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Author: Tom McInally

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Patrick Gordon and the Jesuit College at Braunsberg[1]

Tom McInally

The reader of Patrick Gordon's diaries is struck by the fact that these are the work of an educated man. From the first page he peppers his sentences with Latin phrases and quotes from ancient authors. These are not the writings of a typical professional soldier. Yet in his diaries Gordon tells us little of his formal education. In 1640 at the age of five he was sent to board at a church (Calvinist) school in the village of Cruden along with his brother, George, who was a year older than him. Their formal study was Latin grammar and Patrick even recalled the page of the book which he and his brother had reached when they stopped after four years of study.[2] The brothers moved school on a number of occasions and were later joined by their younger brothers. He recounts that in total he had nine and a half year's schooling but gives no details of his studies other than the names of his teachers and the location of the schools he attended. He records that in 1651 when he was sixteen years old he 'was taken from schoole'. By then he had 'attained to as much learning as the ordinary country schools affoords'.[3] Furthering his studies would have required attendance at a university. Being a Catholic he was unwilling to subscribe to the Calvinist Confession of Faith which was required of students at Scottish universities.[4] Although Gordon

[1] The colleges at Braunsberg are frequently referred to as a university although they were never formally awarded that status. Josef Bender (ed.), *Geschichte Der Philosophischen und Theologischen Studien in Ermland* (Braunsberg, 1868), 15–16. In 1912 what remained of the Jesuit College was enlarged and allotted the title of State Academy by Prussia.

[2] Dmitry Fedosov (ed.), *Diary of General Patrick Gordon of Auchleuchries 1635–1699, Volume I: 1635–1659* (Aberdeen, 2009) (hereafter referred to as *Diary 1*), 4. The schoolmaster, William Logan, taught from the most common Latin grammar book used in Scotland at the time; Jean Despauter's *Gramaticae institutiones*, an abridged edition of which was published in Aberdeen in 1623 by the printer Edward Raban with the financial support of D. Melvil, a burgher of the city. The book was published in eight volumes covering grammar and syntax from basic to advanced level. The last volume was used as a course text by second year students at the University of Edinburgh. Alexander Bower, *The History of the University of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1817), 65–6.

[3] *Diary 1*, 6

[4] Initially it was required of those who had completed their studies and wished to graduate but later was mandatory on matriculation. The Aberdeen universities were

makes no mention of names it would appear that some family acquaintance had suggested that he continue his studies abroad, specifically at the Pontifical College in Braunsberg (Braniewo in north-eastern Poland).

At the time many boys and young men from Scotland travelled to the continent to continue their education. Calvinist youths often chose Geneva but later in the seventeenth century the University of Leiden became the preferred choice of the majority. Catholic youths had separate facilities. In the fifty years between 1575 and 1625 four Catholic colleges were established on the continent specifically for Scots – at Douai (in the Spanish Netherlands), Rome, Paris and Madrid. Scottish Benedictines also had schools available in Regensburg and Würzburg in Southern Germany. By the time Patrick Gordon was preparing to go abroad to study, over 500 Scottish Catholics, many like him from the northeast, had attended these colleges. During the 1650s while he was in Braunsberg a further 100 enrolled at the Scots Colleges abroad. Gordon's choice of Braunsberg requires an explanation since he appears to be alone in deciding to study there.

Fifty years earlier this would not have been the case. The college in Braunsberg predated the Scots Colleges and Scots had not simply attended as students but had been closely involved with its foundation and running. The Cardinal Archbishop of Ermland (Warmia), Stanislaus Hosius (1504–79), was a leading proponent of the Catholic counter-Reformation and in 1564 as part of his efforts to reform his diocese he decided to found a school in the port city of Braunsberg. The Lyceum Hosianum was established with assistance from the Society of Jesus which sent him among others a number of Scottish Jesuits: Robert Abercrombie, John Hay, John Tyrie and later William Ogilvie[5] were among its first teachers. These Scots had already been engaged in developing the Jesuit colleges which were being established throughout Catholic Europe.[6] Hosius gave the Jesuits full responsibility for the lyceum and the following year he built on this educational establishment by opening a college for noble Polish (*Szlachta*) students[7], again run by the Society of Jesus.

later in insisting on these requirements than the other three Scottish universities but even in Aberdeen open profession of Catholicism was impossible.

[5] G. M. Murphy, 'Robert Abercrombie, SJ (1536–1613) and the Baltic Counter Reformation', *Innes Review*, 50 (Edinburgh, 1999), 58.

[6] Abercrombie had been the master of novices at the Jesuit college in Poznan. Murphy, 'Robert Abercrombie', 58. In the second half of the sixteenth century the Society of Jesus founded almost 300 colleges of which thirty-one were of university status. Willem Frijhoff, 'Patterns', in Hilde de Ridder-Symoens (ed.), *A History of the University in Europe,* Vol. II (Cambridge, 1996), 71: also David J. Mitchell, *The Jesuits* (London, 1980), 58.

[7] This was one of the earliest attempts to engage the nobility in higher education.

In 1567 he added a diocesan seminary in keeping with the provisions laid down by the Council of Trent and in 1569 he further enlarged the educational facilities by permitting the Society to open a Jesuit seminary for novitiates to their order. Robert Abercrombie was appointed the first master of novices for this new college. The same year Sigismund Augustus (1520–72), king of Poland, made the cardinal his official representative in Rome.[8] Hosius spent the rest of his life at the papal court and the colleges were left largely in the control of their Jesuit teachers.

