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1

The Historians and the Last Phase of Jacobitism: From Culloden to Quiberon Bay, 1746–1759

Der Niederlage von Culloden folgten keine weiteren Aufstände.¹

Historical study is not the study of the past but the study of present traces of the past.²

Introduction

For thirteen years following the defeat of Charles Edward Stuart's army at the battle of Culloden (16 April 1746 OS), the Jacobite movement persisted as a viable threat to the Hanoverian dynasty and the British state. The possibility of a Stuart restoration by foreign military intervention on behalf of the exiled dynasty was finally eliminated on 25 November 1759 by the decisive victory of the Royal Navy in the bay of Quiberon over a French fleet poised to invade Britain.

This book is concerned with the Jacobite movement in Scotland and in exile in the intervening years, 1746–59. Beginning with the immediate aftermath of the 'Forty-five, the subsequent chapters set out to illustrate the last Jacobite exile in France, and Prince Charles' efforts to gain the French ministers' support for a second expedition to Britain. Following the Prince's expulsion from the French dominions in 1748, the main body of this book concentrates on the genesis and development of the various schemes culminating in the Elibank plot, but also on the extent of Prussian involvement in this conspiracy during the early 1750s. The resumption of Charles' negotiations with the French in the aftermath of the Diplomatic Revolution, and the resulting Franco-Jacobite attempt at invading Britain during the first phase of the Seven Years' War, conclude the narrative section. The final chapter seeks to bring together the conclusions reached in those preceding it, and to lend a broader perspective to the detailed narrative.

Special attention has been paid to Scotland and the Continent: the North of Britain, France, Italy and Spain set the geographic stage upon which most of the events covered by this book occurred. In the period between 1746 and 1759, the role of the Jacobites in England, Wales and Ireland was more of a reluctant or even passive nature, than that of their banished partisans. Understandably so, as the Jacobites resident in the Three Kingdoms faced serious risks of being detected by, or betrayed to, the British government.

The principal aim of my book is to answer the question, whether the suppression of the 'Forty-five, as represented by a long-standing historiographical consensus, spelled the sudden end of Jacobite hopes, and British fears, of another rising. The argument and conclusions presented here are the result of my attempt to provide an answer to this question by exploring the period between the immediate aftermath of Culloden and the abortive Franco-Jacobite invasion of November 1759. To this degree, I have tried to document the last phase of active Jacobitism, and to evaluate both Jacobite activity and the British response during the pertinent period. Flatly contradictory to an established opinion in the field, the careful piecing together of archival evidence lends itself to the conclusion that the Jacobites after Culloden were, indeed, active, and the rulers of Hanoverian Britain apprehended a recrudescence of Jacobitical agitation for over a decade after 1746. Although no other major rising in the Three Kingdoms occurred, the Jacobite movement was very much alive after the 'Forty-five, and the political establishment of the British state continued to fear it as a threat to its security.

But what of the sceptics' historiographical verdict – the perceived *fait accompli* of an impotent Jacobite movement in the post-Culloden period – agreed on by a not insignificant portion of scholars in the field? How are we to let the diametrically opposed view of Jacobitism as a marginal non-event in British history stand *vis-à-vis* the present argument proposing a resurgent Jacobite movement after 1746? The answer is that the two theses are based on divergent assumptions – that of an enfeebled and ineffectual Jacobite party, as opposed to that of a thriving and resilient royalist movement; they are situated on the opposite ends of the existing historiographical spectrum.

There is another significant difference between these two contending theses within the modern debate on Jacobitism. While the former constitutes an established view among sceptical scholars, and more generally within the field of eighteenth-century political history, the latter has only been marginally touched upon, alternately ignored or implicitly precluded by a categorical refusal to see in early eighteenth-century Jacobitism anything but a Robinocratic bogey, a convenient tool of Walpolean statecraft. Seen from such a sceptical angle, Jacobitism constituted a superannuated, waning threat in Walpole's time; hence, it should not have been able to retain its appeal, or even to gain in substance, thereafter. According to this

manner of argument, the 'Forty-five would consequently have to be classed as an historical 'freak', and the survival of a Jacobite threat after 1746 would implicitly find itself well beyond the pale of the sceptical canon. The proposition put forward in this chapter is that the sceptical interpretation of mid-eighteenth century Jacobitism within the modern debate is in need of scrutiny. In order to posit the present argument in the context of the wider debate, a brief identification and exploration of recent, established positions therein merit some attention.

