

INTRODUCTION: JACOBITE NATIONS? BRITAIN AND IRELAND, 1688–1750

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This introduction to the special issue of the *Journal of Irish and Scottish Studies* explains the origins of the ‘Jacobite Nations’ workshop series, developed by the Research Institute for Irish and Scottish Studies at the University of Aberdeen. In presenting a selection of articles from these workshops, the special issue demonstrates the vitality of the field of Jacobite Studies, while pointing to new directions for future research.

Keywords: Jacobitism; anti-Jacobitism; Britain; identity; revolution; rising of 1715–16

WHEN writing anything about the history of Jacobitism and the state of Jacobite studies, it is almost compulsory to make a comment on the transformation of the historiographical field in the last forty years. Jacobitism, it is often repeated, is no longer subject to the once prevailing views of an insignificant and reactionary ideology confined to a small subset of society, predominantly in the Highlands of Scotland. Instead, Jacobitism is widely acknowledged to have been a significant political, cultural and intellectual force. Building on the pioneering work of Eveline Cruickshanks, historians have convincingly recovered the significance of Jacobitism to eighteenth-century British politics and society.¹ In doing so, they have shifted the lens away from the Highlands to consider other constituencies of Jacobitism. Support for the exiled Stuarts was not confined to the Highlands and could be found in large sections of Scottish society. Significant constituencies of Jacobite support also existed in Ireland and

1. Eveline Cruickshanks (ed.), *Ideology and Conspiracy: Aspects of Jacobitism, 1689–1759* (Edinburgh, 1982); Daniel Szechi, *Jacobitism and Tory Politics, 1710–14* (Edinburgh, 1984); idem, *George Lockhart of Carnwath, 1689–1727: A Study in Jacobitism* (East Linton, 2002); Gabriel Glickman, ‘The Career of Sir John Hynde Cotton (1686–1752)’, *Historical Journal*, 46 (2003), 817–41.

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England.² As these works have demonstrated, it is in many ways impossible to understand the development of the British Isles in the eighteenth century without considering Jacobitism. At the same time, an extensive body of literature on the exiled Stuart courts and the wider Jacobite diaspora has illuminated Jacobitism's influence in shaping the politics, culture and society of continental Europe.³ More recent work has begun to uncover Jacobitism's presence in Britain's colonies in North America and farther afield: it is now possible to speak of Jacobitism in relation to global history.⁴ Jacobite studies, then, is in robust shape in ways unimaginable a few decades ago. The frequency with which these assertions are made should not obscure the significance of that transformation, or the insights of new and emerging research into Jacobitism. It is in that spirit that this special issue of the *Journal of Irish and Scottish Studies* brings together and celebrates some of the work coming out of the successful 'Jacobite Nations' workshop series.

The University of Aberdeen's Research Institute of Irish and Scottish Studies (RIISS) hosted its inaugural 'Jacobite Nations' workshop in 2022. Seeking to interrogate the relationship between Jacobitism and national identity, especially the seemingly inextricable associations between Jacobitism and Scotland, the workshop brought together scholars working on Jacobitism and its various manifestations across the three kingdoms. The talks delivered that day provided a useful and important reminder of the adage that not all Jacobites were Scots—and, just as importantly, that not all Scots were Jacobites. At the same time, they pointed towards different ways of considering how the supporters of the exiled James VII and II and his descendants interacted with each other. Jacobitism existed in different forms with varying degrees of intensity at different times across the three kingdoms, often to the detriment of the cause that united its adherents. But Jacobitism in one national context, whether Scottish, Irish or English, was never isolated from developments in other national contexts. Rather, as the workshop showed, Jacobitism was informed constantly by mutual influences between and within the three kingdoms.

In the best tradition of workshops, the 2022 event underscored not only the thriving state of research into Jacobitism, but just how much more needed to be done. At the same time, it was clear that the many conversations generated on

2. Paul Kléber Monod, *Jacobitism and the English People, 1688–1788* (Cambridge, 1993); Éamonn Ó Ciardha, *Ireland and the Jacobite Cause, 1685–1766: A Fatal Attachment* (Dublin, 2002); Allan I. Macinnes, 'Jacobitism in Scotland: Episodic Cause or National Movement?', *Scottish Historical Review*, 86 (2007), 225–52; Murray Pittock, *The Myth of the Jacobite Clans: the Jacobite Army in 1745* (Edinburgh, 2009).