In attempting to transform Braunsberg into a centre of Polish Counter-Reformation, Hosius was following the precepts of his former mentor and professor of jurisprudence at the University of Bologna, Ugo Buoncompagni (1502–85). In addition to Hosius in Poland Buoncompagni had inspired other pupils in a similar way to establish Counter-Reformation movements in their homelands of Italy, Germany and England.[9] Ugo Buoncompagni was elected to the papacy in May 1572 and from his installation as Pope Gregory XIII he had a clear vision for the continuing reform of the Catholic Church. Although he was seventy years of age at the time of his election, immediately he began to institute major change within the Church. Earlier he had served as a papal jurist at the Council of Trent and was passionate in implementing its key directives: rooting out corrupt practices and improving the standard of education among priests. As part of his efforts to achieve the latter Gregory embarked on a programme which was to result in the establishment of twenty-three new

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Throughout Europe they resisted joining institutions which allowed the 'lower orders' to be members. By creating colleges exclusively for the nobility it was hoped that they would become engaged with improving their education and thereby contribute more effectively to the running of the state, the administration of which was increasing in complexity. The universities of the German states were more successful in attracting nobility than others. In the late sixteenth century they established *Ritterakademien* which were not only exclusively for the sons of the nobility but had curricula tailored to their perceived needs – horsemanship, swordsmanship, courtly music and dancing with some classical learning. In the case of the Classics even the texts used were specially chosen to appeal to the tastes of the nobility with Caesar's *Gallic Wars* and Apollodorus' *Twelve Labours of Hercules* being to the fore. The academies for knights in Heidelberg (1593) and Tübingen (1594) were among the earliest successful examples. See Norbert Conrads, *Ritterakademien der früheu Neuzeit* (Göttingen, 1982).

[8] Pope Pius V (1504–72) had already appointed Hosius papal legate to the Polish court.

[9] Alessandro Farnese (1520–89), Cristoforo Madruzzo (1512–78) and Carlo Borromeo (1538–84) in Italy: Otto Truchsess von Waldburg (1514–73), Prince-Bishop of Augsburg in Germany: Reginald Pole (1500–58), Queen Mary's Archbishop of Canterbury, in England. Pole's reforming work was swept away after his death and the accession of Queen Elizabeth in 1558.

colleges. The pattern of how this was to be carried out had already been set. In 1552 Pope Julius III (1487–1555) had established a college in Rome for German nobility who did not want to be educated in the reformed religion of their homelands. The teaching was supervised by Ignatius Loyola (1491–1556) and his followers. Initially reluctant to become involved in education Loyola went on to embrace this work and, by improving on the methods then in use, placed the Jesuits in a dominant position in higher education in Europe and beyond. Their reputation was such that Protestants sent their sons to Jesuit colleges and the Society gained the name of 'Schoolmasters of Europe'.[10] The pope had firm views on how his new colleges should be ordered and the Jesuits were to play the key part in running them. Pope Gregory's ambassador to the Swedish court, the Jesuit, Antonio Possevino (1533–1611), recommended that a papal seminary (which came to be known as the Swedish Seminary or Northern College) should be established in Braunsberg alongside the colleges of Cardinal Hosius. Possevino had identified the need for a college specifically to train priests for the northern mission.[11] It was to be open to all nationalities of northern Europe. By the terms of the Council of Trent seminaries were to be set up in the dioceses in which the priests were to serve (as Bishop Hosius had done in Braunsberg for his diocese) but, since this was impossible in Protestant lands, extraordinary measures were required. Possevino's suggestion was accepted by Pope Gregory and in 1578 the pontifical college was founded in Braunsberg, using the buildings and Jesuit staff of Hosius' colleges.

This Northern College was open to Scottish Catholics at a time when no other institute of higher education was available to them. Robert Abercrombie, who had remained at Braunsberg since he had been sent by the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, Diego Laynez (1512–65), to help set up the original college, took the opportunity that this presented to set out for Scotland to promote the new college and recruit potential students. The following year he returned with two candidates and began the enrolment of Scottish students into the college. In 1581 Abercrombie gained permission from Claudio Acquaviva

[10] Edward A. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *St Ignatius and the Ratio Studiorum* (New York, 1933), 24.

[11] 'Antonio Possevino' in Charles E. O'Neill, Joaquín María Domínguez, *diccionario de la Compania de Jesus* (Madrid, 2001). Possevino also helped found papal seminaries in Olomouc (Moravia) and Cluj (Romania) as well as the University of Vilnius (Lithuania) as part of his counter-Reformation drive. These seminaries, especially Vilnius, remained in close cooperation with the pontifical and Jesuit colleges of Braunsberg, and frequently transferred staff and students between the colleges. John Hay SJ went to Vilnius to help establish the Jesuit novitiate college at the university in 1584. Murphy, 'Robert Abercrombie', 60, 62.