The Modern Historiographical Debate on Jacobitism

A few common denominators bounding the parameters of the modern debate on Jacobitism can be identified, though caution should govern any typology attempting to categorize historians. Dr Daniel Szechi has attempted to construct such a typology, which may here serve as a positive example. He distinguishes optimists from pessimists and rejectionists. The principal difference separating the historiographical schools in the field lies in the significance the optimists accord to the Jacobite threat. While different levels of optimism and outright rejectionism can be detected in most published works on the topic, a rough distinction between optimists, who look upon the Jacobite movement as a significant theme in British history, and pessimists and rejectionists, whose view tends to confine Jacobitism to the margins, can be readily discerned.³ External influences in the present can also be seen at work. Murray Pittock has recently pointed out the correlation between the impact of the revival of modern political nationalism in the British Isles, and a new, vigorous tendency of revisionism among Jacobite scholars dissatisfied with the historiographical status quo.⁴ More generally, Lawrence Stone observed that historical debates are driven by 'current ideological concerns.'⁵

Daniel Szechi proposes a subdivision of the sceptical historians into pessimists and rejectionists.⁶ In the light of the present inquiry, the distinction between pessimists and rejectionists is of little import, as the exponents of both tendencies uphold as a central tenet of their thesis the idea of the sudden demise and utter insignificance of Jacobitism after 1746, if not, as is true in most cases of representatives of the rejectionist school, long before that date.⁷ In the broadest sense, the 'Jacosceptics' – that is, historians of the pessimist and rejectionist schools of thought – may be understood to hold the incumbent position within the confines of the modern debate. Even though Szechi classes him among the moderate pessimists, Edward Gregg, for example, is quick to assert that '[w]ithin 30 minutes of Cumberland's initial charge, Jacobitism was mortally wounded as a political force in Scottish life'.⁸ The implication that Jacobitism could not possibly have been anything but a moribund force in England cannot have been far from his mind.⁹

The thrust of Gregg's contention exemplifies the essence of the 'lost cause model' frequently employed by Jacobseptsics: a representation of events which, in its relevance to the present book, precludes the possibility that Jacobitism, as a potent political movement working towards the restoration of the exiled dynasty, could have survived the disaster of Culloden, or thereafter have maintained any hope of achieving its principal goal of a second Stuart restoration. By extension, William Speck's dictum that '[a]s every schoolboy knows, the Jacobite rebellion of 1745 was a failure', typifies the oversimplification germane to the sceptics' *ex post facto* dismissals of the Jacobite movement after Culloden.¹⁰ The problem here is not so much the evident truth of the culmination of events in retrospect, as the implicit foreclosure of any option left open to the Jacobites at that time, and Speck's omission of the circumstance that nobody in 1746 knew that Culloden was the last battle fought on British soil. Hindsight does confirm Speck's verdict. But the use of hindsight is not without its dangers.