3. Eveline Cruickshanks and Edward Corp (eds), *The Stuart Court in Exile and the Jacobites* (London, 1995); Edward T. Corp, *The Stuarts in Italy, 1719–1766: A Royal Court in Permanent Exile* (Cambridge, 2011); Jérémy Filet, *The Jacobites and the Grand Tour: Educational Travel and Small States' Diplomacy* (Manchester, 2025).

4. Allan I. Macinnes, *Conflict and Loyalty: Jacobitism in Europe and Beyond* (Chicago, IL, 2025).

that day were forging fruitful links between researchers, bringing together scholars at different stages of their career and across institutions. A second workshop to continue these conversations was an obvious thing to do. To date, RIISS has hosted four ‘Jacobite Nations’ workshops, the most recent of which took place in March 2026, with another one scheduled for autumn 2026. Moving beyond questions of national identity, the workshops have embraced a range of themes and methodologies. Questions of belonging and exile, religion, intellectual change, political ideology, education and state responses to the Jacobite threat, to name a few, have enjoyed detailed treatment, as have the insights from researchers working on Jacobite visual, material and literary cultures. Discussions have also incorporated new approaches to Jacobitism in relation to the rapidly expanding field of the digital humanities. At the March 2026 workshop, a productive roundtable considered ways in which Jacobite studies can both harness digital technologies to gain new insights into Jacobite networks, while also thinking about making research into Jacobitism more accessible to wider audiences.

This special issue builds on previous and current scholarship in Jacobite studies to present a selection of articles coming out of those workshops. It is especially welcome that the contributors are early career academics, including independent scholars. The six contributions to this issue reveal important new perspectives on Jacobitism in the half-century after the revolution of 1688–90. Robert D. Tree’s article provides a salutary reminder of the contested and uncertain status of that revolution, with an exploration of a little-known but significant episode: the siege of the Bass Rock in the Firth of Forth by a group of Jacobite prisoners from 1691 to 1694. The three-year siege was a recurring source of embarrassment and panic for Scotland’s privy council, the effective executive of Scotland’s government. Tree explores the council’s various efforts to end the siege, showing the potential for Jacobites to act as political disruptors to the detriment of the nascent Williamite state. Calum Cunningham’s article discusses another, less successful Jacobite attempt to seize a strategic asset: Edinburgh Castle, in the so-called ‘Castle plot’ of 1715. Often overlooked in histories of the wider 1715–16 rising because of its chaotic execution and ultimate failure, Cunningham argues that the Castle plot nevertheless demonstrates the existence of a cohesive Jacobite network in and around Edinburgh.

Cunningham’s article highlights some of the ways in which Jacobite conspirators rebuilt their lives abroad after the failed 1715–16 rising. Stephen Griffin develops this theme with a comparative study of two Jacobite agents: George Keith, 10th earl Marischal, and the Irish soldier Count Owen O’Rourke. Both men served in the emerging Jacobite diplomatic service as the exiled Stuarts attempted to secure European allies for their cause. Yet while O’Rourke remained in James’s service until his death in 1743, Marischal eventually abandoned the Jacobite movement in favour of serving Frederick II of Prussia, a key

Hanoverian ally. In exploring the reasons for this divergence, Griffin points to an important theme in the history of Jacobitism that remains underexplored: pragmatism. Marischal was brought up in a staunch Jacobite family, but personal and economic pressures contributed to his seeking a more secure position in Prussia. Jacobite loyalties, as Daniel Szechi first showed, existed on a spectrum.⁵ So too did the loyalties of those committed to the Hanoverians, as Nicola Martin demonstrates in her discussion of the 16th and 17th earls of Sutherland. For John Gordon and William Gordon, loyalty to the Hanoverian regime, informed by their religious faith, was tempered by ambitions for place and patronage, ambitions which they realised by careful performances of Whig loyalism. By showing the complexities of 'Whig principle' in Scotland, Martin illuminates the difficult choices many elites had to make in this period, especially in the Highlands where even those loyal to the Hanoverians were often suspected of disloyalty and duplicity.