(1543–1615), the then Jesuit general, to establish a mission in Scotland with the help of a small group of fellow Scottish Jesuits.[12] Over time a practice developed that when they journeyed back to the continent missionaries would accompany any candidates who wanted to study at the Northern College. In the course of the next forty years at least thirty five Scots studied at Braunsberg.[13] Missionary work was difficult and, although Abercrombie and his colleagues had initial successes, the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot in 1605 caused King James VI and I to issue a warrant for Abercrombie's arrest. He managed to escape from England and returned to the college where he died in 1613 aged 77 years.[14] All of the Jesuit colleges in Braunsberg were forced to close in 1626 when the town was occupied by Protestant troops during the Thirty Years War (1618–48).[15] When the teachers returned and reopened three colleges[16] in 1637 Scots also began to enrol as students although this time in fewer numbers. Nevertheless, one of them, Alexander Menzies (see below), was to be particularly important to Patrick Gordon.

The drop in numbers can be accounted for by the fact that by the 1620s Scottish Catholics had four colleges available to them and the one located in Douai was attracting the majority of entrants due to the relative ease of travel from Scotland to the Spanish Netherlands.[17] It does not appear that any more Scottish students enrolled at Braunsberg after Patrick Gordon. There were, however, Polish-born sons of expatriate Scots who studied there. The convenience of studying closer to home outweighed any attraction that the Scots colleges in Douai and Paris might have had for them.

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[12] The missionaries were forced to used aliases – Abercrombie's was Robert Scot – so identification is difficult but at least one, William Ogilvie, had studied and taught at Braunsberg. G. L. Delavida, *George Strachan* (Aberdeen, 1956), 7–8.

[13] Ernst Ludwig Fischer, *The Scots in Germany* (Edinburgh, 1902), 298–9. Five are known to have become Jesuits and a further seven appear to have been ordained priests in other religious orders. The records of the Scots Colleges run by Jesuits give great detail on students who became members of the Society but less so in relation to those who joined other orders.

[14] Alphona Bellesheim, *History of the Catholic Church in Scotland*, Vol. 3 (Edinburgh, 1890), 351.

[15] The occupation began during the phase known as The Polish Swedish War (1625–9).

[16] The college for Jesuit novitiates had been transferred to Krakow earlier. The college for nobles had not been successful in attracting the desired number of students. Only the lyceum and diocesan seminary were reopened along with the Swedish Seminary. The total number of students fluctuated between 130 and 300 of whom about forty attended the Swedish Seminary which Gordon attended. Bender, *Geschichte*, 15–16.

[17] Tom McInally, *The Alumni of the Scots Colleges Abroad, 1575–1799* (Unpublished PhD, University of Aberdeen, 2008), 74–6.

Robert Abercrombie initiated more than the tradition of Scots studying at Braunsberg. The purpose of his visit to Scotland in 1578 had been to recruit students for the Northern College. Thereafter it became standard practice for missionary priests to identify potential recruits and accompany them to a Scots college abroad. Priests and others who carried out this role ran serious risks. Travelling to and from the continent aroused suspicion and port authorities were alert to strangers. Priests often travelled in the guise of mercenaries or merchants and equipped themselves accordingly to avoid detection. Secrecy had to be maintained regarding the identities of those involved and surviving correspondence, when it mentions the courier at all, refers to him by an alias. However, in the registers of the Scots colleges there are many references to the arrival of a student accompanied by a member of the college staff or sometimes by some visiting dignitary from Scotland who was a friend of the student's family. Occasionally a party of students travelled together as can be identified by their being recorded as having entered college on the same day. The records of the Swedish Seminary in Braunsberg show similar patterns for Scottish students although there is no mention of a guide who might have accompanied them.[18]

In his diary Patrick Gordon makes no mention of being recruited as a student or of being accompanied to the college in Braunsberg, nevertheless, he gives sufficient information to deduce that this was the case. After expressing unwillingness to go to university in Scotland he asserts that he 'resolved … to go to some forreigne country, not careing much on what pretence' implying that attending university was his purpose in travelling abroad and that it would also serve him by providing the freedom and adventure he sought.[19] His description of his journey as a youthful Scottish student travelling to a foreign college is almost unique but another account of such a journey does survive for Gordon's great nephew, twelve-year-old Charles Arbuthnot. In a letter home dated 22 September 1748 Arbuthnot described his feelings on leaving his family and the discomfort of what turned out to be a twenty-day voyage from Aberdeen to Rotterdam during which he was almost constantly seasick.[20] On arrival in

[18] The students, Patrick Abercromby, William Douglas and James Lindsay, each entered the college on 6 August 1596. Thomas Abercromby and David Kinard entered on 27 September 1599. Others are recorded in December 1609, August 1641 and August 1642. Bellesheim, *History*, 455–7.

[19] *Diary 1*, 6–7.

[20] Aberdeenshire Museum Service, Mintlaw, archive, *PEHMS:P3422*, Letter no. 1. The voyage took so long because bad weather forced the ship to take shelter in a number of ports including Whitby before finally reaching Rotterdam. The similarity between Gordon and Arbuthnot of the description of parting from their families is

Rotterdam he went to a house recommended to him before he left Aberdeen where he was well treated and stayed a number of days while transport was arranged for him and four other boys to their final destination which was the Scots college in Regensburg. He makes no reference to a guide accompanying them although one would have been required to coordinate their journey.