The sceptics' offensive against a positive portrayal of Jacobitism has been characterized by a pronounced severity. Linda Colley recently claimed that Jacobitism had been overrepresented in the context of British history at the expense of 'the other, *apparently* more conventional voices', and solved the problem by confining this *bête noire* of British historiography to the margin of her own work, or by attempting to demonstrate that the Tory party predominantly consisted of His Majesty's most loyal opposition in Parliament, not subversive Jacobites.¹¹ Furthermore, Colley insinuated that the judgement of optimistic scholars in the field had been clouded by their partisanship, preventing them from seeing the detrimental effects of a potential, second Stuart restoration on the burgeoning trade and political empire of an ascendant Britain: 'A cynic might argue that this is because a disproportionate number of those who write about Jacobitism are themselves Jacobites.'¹² Taking this line of argument into the realm of vitriol, David Cannadine not so long ago vituperated that 'the new Jacobite view of history, a wilfully perverse celebration of such obscurantist troglodytes as the Young Pretender . . . makes even the embittered splutterings of Hilaire Belloc seem models of fair-mindedness and tolerance by comparison'.¹³ Even if measured by a liberal standard, the modern historical debate dealing with Jacobitism stands out as having been emotionally charged, and somewhat muddled. The most visible, historiographical common denominator of Colley and Speck is the inimical nature of their respective positions in relation to Jacobitism.¹⁴

Moreover, the view of Jacobitism as an overrated topic tends to support another historical paradigm upheld by the sceptics: that of political stability in eighteenth-century Britain. In Colley's case, the Protestant identity as a unifying factor and the successful superimposition of Parliamentary politics over open conflict following the 'Fifteen, and in that of Speck, a broad politico-religious concordance based on the Revolution Settlement culmin-

ating in the stable rule of the Whig oligarchy after the Rage of Party during Queen Anne's last years had quieted down, would both stand to lose some credibility as historical concepts if the Jacobites proved to be a more tenacious, disruptive force than hitherto admitted by the sceptics.¹⁵ In its implications, there is more at stake in the debate concerning Jacobitism than the historical significance of the Stuart cause's threat to the Hanoverian dynasty.

The 'more agnostic, but overall still pessimist' Bruce Lenman, working on Scottish Jacobitism, seems to favour the principles of the pessimist tendency over that of the agnostic when he asserts that '[a]fter 1716 the real problem of Jacobite history is why there ever was another major rebellion'.¹⁶ In regard to the consequences of a second Stuart restoration, Lenman believes that the new government, reinstated with the support of France, would be unable to act with initiative in regard to its benefactor.¹⁷ His stance concerning the post-Culloden period is also clear: 'After 1746 the antics of the exiled Stewarts were seen to be increasingly irrelevant.'¹⁸ Lenman does, however, attempt to bridge the gap between 1746 and 1759 by an explanation of what happened to those who staked their lives and fortunes on the successful outcome of the 'Forty-five. For into this period, and well beyond to 1784, the year in which the Disannexing Act was passed, he proposes his thesis of a Jacobite rehabilitation and reconciliation to the Hanoverian establishment through the back door of the British army.¹⁹ Lenman's pointed omission of those Scots Jacobites remaining at large in the Highlands, and of those exiled families established at the safe haven of diverse European courts, is somewhat dissatisfying, and detracts from the credibility of his thesis for the decade following Culloden – at least in proportion to the number of those it does not include. This last group may not have constituted a clear majority of Charles Edward's army, but if not, then the prominent Scots Jacobites in exile from 1746 to 1759 can be said to have represented a majority of the army's elite.

Though critical of the prospects of Jacobitism after the 'Fifteen, Paul Fritz's seminal study on Sir Robert Walpole's manipulation of the Jacobite scare for political reasons between the 'Fifteen and the 'Forty-five has also shown that:

[t]he reaction of the English ministers to Jacobite projects in these years demonstrates clearly their dread of Jacobitism, and the harsh retaliatory measures they took appear as but external expressions of their genuine fear of a Stuart restoration.²⁰

In at least one instance, that of English ministerial intervention in the Swedish plot of 1717, Fritz has demonstrated the distorting effects of hindsight – the fickle yardstick by which so many Jacobosceptics measure the importance of Jacobitism.²¹ But then 'hindsight', to quote Éamonn Ó'Ciardha 'is the

worst enemy of Jacobitism'.²² Fritz concluded that Jacobite conspiracies during the hiatus between the risings of 1715 and 1745 were not Whiggish figments of imagination. He concluded that the 'English ministers did not raise the bogey of Jacobitism and there is no evidence to suggest that they even considered it as a remote possibility'.²³ Walpole and his cohorts were dealing with a double-edged sword that, as we shall see, was inherited by his Pelhamite successors: on the one hand, the Jacobite threat could be, and certainly was, used as a means to control the British polity with fear, but on the other, its role as an instrument of ministerial statecraft depended on the fact that its edge was not too blunt. Nevertheless, a note of warning ironically issued by Gregg, a strident sceptic, should also be heeded: 'what actually happened is frequently not as important as what people believed had happened or feared might happen'.²⁴ In this sense, fear of Jacobitism, whatever the substance of the threat, certainly existed.