Scholars are increasingly aware of the vibrant intellectual and cultural worlds of the exiled Stuarts and their supporters.⁶ The final two contributions to this special issue speak to this theme. Michael Ray Taylor demonstrates the intellectual variety of English Jacobitism with a case study on the dissenter and Jacobite propagandist Charlwood Lawton. Lawton developed a series of stirring arguments for religious toleration, including for Catholics, in the wake of the revolution; Taylor argues that these ideas were grounded in Lawton's particular brand of Latitudinarian theology. Taylor thus adds an important dimension to recent work demonstrating the highly contested and uncertain nature of the 1689 Toleration Act.⁷ Of course, one of the problems for Jacobites keen to present an image of religious liberty was the fact that any pronouncement by supporters of the exiled Stuarts on religious toleration was met with ingrained scepticism by their opponents. Dylan Fowler's article neatly encapsulates such views with his exploration of a Jacobite 'conspiracy'—uncovered by the Scottish philologist James Man—against the well-known Jacobite publisher Thomas Ruddiman. Man accused Ruddiman of engaging in a conspiracy to twist Scottish history to favour a Jacobite agenda. Yet if Man's idea of a conspiracy was somewhat hysterical, Fowler shows us that such ideas were not entirely unfounded. The article explores the antiquarian networks of eighteenth-century Britain and their Jacobite links. Building on the work of Kelsey Jackson Williams, Fowler shows

5. Daniel Szechi, *The Jacobites: Britain and Europe, 1688–1788*, second edition (Manchester, 2019), 24–5.

6. E.g., Kelsey Jackson Williams, *The First Scottish Enlightenment: Rebels, Priests, and History* (Oxford, 2020).

7. Ralph Stevens, *Protestant Pluralism: The Reception of the Toleration Act, 1688–1720* (Woodbridge, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781787443204>; Carys Brown, *Friends, Neighbours, Sinners: Religious Difference and English Society, 1689–1750* (Cambridge, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009221375>.

that Jacobites such as the Scottish Catholic priest Thomas Innes contributed to a broader transformation of historical practices in this period.⁸ In doing so, Fowler seeks to reposition Jacobitism away from exclusively political interpretations to show their wider impact on intellectual and cultural life in the long eighteenth century.

Despite the variety of topics covered in this special issue, the articles are connected by important themes and parallels. One theme that is especially welcome is that of anti-Jacobitism. Allan Macinnes and Christopher Whatley have both noted that far more attention has been paid in recent years to supporters of the exiled Stuarts than their opponents. In an influential article of 2013, Whatley commented on the curious nature of this imbalance, given that even in Scotland, commitment to the 'Whig' cause was both widespread and deeply felt in many sections of Scottish society.⁹ If Whatley's article threw down a gauntlet for future historians to take anti-Jacobitism seriously, it remains the case that anti-Jacobitism receives far less attention in the historiography.¹⁰ Contributions in this issue show the merits, and indeed the necessity, of considering Jacobitism and anti-Jacobitism in relation to each other. As Tree's exploration of the siege of the Bass shows, the privy council was forced to negotiate with the Jacobites to abandon the rock; the council's ability to regain control of the situation and present an image of effective governance in Scotland depended on compromise. Equally, Martin's work reminds us that Highlanders were never monolithic in their allegiances or identities; the Sutherlands' careers were grounded in their status as Highland elites, but this did not preclude them from loyalty to the Hanoverian regime.

As Martin's article suggests, there remains the need to reappraise Jacobitism away from its 'traditional' Highland heartlands. Despite a now substantial body of literature demonstrating the importance of non-Highland Jacobite enclaves, the association with Jacobitism as a uniquely 'Highland' phenomenon persists in the popular imagination. The special issue demonstrates the strength of Jacobitism not only in other national contexts, but also in southern Scotland, not least Edinburgh. While historians have long noted the strong non-juring Episcopalian presence in Edinburgh after the revolution, we still know comparatively little about how that translated into explicit Jacobite support or conspiracy.¹¹ In demonstrating the potential for Jacobite commitment and activity in and around

8. Williams, *First Scottish Enlightenment*, esp. ch. 4.

9. Macinnes, 'Jacobitism in Scotland', 225; Christopher A. Whatley, 'Reformed Religion, Regime Change, Scottish Whigs and the Struggle for the "Soul" of Scotland, c.1688–c.1788', *Scottish Historical Review*, 92 (2013), 66–99, <https://doi.org/10.3366/shr.2013.0138>.