In his account of his arrival in Gdansk Gordon tells of lodging in the house of a Scotsman, John Donaldsone, before travelling onward to Braunsberg on the ordinary coach for Konigsberg in the company of three unnamed Germans and a 'gentleman Thomas Menezes' (Menzies).[21] Given that Gordon spoke no German or Polish, this journey could only have been achieved smoothly by his having a guide to accompany him. Gordon does not refer to him as his guide but Thomas Menezes is his only Scottish travelling companion and when the coach arrived at Frombork they were met by the priest, Robert Blackhall, and together lodged with him. Robert was a canon of Frombork cathedral and the brother of Gilbert Blackwell, who at the time was a missionary in the northeast of Scotland and would have been known to Gordon's family. The following day the three men travelled together into town and stayed with Alexander Michal Menezes, brother of Thomas, who was a parish priest in Braunsberg. Gordon records that he lodged with the priest for a while.[22] Alexander Menezes had enrolled at the Braunsberg College in 1641 along with his brother, William. William left without completing his studies but Alexander was ordained and remained as a parish priest in the city dying there in 1671 while attending to the plague stricken of his parish.[23] It would appear that Patrick Gordon was able to travel to the college in Braunsberg because Thomas Menezes had planned to visit his brother and this had become known to Gordon's parents.

Following the note on lodging with Alexander Menezes, Gordon's next diary entry is the short paragraph:

> Here being at my studies in the Colledge of the Jesuits, albeit I wanted not for anything, the Jesuits always bestowing extraordinary paines, and takeing great care in educateing youth, yet could not my humor endure such a still and strict way of liveing.[24]

strengthened by the fact that neither was able to return to Scotland until many years later and the parting in Aberdeen was the last time they saw their parents.

[21] *Diary 1*, 9.

[22] *Diary 1*, 10.

[23] Fischer, *Scots in Germany*, 299. Their names appear in the register as 'Minnesius'.

[24] *Diary 1*, 10.

This is all the information Gordon gives of his studies with the Jesuits at the college in Braunsberg. In order to understand what his experiences there might have entailed it is necessary to look elsewhere regarding Jesuit education.

When Ignatius Loyola opened his first college, *Collegio Romano*, in Rome in 1551 a notice was nailed to the door which said 'School of Grammar, Humanities and Christian Doctrine, free'.[25] There were three distinct aspects to the structure of the education which the Jesuits provided and as far as was possible every college complied with them. First the colleges were run by the Jesuits according to their rules. Although students had rights laid down in the college rule book they had no power of appointment or dismissal of academic staff who were exclusively members of the Society of Jesus. Loyola had organised his new society along military lines and he and his successors were referred to as 'The General'. Discipline was required and Gordon commented on the strictness of the Jesuit way as something his 'humor' could not endure.

Secondly, whenever possible, the colleges were housed in buildings in which the students had secure lodgings and received teaching and spiritual direction. Although Gordon wrote that on first arriving in Braunsberg he lodged with Alexander Menezes it is unlikely that he continued to stay with the priest since after he enrolled at the college he would have been required to reside in the college buildings.[26] Bishop Hosius had established his colleges in a former Franciscan friary. The old friary would have provided the enclosed environment that the Jesuits needed. When Gordon arrived in 1652 the Swedish Seminary was housed in the quarters previously occupied by the college of the *Szlachta*[27] which were probably the most commodious and comfortable available in the old friary, nevertheless, he still referred to his time there as a 'still and strict way of liveing'.

Thirdly the courses of study were organised in a logical way, with each new stage attempted requiring the students' having knowledge and understanding of the previous stages. Classes were grouped according to attainment not age. Gordon was sixteen or seventeen years old when he first arrived and would have been four or five years older than most in his class.[28]

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[25] Mitchell, *The Jesuits*, 59.

[26] The college records do not, however, show Gordon as ever having enrolled. Bellesheim, *History*, 455–7.

[27] Bender, *Geschichte*, 15.

[28] The Braunsberg college records show that it was not uncommon for Scots to be older at entry than would normally be the case. When he entered in April 1607, Patrick Stichel was aged twenty-five but since he was ordained two years later he must have completed most of his *Quadrivium* studies elsewhere. Equally the Seton brothers,

Despite 'the Jesuits always bestowing extraordinary paines' this aspect of his education must have presented him with difficulty in settling into his new surroundings. At the outset of Jesuit involvement in education Loyola had stipulated that new entrants had to be fully literate in Latin before they could be accepted into a Jesuit college. He believed that this entry qualification was essential since the Society's resources could not be stretched to include elementary education. On arrival Gordon would have been tested on his proficiency in reading, writing and conversing in Latin. After nine-and-a-half years' tuition he should have had no difficulty in satisfying the university staff in this regard. However, it is known that continental scholars sometimes had difficulty in understanding the strongly accented Latin spoken by the Scots.[29] No doubt Gordon equally would have taken some time to attune his ear to the Latin he heard at Braunsberg. This would have presented him with problems since all the tuition was conducted in Latin. The Jesuits permitted a limited use of the vernacular in the first year of study but only for the purpose of explaining the more difficult aspects of the lesson being taught. Since Gordon was the only Scot at the college all of his discourses would have been in Latin. Even if there had been sons of expatriate Scots in his class it is unlikely that he would have had an opportunity to converse in his native tongue with anyone other than Alexander Menezes on the limited occasions when he was allowed out of college. After Gordon left Braunsberg to attempt his journey home to Scotland he makes reference in his diary to his inability to converse with Poles and Germans.[30] His lack of progress in learning the language of his hosts can be explained by the college environment of total immersion in Latin. A considerable effort would have been needed on Gordon's part to follow his class work and, as a new boy

David and James, who enrolled in December 1609 at the age of nineteen and eighteen respectively, are recorded as having been entered in the class for syntax and would thereby have avoided the first three years of the *Trivium* course. The ages of those Scots who, like Patrick Gordon, started at the beginning of the *Trivium* ranged from twelve to seventeen. Older boys after completing three or four years study (such as John Lesley–entered August 1613) were, however, transferred to other Jesuit colleges such as Vilnius and Rome to finish their studies. This was possibly in recognition of the fact that they were by then fully adult. Bellesheim, *History*, 455–7.