Overall, the sceptics have amassed an impressive arsenal of arguments against a favourable interpretation of Jacobitism. Essentially, the crucial point on which representatives of this school rest their case of the weakness of the Jacobite movement is that it ultimately failed to overturn the establishment of Revolutionary Britain by effecting a successful restoration of the Stuarts. On the basis of this argumentative framework, consisting of facts available to us now, most, if not all, exponents of this school reject the Jacobite movement, from its inception in 1688 to the suppression of the 'Forty-five in 1746, as an important phenomenon in British history. By extension, it follows that the mere notion of active Jacobitism in the post-Culloden period must be unacceptable to the sceptics. There are problems with such a position.

The very basis for any interpretation of Jacobitism is a dangerous ground.²⁵ Colley's accusation of partisanship against optimistic revisionists could just as well be turned against sceptics. Gregg, for instance, has stressed the ambivalent nature of the archival evidence in the Stuart papers, and the State papers domestic and foreign, which in his opinion constitute 'unpredictable mixtures of solid fact, idle speculation and deliberate or inadvertent distortion'.²⁶ It is one thing to point out the dangers of sources, but obviously quite another to completely discredit their integrity. The doyenne of modern Jacobite studies, Eveline Cruickshanks, has reached a similar conclusion: 'Because of the difficulties presented by sources dealing with Jacobitism . . . many historians have ignored the subject completely or have dismissed all evidence as unreliable, even when that evidence is confirmed by other contemporary testimony'.²⁷ According to Cruickshanks:

[t]he less historians know about the Stuart papers, the more convinced they seem to be that Jacobite agents were unreliable and invariably optimistic. It has become an easy way for Whig historians to disregard inconvenient evidence.²⁸

More generally, any attentive reader may discern a sense of continuity in the intellectual orientation linking the Scottish Whig historians' attempts in the eighteenth century to reconstruct their country's past in order to force it into a British mould, to the architects of the Protestant, progressivist Whig interpretation a century later, and the presentday sceptics, whose marginalization of Jacobitism, albeit for different reasons, does much to recall the heyday of Macaulay and Trevelyan.²⁹ It is telling that Allan Macinnes recently felt the need to comment that in regard to indigenous Scottish factors supportive of Jacobitism 'historiographical appreciation . . . has rarely cut free from the polemical and ideological constraints of Whig propaganda'.³⁰ The connection between a past historical bias and modern scepticism may seem threadbare, but Pittock reminds us that the former 'is a powerful survivor in our consciousness of the general shape of history'.³¹

While progressivism and teleology may not constitute the typical problems of modern sceptics, another member of the family of determinisms, in this case retrospectivism, which entails taking full advantage of hindsight, clearly is. The potential for distortion of the past through hindsight cannot be stressed enough. The problem at the core of the Jacosceptic position is the *ex post facto* nature of the conclusions this school's exponents tend to arrive at, the consequence of which is that no allowance is made for the shades of grey in the discovered or unknown recesses of the past – a general sense of contingency.

In reference to the pitfalls of hindsight, Niall Ferguson recently commented that 'historians should never lose sight of their own "uncertainty principle" – that any observation of historical evidence inevitably distorts its significance by the very fact of its selection through the prism of hindsight'.³² The use of hindsight in order to construct an historical framework is deceptive because it only allows us to see the tip of the iceberg, that is visibly documented, 'factual' history. Such an explanation of the past may be based on unimpeachable documentary evidence, but it is the historian who decides which documents are pertinent. The conclusion, that any historical exposition must therefore be an entirely subjective, editorial process, is tempting, but not necessarily, and altogether wrong. The avoidance of retrospectivist criteria in the choice of evidence, would, if not eliminate the subjective character of the process, then at least work as a corrective to the ahistoricity of a determinist lens.

