English Civil War'). Wodrow also diagnoses the extinguishing of democracy in the individual American states in a centralising republican governmental 'tyranny', aided and abetted by the influence of Britain's fierce ally the French. Debates about government and 'tyranny' and 'liberty' and other hot-button coinages of the day abound in this correspondence and are particularly interesting not only in the political but also in the closely-related religious sphere. Wodrow had an impeccable traditional Calvinist family-pedigree. He was the son of Robert Wodrow (1679-1734), minister at Eastwood and a prominent apologist for the Covenanters, and his grandfather was Rev. James Wodrow (1637-1707), Professor of Divinity at the University of Glasgow and an outspoken Covenanting preacher. Curiously, perhaps, grandson James belonged to the Moderate Party of the Church of Scotland, more theologically liberal although also more conservative in terms of ecclesiastical government when compared to the traditional Calvinist temper of the Church of Scotland. This was true especially in the case of Moderate support for the Patronage Act of 1712 which entrusted heritors, or land and property owners, rather than local congregations with the appointment of church ministers. Kenrick writes to Wodrow in May 1783 that he is pleased to hear from his friend of the good health of the Rev. William

Boyd (1748-1828), the Moderate clergyman whose induction to Fenwick in 1780 was opposed and delayed for two years by Popular Party adherents. This was one of the cases that provoked the ire of Robert Burns as he wrote about Moderate/Popular opposition in Kilmarnock a little later in 'The Ordination' (1786). In Burns's satirical text, a Popular voice complains:

Lang Patronage, with rod o' airn,
Has shor'd the Kirk's undoin;
As lately Fenwick, sair forfairn
Has proven to its ruin

Burns a Moderate Party adherent supported Patronage and even as his secular politics became increasingly democratic, he retained his deep dislike of the Popular Party. The poet's great satire on hardline Calvinism, 'Holy Willie's Prayer' (written in 1785), was published by Burns in chapbook form in 1789 when the persecution of his friend the Rev. William McGill (1732-1807) by the Popular Party was reaching a crescendo, albeit unsuccessful in the end as McGill's opponents failed in their attempt to make heresy charges stick. In May 1783, Kenrick writes for the sympathetic ear of Wodrow, commending McGill's burgeoning theological disquisitions. In the late 1760s we also see Wodrow perturbed by the 'persecution' of Church of Scotland clergy charged with heresy. Ayrshire farmer and poet, Burns and Ayrshire clergyman, Wodrow are both of Moderate stamp and this similarity is instructive of the way in which that outlook was strong in 'the provinces' as well as in its more usually cited metropolitan bastion of Edinburgh. Also, in both Glasgow metropolis, with its important university, and in the countryside of the western counties of Scotland it is clear from the Wodrow-Kenrick letters that the intellectual agency of both Moderate and Popular parties was vigorous. Here the correspondence of Wodrow and Kenrick attests a more continuously contested eighteenth-century culture than we sometimes think of via a canonical narrative of the increasingly more liberal, secular Scottish Enlightenment. At various points also, the comments of our two pen-friends reflect an enlightenment intellect within Popular Party as well as Moderate Scottish Presbyterianism.

The Wodrow-Kenrick Correspondence Volume 1 is likely to be a veritable quarry for scholars in future pursuing a wide variety of themes. In it, we see Glasgow University as an important place for students from England and Ireland, given that scholarly progress was not dependent as it was at Cambridge and Oxford on an oath of allegiance to the Church of England and so – like the University of Edinburgh – Glasgow became a key seat of learning for Protestant dissenters from furth of Scotland. Entangled in the Wodrow-Kenrick correspondence are the affairs and writings of David Hume, Adam Smith, Thomas Reid, William Leechman and a wide cast of more minor figures of the Scottish Enlightenment. Here these are lively, conversational fodder, simultaneously gossipy and informed. The editors provide a wealth of unobtrusive annotation that skilfully guides the reader through the politics, religion and culture in general during the period of the Wodrow-Kenrick correspondence. The fifteen-page thumb-nail sketch of 'Persons Mentioned in Volume 1' is an excellent guide both to numerous family and friends of the correspondents as well as the famous, and not now so famous, historical protagonists who flit in and out of the Wodrow-Kenrick discussion of events and books. An excellently incisive introduction paves the way for a correspondence that reflects real history, people great and small and interlaced domestic and world concerns. The editors and Oxford University Press are to be commended for bringing the Wodrow-Kenrick relationship and its many aperçus into such accessible published-form. This is a must-have, or at least must-consult, volume for any scholar with a serious interest in the

culture of Scotland – and of Britain – in the second part of the eighteenth century. Intriguingly, the editors signal ahead in their general introduction to the next volume to be published of the Wodrow-Kenrick correspondence, where Samuel writes to James of his family in England in 1789 laughing ‘heartily’ at Burns’s poetry. I very much look forward to the appearance of Volume 2.

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