[29] In the late eighteenth century it was still possible for the Dutchman, Jan Bilderdijk, to report that the reason why continental students shunned Scottish universities was that they could not understand the Latin spoken there. Hilde de Ridder-Symoens, 'Mobility' in Hilde de Ridder-Symoens (ed.), *A History of the University in Europe*, vol. II, 428.

[30] 'I had not learned any Dutch, by reason of our speaking Latine in the Colledge'. *Diary 1*, 10.

straight from a village school, his Jesuit teachers required him to start at the beginning of the first year of *Trivium* studies.

Education in colleges and universities at the time was structured into lower and higher studies known as *Trivium* and *Quadrivium*. The first level to be undertaken was the *Trivium* which was a course of studies normally lasting five years and consisting of three years of grammar, one of syntax and a final year of rhetoric. The age of students on entry to the *Trivium* was usually between ten and twelve years.[31] Higher studies were attempted only after successful completion of the *Trivium*. The *Quadrivium* took from four to seven years and required study in one or more of four faculties – arts (philosophy), theology, medicine and law. Jesuit students usually enrolled in arts and theology but canon law was also common. The Braunsberg colleges did not offer *Quadrivium* studies until 1701 when the Jesuit rector applied to Rome for formal designation as a university but Pope Clement XI (r. 1700–21) denied the request.[32] When Gordon was a student the college offered limited study in theology and philosophy but all of its students who progressed to higher studies did so at another college.

During the early years of Jesuit involvement in education they developed an approach to studies which they found most effective in imparting knowledge. Adherence to the plan which they formulated gave a consistency to the standard of education being provided which was superior to that available at most other colleges and universities. It was this systematic approach which was in large part responsible for their reputation as 'the schoolmasters of Europe'. After several decades of deliberation, in 1599 the plan was formalised in a document entitled *Ratio Studiorum* (System of Studies) which thereafter became the template for use in Jesuit education throughout Europe and in their world-wide missions. (One of the authors of the original draft of this document in 1585 was John Tyrie, the Scottish Jesuit and friend and companion to Robert Abercrombie, who had helped set up the colleges in Braunsberg before becoming master of novices at the Jesuit noviciate in Vilnius.)[33] The *Ratio Studiorum* stated that the purpose of the *Trivium* was to '… instruct the boys,

[31] Fitzpatrick, *St Ignatius*, 195. A minimum of nine years study was required to take a student from first entry to graduation and ordination. Most students would have achieved this by their early to mid twenties. In Gordon's case, however, he could not have achieved graduation before his mid to late twenties or even into his early thirties. It is questionable whether he ever seriously considered committing so much of his life to study. As events turned out he did not.

[32] Bender, *Geschichte*, 16.

[33] Mitchell, *The Jesuits*, 90.

who are entrusted to our Society, that they will thoroughly learn along with their letters, the habits worthy of Christians'.[34] The system was not intended to be prescriptive and teachers were encouraged to vary it to suit local conditions but it was so successful that it was applied with few variations in all Jesuit colleges. When Gordon entered college his first year of study would have covered grammar using as the main text the first book of *Emmanuel* (Isaiah's prefiguring of the coming of Christ from the Vulgate Bible). In addition he would have studied texts from Cicero, the epistles of Ovid, an expurgated Catullus, Tibullus, Propertius and the *Eclogues* and fourth *Georgic* of Virgil.

Despite his being much older than his classmates and having had over nine years of education in Scotland, he was started in the first class of the *Trivium* and not allowed to move immediately into any of the higher classes as was possible for some older students. This can deduced from the stipulation in the *Ratio Studiorum* that in their second year of study, as well as furthering their proficiency in Latin grammar, students should be taught Greek. In his diaries Gordon does not make use of Greek words or quotations. From this it would appear that he was still in his first year of study when he decided to leave. As well as laying out the course content and teaching material the *Ratio Studiorum* also stipulated how the teaching was to be conducted. Classes were to be held each morning and afternoon. The teacher would choose the topic to be studied and read a passage from an appropriate book which illustrated the point to be examined while the pupils consulted their own copies of the text. The teacher followed a logical pattern of discussion by explaining the argument of the author (*thesis*) followed by a possible counter argument (*antithesis*) and finally a resolution of the opposing ideas by an argument, usually of his own devising, which reconciled all the accepted facts (s*ynthesis*). Afterwards the students were set exercises (*exercitium*) on the subject to complete and memorise before their next lesson so that the teacher could check on their comprehension and progress.[35] Teachers also gave individual attention to students through a practice called *concertatio.* In this exercise one student was set a piece of written work which was criticised in 'honourable rivalry' by a fellow pupil in the presence of their classmates and the professor. The author and critic would then engage in debate. The exercise was designed to raise standards and give practice in logic and rhetoric.[36] As well as these

[34] Fitzpatrick, *St Ignatius*, 195.