Scholars who have given Jacobitism a favourable reading have generally displayed more sensitivity to the nature of the problem of contingency than their colleagues in the sceptical camp. This has led some of them, as we shall see, to embark upon different, but no less challenging and productive inquiries, reaching beyond the inflexible maxims of retrospectivist determinism, into the realm of counterfactuals. This, too, is a route fraught with perils, but the risks may be worth taking. J. G. A. Pocock believes that there is a legitimate use of counterfactuals in serious history: 'the case for

considering outcomes which did not occur . . . is that it enables us to understand better the problematics in which the actors were entangled'.³³ Ferguson further elaborates on the nature of this problem within the context of historical debates:

Whether by posing implausible questions or by providing implausible answers, counterfactual history has tended to discredit itself. Yet there are clearly other reasons why so few historians have attempted to argue in this way – or, when they have acknowledged the possibility of alternative outcomes, have left the counterfactual implicit, as a kind of subtext. Such veiled counterfactualism has been a striking feature of a great many 'revisionist' works of history – not altogether surprisingly, in that most revisionists tend to be challenging some form of deterministic interpretation.³⁴

More specifically, Jeremy Black reasoned that:

Speculation on this theme can be, and has been, dismissed as pointless hypotheses or the revisionist obscurantism and nostalgia that interest in Jacobitism has been held to display, but such arguments are of value only if the options facing individuals in the past are ignored and it is assumed not only that the path of history is pre-ordained and obvious but that the past belongs to the victors.³⁵

Frank McLynn observed that to deny the counterfactual option, which is raised as a consequence of a rejection of rigid retrospectivism, would 'make the quest for causality otiose, and history would then simply be what the young Jane Austen imagined it was – a crude recital of events and dates'.³⁶ He challenged the lost cause model by spearheading the attack on retrospectivist explanations of Jacobitism in the post-Culloden period, and thereby postulated the proposition on which the present book is based. According to McLynn, and closely echoed by Pittock, Culloden was a decisive battle, but contemporaries did not necessarily see it that way.³⁷ Moreover, there is nothing inevitable about the outcome of the rising in his mind; on the contrary:

When one considers what Charles Edward achieved at Prestonpans with 2,500, in England with 5,000 and at Falkirk with 8,000 men, who can doubt that a Jacobite army of 30,000 would have swept all before it, especially since the probability of a rising in England or an invasion from France would then increase as a multiplier effect.³⁸

We will, of course, never know. Nevertheless, McLynn's foray into the contingent and counterfactual adds, as opposed to most deterministic models of

explanation enjoying widespread acceptance in the historical profession, a useful perspective to the study of Jacobitism. More important are the consequences of McLynn's rejection of a predetermined, inevitable culmination of the 'Forty-five. Although McLynn treats the subject with an awareness of contingency, that is not to say that his thesis is not grounded in the solid tradition of archival research. Approximating Leopold von Ranke's archivist maxim (as opposed to its positivist *pendant*) to write history as it happened (by reconstructing the minutiae of the past), and by combining it with both psychoanalytical and psychohistorical methodologies, and a variant of Quentin Skinner's historical pragmatics, McLynn's approach has come closest to what could be called historical contextualism – a manner of understanding historical phenomena within the constraints and mores of their temporal environment.³⁹ Ferguson's objection to the determinism inherent in the Monde Braudelian exemplifies the essence of such an approach. He faulted Braudel for the dismissal of history *as received* and documented by contemporaries.⁴⁰ The distillation of McLynn's conclusion in relation to the historical context after Culloden is that:

[f]urther evidence for the gravity of the rebellion [of 1745] can be discovered in the seriousness with which, right up to 1759 and despite the ferocious Whig backlash of 1746–47, it was feared that the Jacobites would rise again. Until Hawke's victory at Quiberon Bay, no one could be certain that Charles Edward would not come again to Scotland for another trial of strength.⁴¹

It is exactly the evident fear of the Whig oligarchs in power after 1746 which does at least as much to justify the present inquiry as the post-Culloden Jacobites' ignorance of their ultimate failure. The Jacobite threat in that period was tangible to the British government officials who had to confront it without the secure knowledge of the present-day historians that it was they, and the sediment of their political power, namely the Revolutionary Settlement and Protestant Succession, who would finally triumph. The hallmark of retrospectivism is recognizable in the ahistorical verdicts of those modern British historians who presume to hold a superior knowledge to that of a Newcastle, Pelham, or an elder Pitt in their own time. After all, the statesmen of mid-eighteenth-century Britain would have had a more contemporaneous and, hence, palpable sense of the politics of their day, and accordingly would have been in a better position to evaluate the authenticity, or at least the perceived truth, of a Jacobite threat – especially because they could not seize upon the advantage of hindsight. As they experienced the reality which created the evidence upon which our historical exegesis rests, the political helmsmen's picture of their own reality was infinitely more, to use a Geertzian term, 'thick' than ours is in the present.⁴² As John Brooke so eloquently explained:

[l]ooking back from the distance of two hundred and fifty years it seems that King George I and his ministers exaggerated the danger of Jacobitism. But at the time no one could be sure. The long vista of history is deceptive. Nor are timely precautions to be despised because the danger they guard against never materializes.⁴³

The fundamental conclusion of this book is that Brooke's template can also be applied to the later reign of George II.

The interpretative parochialism of Jacoboscepticism has also made itself felt in the sphere of most studies' geographic scope, as many of the historians who have given Jacobitism a negative reading have confined their research to the pale of one, or at times two, of the three British kingdoms. That such a tight focus is inherently inimical to any just evaluation of Jacobitism, can be gauged from the circumstance that such a view more often than not tends to disparage, or even ignore, the apparent international dimension of the movement. This is especially true for the European political situation of 1745. Cruickshanks stated this clearly in 1979, when she wrote that many accounts of the last Jacobite rising:

have largely ignored the European context out of which the '45 arose and in which alone it could succeed. Historians on this side of the Channel have assumed that for the French the rebellion [of 1745] was a useful 'diversion' from the war in Flanders, without taking any systematic look at French sources. French historians, who knew that Louis XV was in earnest in seeking to restore the Stuarts, did not appreciate that conditions in eighteenth-century England made open expression of Jacobitism impossible . . . At any rate . . . European history seen in purely national terms will not do.⁴⁴

In the event of an invasion, as opposed to a purely domestic rising, French support for the Jacobites constituted a *sine qua non*; the Stuarts' fate was closely tied to the goodwill of their Bourbon cousins. The crucial nature of this relationship is as evident in a positive, as in a negative sense. If, as some embittered American veterans of the twentieth century have argued with some merit, the war in Vietnam was lost in Washington, the Jacobites, heavily dependent on their French sponsors by 1746, could, as they indeed did, with some justification blame ministerial vacillations at Versailles and the consequent lack of substantial reinforcements for the events leading up to, and culminating at, Culloden. In his seminal study of the French connection with the Jacobite rising of 1745, McLynn not only reiterates, but corroborates Cruickshanks' point. Indeed, McLynn believes that a supportive role of France had in fact become still more important by that time:

What is clear is that the nature of the Jacobite movement in Britain had changed in the thirty years since 1715 so that whereas French assistance for the Stuarts in the '15 looked very much like aid for one side in a civil war, by 1745, with Jacobite sentiment powerful only in Scotland, France seemed cast more in the role of abettor of invasion of England from Scotland . . . In fact Jacobite chances of success in the '45, given French assistance, were rather higher than the prevailing consensus would have us believe . . . if France had seized all the opportunities presented in 1745–6, success would surely have been assured.⁴⁵