10. Though see David Parrish, *Jacobitism and Anti-Jacobitism in the British Atlantic World, 1688–1727* (Woodbridge, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781787440852>.

11. Tristram N. Clarke, *The Scottish Episcopalians, 1688–1720* (Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1987).

the city, Cunningham and Tree's articles will hopefully inspire further inquiries into this subject. Alongside exploring lesser-known geographical constituencies of Jacobite support, the articles also point to the complexities of Jacobite ideology. Cunningham shows that the ringleaders of the 'Castle plot' were not Catholics or Episcopalians, but disaffected Presbyterians. Together with Taylor's discussion of Lawton, this adds texture to the underexplored phenomenon of 'Whig Jacobitism'.¹² Collectively, the articles demonstrate the range of Jacobite sympathies and stances it was possible to adopt in the eighteenth century. The binaries that contemporary polemics so often assumed between 'loyalty' and 'disloyalty' were seldom as straightforward in practice.¹³

The articles in this special issue provide a sample of some of the excellent work that is ongoing in the field of Jacobite studies. Nevertheless, they also remind us of the gaps that remain in the scholarship and the areas of Jacobite studies that continue to be under-researched. One obvious gap is Jacobitism in relation to women's and gender history. The contribution of women to the Jacobite cause has long been recognised, but studies on this fascinating topic tend to concentrate on a few focused areas. One such area is the lives of royal and elite Jacobite women. As shown in a recent volume on later Stuart queens, chapters on the lives and afterlives of Mary of Modena and Maria Clementina Sobieska demonstrate these women to have been powerful political agents, providing an important corrective to older studies that tended to marginalise the contributions of these women to the political, intellectual and cultural life of the exiled Stuart court.¹⁴ Other studies of prominent Jacobite women have added to this picture, showing some of the complexities of female Jacobite experiences and demonstrating that Jacobite commitment was far from confined to the battlefield.¹⁵

12. Mark Goldie and Clare Jackson, 'Williamite Tyranny and the Whig Jacobites', in Esther Mijers and David Onnekink (eds), *Redefining William III: The Impact of the King-Stadholder in International Context* (Oxford, 2007), 177–99.

13. On which, see Parrish, *Jacobitism and Anti-Jacobitism*, 66–94.

14. Mindy Williams, 'Mary Beatrice of Modena: Patronage, Poetry and Power', in Eilish Gregory and Michael C. Questier (eds), *Later Stuart Queens, 1660–1735: Religion, Political Culture, and Patronage* (London, 2023), 97–119, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-38813-2_5; Susannah Lyon-Whaley, 'Contesting Catholic Motherhood: Mary Beatrice of Modena, the "Glorious Revolution," and Queenly Agency', *idem*, 121–48, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-38813-2_6; Stephen Griffin, "'La Terrible Catastrophe': Political Reactions to the Estrangement of Maria Clementina Sobieska and James III, 1725–7", *idem*, 257–77, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-38813-2_12; Georgia Vullings, "'A Crown of Everlasting Glory": The Afterlife of Maria Clementina Sobieska in Material and Visual Culture', *idem*, 279–309, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-38813-2_13.

15. Frances Nolan, *The Jacobite Duchess: Frances Jennings, Duchess of Tyrconnell, c.1649–1731* (Woodbridge, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781800102040>; *idem*, 'Zealous for "the Cause": Irish Women as Jacobite Agents, 1689–1724', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, 40 (2025), 29–51, <https://doi.org/10.3828/eci.2025.4>.