[35] Rainer A. Müller, 'Student Education, Student Life' in Hilde de Ridder-Symoens (ed.), *History of the University in Europe*, vol. II, 343–5.

[36] Fitzpatrick, *St Ignatius*, 203.

regular exercises the Jesuits required all the students to engage in a group *exercitium* which usually marked the end of the academic year. Such 'spectacles', as they were called, were performed in front of audiences of local civic and church dignitaries. The 'spectacles' took the form of orations or recitations of poetry or dialogues which would include verses set to music, philosophical and theological disputations or dramas which often included music *entr'acte*.[37] These performances were taken very seriously since they acted as promotional vehicles for Jesuit education and preparation occupied much of the students' leisure time for that year. By being engaged in this way they were expected to improve both their Latin and their memories.[38]

There is no reason to believe that Patrick Gordon's experience at Braunsberg did not conform to the normal Jesuit practices laid out in *Ratio Studiorum*. He was therefore in receipt of a very high standard of education which he acknowledged in his diary comment that the Jesuits were 'takeing great care in educateing youth'. Nevertheless, he decided to leave while in his first year of studies. His reason for doing so was not any physical hardship which he had to endure, nor was it disappointment in the education he was receiving. His own words 'yet could not my humor endure such a still and strict way of liveing' suggest that he was not settling in to his new life and in all likelihood he was homesick. There are a number of such instances recorded in the student registers of the Scots Colleges. The malady of 'homesickness' would not have been recognised by Gordon and his contemporaries but the college rectors make references to illness which could only be cured by the boy breathing the clear air of his homeland once more.[39] It was not unknown for pupils at the colleges

[37] John W. O'Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge Massachusetts, 1993), 222–3.

[38] Gordon's diary provides evidence for this practice of memorizing Latin verse. He quotes from a number of classical authors – not always with complete accuracy which may have been because of the passage of time or perhaps reflects some difficulty he had with this kind of exercise as a student.

[39] There are a number of entries in the registers of the Scots Colleges of students who fit this description. Thomas Abercromby, Douai 1632 (*Records of the Scots Colleges*, vol.1 (Aberdeen, 1906) hereafter referred to as *RSC*, 27), and Patrick Gray, Douai 1623 (*RSC*, 15), were Scottish but Ignatius Corduan (*RSC*, 50–51), was a French student who was so unhappy at the Scots College in Douai that he asked his mother to request that he be sent home. Walter Hervey, Douai 1634 (*RSC*, 30), in a number of ways was in a similar situation to Patrick Gordon in that he was aged fifteen when he entered the college but left after less than a year, supposedly on the grounds of ill health, but immediately enlisted in the Spanish army. The tragic case of John Ingles, Douai 1650 (*RSC*, 38), would have been known in all of the Jesuit colleges at the time Patrick Gordon was at Braunsberg and would have given the staff concern for the wellbeing of any student suffering from homesickness. The young Scotsman had

abroad to be homesick. In Gordon's case he had more reason than most being separated from almost everything that he was familiar with – family, homeland, the Scots language and even companions of his own age all of which would have contributed to the loneliness he must have felt in Braunsberg. Nevertheless, it is likely that there was an incident which triggered his decision to leave.

The trigger could have been the 'Mission Oath'. In Rome the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (*Propaganda Fide*) was established in 1624 to oversee the Church's missionary activities throughout the world including the training of missionaries. It was given responsibility for all the papal colleges such as that of the Northern College in Braunsberg. Its responsibility covered the funding and regulation of the colleges and from the outset *Propaganda Fide* was concerned that not all students at the colleges, which were primarily seminaries, had the intention of being ordained. Instructions were issued that all new entrants to the colleges should be required, after about six months' attendance, to sign a 'Mission Oath'. By the terms of this formal document students could continue at college only on the understanding that they would become priests and that on ordination they would serve a minimum of three years as missionaries. At first the college principals ignored this instruction but by the 1650s *Propaganda Fide* was becoming insistent and issued formal rebukes when delinquency was proven. Exceptions were made for young boys starting their *Trivium* studies since it was felt that at twelve years of age they were too immature to make such a solemn promise. Although Gordon was in his first year of study he was seventeen and at an age when the college would have insisted on the signing of the oath. This proposal would have been put to him about the time his class was preparing for the annual examination of academic achievement. The Jesuit method of assessment determined whether each student had mastered that year's subject sufficiently to allow them to progress or whether they should repeat their year's studies. On being presented with the 'Mission Oath' Gordon was faced with a difficult decision. It involved not only committing himself to a minimum of a further eight years of study but also of making a lifetime commitment to the Church and mission in Scotland. The homesick Gordon decided to return to Scotland. This would have been met with disappointment by his Jesuit tutors but it was not uncommon for students to decline the 'Mission Oath' and they would have remained on friendly terms with the young man.[40]

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developed depression, left Douai at the end of his second year and shortly afterwards committed suicide. The need to avoid a repetition of such a tragedy would have caused the Jesuit rector to treat Gordon with sympathy rather than censure.