Ultimately, McLynn has argued, the French, by withholding immediate support for Charles' army, were responsible for the suppression of the 'Forty-five.⁴⁶ Even so, the Jacobite threat persisted, for after the extended incommunicado following the nadir of Franco-Jacobite relations in 1748, France resumed its share in Jacobite planning shortly before the Diplomatic Revolution. Although Paul Kléber Monod has recently postulated that 'the last great Jacobite gambit took place in 1750, not 1745', the pioneering work of Claude Nordmann has shed light on the Jacobite dimension in French plans to invade Britain during the Seven Years' War.⁴⁷ Temporally speaking, his is the furthest extension of the Jacobite threat along the timeline, renewing its lease on life for more than a decade beyond the presumed graveyard of Culloden, and thus constitutes the argument least amenable to the lost cause model. Nordmann's research points to Franco-Jacobite cooperation in 1758–59, an argument which my research has corroborated. The relevance of a renewed Franco-Jacobite collaboration in 1758–59 to British internal security is momentous. According to Nordmann, the domestic potential for a resuscitation of Jacobitism in the British Isles in these years still existed:

Jacobitism could still revive and even rally some of the Tories, in as much as it represented a kind of nationalism or regionalism . . . Ireland, 'the frontier of Catholicism', might be expected to take up arms again, the Scottish Highlands remained a threat and there were still supporters of the Stuart cause in Wales.⁴⁸

My own research has tended to support this picture for Scotland, where the potential for a Jacobite fifth column remained extant.⁴⁹

Apart from the French, Swedes and Spaniards, the emergent first-rate power in European politics, Prussia, played a murky, if not quite undistinguished role as potential ally of Jacobitism. In the context of the historiographical debate on Jacobitism, the seriousness of the Prussian conspiracy, better known by the name of the Elibank plot, has remained highly controversial. Even exponents of the optimist school have been reluctant to give too much credit to the clandestine Prusso-Jacobite proceedings. Though Andrew Lang indicated that Frederick II, for reasons of political expediency,

was peripherally involved in the conspiracy, the otherwise enthusiastic Sir Charles Petrie contended that 'it is in the highest degree unlikely that he ever intended to do anything more for the Stuarts than give them a little underhand encouragement for the furthering of his own ends'.⁵⁰ McLynn and Cruickshanks concur in that both set Prussian expedient politics of brandishing the Jacobite bogey before Frederick II's inveterate, personal hatred of George II, and his disputes with Britain over the Friesian succession and the Silesian Loan.⁵¹ My own investigation, however, points to a British policy of silence regarding Frederick's dealings with the Jacobites for fear of provoking an open rupture with the Hohenzollern monarch, and suggests further Prussian involvement in the Elibank plot.

At the heart of the international aspect of the debate, however, remains the question regarding the significance of the threat which the 'Forty-five posed for the British state. Again, the optimists differ substantially from the view taken by their more pessimistic colleagues. While the deep impact of the last Jacobite rising in Scotland has generally been accepted, the English situation is not as clear cut. But, as Cruickshanks has shown, the 'Forty-five also left its imprint on the South. Before early December 1745, Henry Pelham did not believe that a successful defence of the capital could be mounted with only the thin line of Guards stationed at Finchley, and the French attempting a junction with Charles' advancing army.⁵² The Hanoverian response to the rising may also serve as an indicator. 'The Whig reaction to the '45', McLynn notes, 'was as severe as their shock and fear had been when the rising came so close to success.'⁵³

