
Contrary to the publisher’s claim, the Jacobite movement between the 1715 uprising and the ’45 has received extensive historical treatment, yet this work does make a critical contribution to the literature in its use of a biographical approach to illuminate the wider *mentalité* of Jacobitism. The case is that of the arch Jacobite leader George Lockhart whose life and ideas are paradigmatic of the cause he represented. Lockhart’s vast literary legacy is especially important: almost half a million or so words of autobiography, correspondence and political polemics which *en somme* greatly offset the scant documentary sources that traditionally have hampered a deeper understanding of the Jacobite mind. To give readers a fuller picture of Lockhart’s world and times, the author deploys an innovative technique, using chapters one to three to explore the social, economic, and political context which shaped the man’s formative years. In the remaining sections, he demonstrating how these experiences shaped his perception of events and how this perception illumines the ideological dimension of Jacobite activity.

Shown to be literate and well read, “with an independent, assertive cast of mind,” (19) Lockhart was, by circumstances, forced to mature early, creating in him a desire for order and stability “that was to manifest itself repeatedly throughout his career.” (26) Financially solvent through a combination of inheritance profits from collieries, and resourceful (if not ruthless) estate management, Lockhart was initially less successful in the social/political sphere, his “patriot” principles and steadfast refusal to support the “Court Party” in Westminster costing him royal favor. Meticulously Szechi traces Lockhart’s gradual transition to hard-line Jacobitism from his early entry into national politics, as member for mid Lothian (1702) and subsequent alignment with the “Country Party,” opposing the cavalier sponsored succession law, and Scottish Militia Bill, while advocating greater Scottish legislative autonomy.
Finally, by means of family connection, named one of the Scottish Commissioners for the Union, he was shrewdly effective, as is clearly shown, in extracting vital fiscal, and other concessions from his English counterparts though many of these, admittedly, favored the gentry class to which Lockhart belonged. (62)

Szechi’s in-depth account of the process whereby Lockhart eventually came to oppose the Union, leading to involvement in the abortive rising of 1708, fills a vital lacuna in Scottish historiography and is a model of analytic precision. Taking no role in the botched rebellion of 1715, due to widespread notoriety following the publication of his Memoirs (1714), Lockhart was well placed to offset the need for leadership created by the subsequent flight of many notable Jacobites. His animosity towards the Hanoverians became intensified with the execution of his brother for high treason. This execution “locked him into commitments that were to dictate the rest of his life.” (121) These included zealous participation in all major Jacobite activity after 1717, notably negotiations for a Swedish invasion to aid the exiled Stuarts, personal correspondence with the Pretender and maintaining Clan resistance to English financial inducements and political pressures.

The remainder and central portions of the book (chapters 7-10), drawing on an unprecedented wide range of sources, casts further light on Lockhart’s varied career by viewing this within the context of his political theories and ideas and in relation to the subversive movement in which he was so committed. In many ways, as Szechi convincingly demonstrates, Lockhart’s mindset ? classically patriarchal, anti-Presbyterian, self-righteous, nostalgic ? mirrored the Jacobite phenomenon as a whole, an affinity that endowed Lockhart, and others of his circle, with both an identity and energizing focus. This fact, and supporting documentation, in turn enhances the reader’s understanding of the strengths as well as limitations of the emerging British fiscal/military state; also the conception of nationhood which accompanied it.\(^{iii}\)
In sum, this is an interesting, useful and well-written book, recommended to all those interested in a fascinating and eventful chapter of Scottish history.

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