[40] James Gibb (1682–1754), the architect, did so at the Scots College in Rome in 1704

In his diaries Patrick Gordon tells of his travels in great detail, naming the places he visited and the people he met. The absence of information in his diary on his time at the Northern College, therefore, is remarkable. It can be explained by a promise he is likely to have been asked to make. The Jesuit principal would have requested that the Scot keep confidential details of his time spent with them especially in regard to naming anyone associated with the college; staff and particularly students. The reason for the request was the concern that information could be divulged which would place students and their families in jeopardy in their homeland. The Braunsberg College had been set up specifically for students from the northern Protestant lands such as Scandinavia, Germany and Britain where penal laws against Catholics were in place. In Scotland it was a criminal offence for the head of a family to send his sons abroad to a Catholic college. Severe penalties, usually fines, were exacted. The colleges had a duty to keep identities secret not only for the safety of the students but for the wellbeing of their families. This was of particular concern to the Scots Colleges since the Kirk and state authorities were especially diligent in applying the penal laws. The degree to which the Scots Colleges tried to protect themselves can be gauged by two examples both of which happened about the time Patrick Gordon was in Braunsberg. In 1657 a self declared convert from Calvinism, Alexander Gordon, applied to the college in Paris for admittance. He had been vouched for by Jesuit missionaries in Scotland but the college rector, Robert Barclay, suspected his intentions and refused him entry. He travelled on to Rome and Würzburg and applied unsuccessfully for entry to the colleges there. He finally succeeded in gaining entry to the Scots monastery in Regensburg and enrolled as a Benedictine novice. After staying for a year he returned to Scotland and reported that he had been spying on the colleges. The Jesuit, James Macbreck, who was based in Paris, reported later that Alexander Gordon had been a political spy in the pay of Cromwell's spymaster, John Thurloe.[41] Another example which shows the caution exercised by the Scots Colleges concerns James Fraser, a graduate of King's College Aberdeen, who travelled around Europe in the years 1657 to 1660. He kept a journal in which he recorded a visit he made to the Scots College in Douai.[42] He spent several days as the guest of the college and recorded the names of the staff and students that he met during his stay.

and, despite that, the college sub-principal helped him financially to stay in Rome and study under the architect, Carlo Fontana. *RSC*, 126.

[41] Brian M. Halloran, *The Scots College Paris 1603–1792* (Edinburgh, 2003), 41.

[42] Aberdeen University Library, Special Collections, *MS 2538*, Vol. III.

The college register shows that Fraser's record was correct in the case of the staff but the names of the students he gives were neither the true ones nor the aliases which they adopted while at the college. It would appear that even when the college authorities were willing to entertain a visitor their concern did not allow them to share any knowledge of their students' identities. It is in light of such a level of concern for secrecy that Patrick Gordon's omission of details of his time at the Braunsberg College must be viewed.

Given that Patrick Gordon wrote so little in his diary regarding his formal education and that he spent less than a full academic year with the Jesuits it is tempting to believe that he had been little affected by his experience. This would be a mistake. Despite the lack of details it is possible to deduce that he gained much by his studies. His education was the equal of, if not superior to, that of most of his fellow officers. Moreover by following the Jesuit *Ratio Studiorum*, which was designed not simply to impart knowledge but to help students question what they had learned, Gordon developed in intellectual maturity. Specific skills such as the ability to memorise information and a proficiency in presenting logical argument were attributes which his military superiors would have valued.

The Jesuits also took great pains with their students' religious education and although his experience at the college did not convince him that the life of a priest would suit him, initially he did feel uncomfortable about this decision. On leaving the college he met with Father Menzies before departing Braunsberg but he

> resolved not to go to Father Blackhall for fear of being chidden for leaving Colledge, he haveing alwayes diswaded me from takeing any other course as to be a scholler and turne religious.[43]

It would appear that Gordon had misgivings regarding staying at the college even before his final decision to leave.

Gordon makes numerous references in his diaries to occasions when his Catholic faith both supported him and caused difficulties in his life in the military. He makes clear the great reliance he placed on prayer especially when under stress or in danger.[44] His experience at college would have influenced

[43] *Diary 1*, 10.

[44] 'And truly, as well now as very many times hereafter, as you shall hear, when, in my necessities or any extremity, I betooke my self to God Almighty by prayer, I found His extraordinary assistance.' *Diary 1*, 13.

him in this practice of prayer. In 1524 Ignatius Loyola (1491–1556) developed a regime of prayer which was widely used by Jesuits and others. It received papal approval from Paul III and was published in 1548 as the *Spiritual Exercises* (*Exercitia Spiritualia*). It consists of a programme of meditations, prayers and mental exercises set out over four weeks with each week being separately themed. The object of the prayer cycle was to train the participant to discern between good and evil in any situation with which they were faced and to provide them with the spiritual strength to endure life's trials. Patrick Gordon would have been required to practice the *Spiritual Exercises* while at college. In his diary he mentions that when he left Braunsberg his possessions consisted of 'linens and some books'.[45] Given his relative poverty the books were probably parting gifts from his Jesuit teachers and would have included a copy of Loyola's *Exercitia Spiritualia*, although by that time it is likely that he would have memorised the whole prayer cycle. We know that he carried a Latin copy of Thomas á Kempis' *Imitations of Christ* for personal use on his travels. Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* would have fitted well with this book in his small library.

The value of such a structured prayer regime to Gordon is illustrated by his account of his imprisonment by Poles in 1656. After thirteen weeks of being held confined in irons, he believed that he was about to be executed. Having meditated on his life and 'found many things justly deserving a publick judgement and punishment from God Almighty' nevertheless he had confidence in God's mercy and regained his courage and resolution that somehow he would survive.[46] Although he was barely twenty years old the mental resolve he had gained through prayer allowed him to present judicial arguments to his captors which persuaded them to spare him and his companion even while others were being executed. It would appear that the training he had received in the Jesuit College saved his life on this occasion.