As far as non-elite women are concerned, our knowledge remains confined chiefly to camp followers during the failed 1745–6 rising, or the study of especially prominent women during that rising, such as Jenny Cameron.¹⁶ Some work has also been done on how Jacobite women were perceived and portrayed by Hanoverian propagandists during the rising.¹⁷ More needs to be done to recover the experiences of Jacobite women at all social levels across the eighteenth century. Promising research into material culture points to one interesting direction of research in relation to Jacobite women.¹⁸ But the field would also benefit from considering Jacobitism more broadly in relation to gender. Jacobite masculinity, in particular, remains vastly under-researched, despite a growing body of work on these ideas in the eighteenth century.¹⁹

If this special issue has shed light on the richness of what we might term ‘early Jacobitism’, one of its limitations is that it has little to say about Jacobitism after the failed 1745–6 rising. In many ways, this focus speaks to important shifts in the historiography. Daniel Szechi’s seminal monograph on the failed 1715–16 rising illuminated the significance of what was then a lesser-known and widely dismissed uprising, inspiring a new generation of scholarship on Jacobitism in the first thirty years after the revolution of 1688–90.²⁰ As Griffin’s contribution shows, we are also beginning to uncover the complexities of Jacobite experiences in the period between the two major risings, particularly in the 1730s. Yet recent and ongoing work is revealing the continued significance of Jacobitism even after comprehensive military defeat.²¹ As Fowler’s discussion of James Man shows, the spectre of Jacobite conspiracy exercised a powerful hold after Culloden; fear of this movement and what it was perceived to represent long outlasted the movement itself. At the same time, interdisciplinary work on Jacobitism and cultural memory from the later eighteenth century to the present day demonstrates some of the lasting legacies of Jacobitism within and beyond

16. Maggie Craig, *Damn’ Rebel Bitches: The Women of the ‘45* (Edinburgh, 2000).

17. Carine Martin, ‘Female Rebels: The Female Figure in Anti-Jacobite Propaganda’, in Allan I. Macinnes, Kieran German and Lesley Graham (eds), *Living with Jacobitism, 1690–1788: The Three Kingdoms and Beyond* (London, 2015), 85–98; Anita R. Gillespie (ed.), *An Impartial and Genuine List of the Ladys of the Whig or Jacobite Partie, Edinburgh 1745–6* (Edinburgh: Scottish Record Society, 2020).

18. Georgia Vullings, *Loyal Exchange: The Visual and Material Culture of Exile, c.1716–c.1760* (Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2021); see also Jennifer L. Novotny, ‘Polite War: Material Culture of the Jacobite Era, 1688–1760’, in Macinnes et al. (eds), *Living with Jacobitism*, 153–72; Brown, *Friends, Neighbours, Sinners*, 44–6.

19. Rosalind Carr, *Gender and Enlightenment Culture in Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2014), <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780748646432>; Montana Davis-Shuck, ‘Aping the French: Foppish Masculinities in the Eighteenth Century’, in Jennifer Buckley and Montana Davis-Shuck (eds), *Character and Caricature, 1660–1820* (London, 2024), 87–115, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-48513-8_5.

20. Daniel Szechi, *1715: The Great Jacobite Rebellion* (New Haven, CT, and London, 2006).

21. Calum E. Cunningham and Stefano Baccolo, ‘The Stuarts in Italy, 1766–1807: A Court in Perpetual Pretence’, *The Court Historian*, 29 (2024), 134–62, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14629712.2024.2367338>.

the British Isles.²² Relatedly, the growing prominence of works on Jacobitism in its Atlantic and imperial contexts also invites further consideration.²³

Happily, the continuation of the 'Jacobite Nations' series provides an ideal forum to address these issues. It is a testament to the University of Aberdeen's work in fostering research into Jacobitism that the 2027 iteration of the triennial Jacobite Studies Trust conference will be held at Aberdeen, with the theme of 'Jacobitism on the Home Front and Abroad'. The continuation of these scholarly conversations will ensure that the study of Jacobitism continues to evolve in new and exciting directions.

22. Leith Davis and Kevin J. James (eds), *Shaping Jacobitism, 1688 to the Present: Memory, Culture, Networks* (Edinburgh, 2025), <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781399525800>.

23. Allan I. Macinnes and Douglas J. Hamilton (eds), *Jacobitism, Enlightenment and Empire, 1680–1820* (London, 2014); S. Karly Kehoe, 'Jacobites, Jamaica, and the Establishment of a Highland Catholic Community in the Canadian Maritimes', *Scottish Historical Review*, 100 (2021), 199–217, <https://doi.org/10.3366/shr.2021.0515>; Harry M. Lewis, "'A Project was Contrived and Carryed on with Great Secrecy': International Irish Jacobite Networks and the Madagascar Project, 1718–1723", *Northern Studies*, 52 (2021), 135–60.