It is clear, however, that other lessons learnt while at Braunsberg caused him problems. His diaries are remarkable records of the events which he witnessed but also at times they take on the character of a written confession. Some of the actions which he felt obliged to undertake as a soldier clearly troubled his conscience. His behaviour in the heat of battle did not affect him in this way but theft from civilians often did – 'This I confesse to be a most heinous crime'.[47] This declaration was made regarding his actions in September 1656

[45] *Diary 1*, 12.

[46] *Diary 1*, 85.

[47] *Diary 1*, 170. Gordon in this passage lays the blame in part for these actions on his superiors since the army was unpaid although he adds 'let no man presume to think

in Radzin in Poland but the early diaries have many such references. On that occasion, however, he concluded his confession with the cry '*Peccavi*'—an echo of the personal confessions he made while a student at college.[48] He followed this declaration with an appeal to 'all Christian souldiers' to fight only in just wars, the characteristics of which he then attempted to define.

> I would perswade all Christian souldiers … first to seeke to serve under a lawfull prince or state in a good quarrel or cause, the defensive war being alwayes the most lawfull, or that made to recover or maintaine ones owne propriety and rights. But that war made against ones owne religion, native country, or assisting rebels or those who upon the pretence of injuries do follow the way of conquest, such is impious and unlawfull.[49]

His description of a just war fits well with the doctrine of *Bellum Iustum* as argued by Thomas Aquinas (1225–74). This Catholic doctrine had been disputed by Protestant jurists such as Hugo Grotius (1583–1645) who argued that morality needed to be replaced by international law. The Jesuits saw it as a duty to counter such doctrinal attacks. It is likely that Gordon became familiar with this debate as part of a student *exercitium* at Braunsberg but for him it changed from a theoretical argument to a practical concern when he became a professional soldier.

Gordon benefited from his time at Braunsberg college in at least one other way. By virtue of studying abroad he became part of a network of Catholic college alumni that could provide support to its members. Significantly many of the alumni had been ordained and taken up positions of authority in the Church in Europe and on the mission in Scotland. The majority, however, did not become priests but returned to their families in Scotland. Others took up careers in the diplomatic and military service of European powers. Patrick Gordon was a trusted member of this grouping which included men in the service of Spain[50],

himself guiltless or excusable by want of pay'.

[48] *Diary 1*, 170. The formulaic appeal to a confessor at the start of the act of confession (the sacrament of reconciliation) was: *Benedicite me, Pater, quia peccavi* (Bless me, Father, for I have sinned).

[49] *Diary 1*, 170.

[50] There were many during Gordon's lifetime, two examples of whom are Walter Hervey and William Laing. Hervey studied at the Scots College in Douai and afterwards joined the Spanish army. He also fought in the Wars of the Three Kingdoms and was knighted by Charles I. *RSC*, 30. Laing studied at the Scots Colleges in Douai and Madrid before entering the service of the Marquis of Castello Rodriguez. *RSC*, 32, 195.

Portugal[51]France[52], Russia[53] and the Holy Roman Empire[54]. As his career progressed he became increasingly involved with these Scots and other members of the expatriate Jacobite communities which developed in Paris, Rome and Regensburg. The Scots Colleges provided the members of the networks with a means of communicating with each other as well as affording them accommodation and financial support. Knowledge of and trust in such able men allowed Gordon to facilitate the entry of Scots into the Russian Imperial service and thereby help both his fellow countrymen and his Russian hosts.

Patrick Gordon's diary gives his account of the great events of his time – war, peace and politics – but it also contains a fascinating description of his life experiences among which were fighting, stealing, drinking, gambling and womanising. It is when he attempts to explain his motives for his actions, however, that he reveals some of the influence of his Jesuit teachers. The adage attributed to Ignatius Loyola 'Give me the boy and I will give you the man' is too great a claim to make on behalf of the Jesuits in Gordon's case. Nevertheless, it is clear that even in the short time that he spent with them in Braunsberg the seventeen year old gained much that was to influence him throughout his later life and perhaps much of Gordon's philosophy as expressed in his diary is simply a reflection of the Jesuit motto:

Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam (To the greater glory of God).

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[51] Henry Chatlain, Douai, who entered service in Portugal with his stepfather, Colonel Cathcart. *RSC*, 42.

[52] Prominent among these was Thomas Maxwell. *RSC*, 44, 98.

[53] Augustine Whytford, Douai, took service in Russia with his father Colonel Walter Whytford. *RSC*, 43. Colonel Whytford's younger son, Charles, studied at the Scots College in Paris and later became its rector. Halloran, *Scots College Paris*, 104–39. Alexander Gordon, who studied at the Scots College in Paris, was a major general in the imperial army and became Patrick Gordon's son-in-law. *RSC*, 211.

[54] General Alexander Leslie, Count of the Holy Roman Empire, was a benefactor of the college in Regensburg run by the Scots Benedictine monastery there. His nephew, James, who inherited his titles, also served the emperor at the siege of Vienna and in the wars against Sweden. Gordon mentions encountering Leslie who was leading the imperial forces on the occasion of Gordon's capture by them. Leslie's cousin William who studied at the Scots College in Rome became bishop of Ljubliana as reward for his services to the emperor. *RSC*, 119.