Taking his inquiry still further, Jeremy Black has considered the possibility of a Jacobite victory, concluding that though the capture of London would not have been an easy task for Charles' army, '[h]ad the French landed in 1745-46 they would have been able to defeat whatever irregular forces the local authorities had raised and they would have outnumbered the regular troops in and around London'.⁵⁴ Black thus indirectly confirms McLynn's point on the crucial role of French reinforcements, and, by implication, of French culpability for the eventual failure of the rising; the Jacobite effort to raise an effective, and highly mobile, army was a full success, as was Charles' campaign of 1745 in Scotland. Black therefore concludes that though some historians have seen the 'Forty-five as an undertaking destined to fail, 'it is too easy to overlook the seriousness of what was the biggest crisis to affect the eighteenth-century British state'.⁵⁵ By extension, historical arguments which advance the thesis of an authentic Jacobite threat imply that, in the face of the Stuarts' unresolved dynastic claim and the several attempts to enforce it, early- to mid-eighteenth-century Britain was not the stable political system it has been represented to be by the sceptics. The pivotal point, then, on which the optimists base their revisionist offensive is that up to 1746, and beyond, Jacobitism repeatedly posed a serious challenge to the post-Revolutionary British state.

The above treatment of the existing polarities within the modern debate on Jacobitism indicates that the very nature of the present book determines its position on the historiographical map. The main thrust of the research presented here is based on the optimists' conclusion of the general significance of the Jacobite movement in the context of eighteenth-century British political history up to the 'Forty-five. What distinguishes this book from the work of other like-minded historians, with the notable exception of Claude Nordmann and Frank McLynn, are its temporal boundaries, attempting to explore the last phase of active Jacobitism to 1759. The two premises on which these temporal bounds are based are that, first, no sudden expiry of Jacobitism occurred after Culloden, and, second, that the movement continued with its activities under the auspices of Charles, until the Stuarts' last, realistic prospect of restoration by military intervention was dashed by the British naval victory at Quiberon Bay in November 1759. In this thirteen-year period, there was a demonstrable continuity of *active* Jacobitism: there were, for example, several attempts to advance the Stuarts' claim by lobbying foreign potentates for military support; the vigour and ingenuity exhibited by Jacobite plotting against Britain and its Hanoverian monarch; the maintenance of cross-Channel communications in the face of the grisly penalties prescribed by the British law of treason; the illicit recruiting of troops in the Three Kingdoms and the pro-British United Provinces for service in expatriate regiments in foreign military establishments, owing their loyalty to their exiled King, James III and VIII; the subsisting and sheltering of attainted clan-gentry in the Highlands by relations and the loyal tenantry, who in several cases also abetted their escape, and, through the subversive practice of double-remitting, contributed to the upkeep of exiled chiefs and their families. Following Culloden, the strength of the Jacobite movement may have gradually declined, but it certainly did not cease to exist in a single day.

Methodology and Structure

Some of the more particular, methodological and structural aspects of my work merit some explanation. Structures and methodologies tend to be traditionally linked with certain types of historical genre, as is the case with high political history, which has often been presented as a narrative. In the past, Jacobitism, as a subject, has traditionally been treated as high political history, and, more often than not, been represented as a narrative.

But Jacobitism and narrative history cannot be said to have been in great demand among writing historians in the post-Second World War period; only in the past two decades have both witnessed a limited comeback to the centre stage of the historical profession. To a certain extent, political history still remains a marginalized genre on account of new trends in the field. Conversely, the proliferation of the new approaches to history has not only attracted acclamation. Peter Burke recently commented that:

'[I]like scientific revolutions, historical revolutions are constantly being discovered these days, and our conceptual currency is in serious danger of debasement.'⁵⁶

The question of which literary representation is best suited to the task of communicating written history has been, and remains, a matter of great concern to practising historians. This question has also fuelled a lively debate. At least one sage of the *Annales* school proclaimed the death of narrative history in 1972 – prematurely, as it turned out. Indeed, after the Second World War, historical inquiry, and its literary representation, markedly diverged from the path trodden by the narrative historians of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁵⁷ New histories have since risen on the ashes of the old: statistical, quantitative, intellectual, cultural, social, psychological, and other interdisciplinary hybrids, to name but a few. In the light of the nascent plethora of possibilities, the present attempt to write on not only an exclusive, aristocratic elite at the expense of Colley's 'other, apparently more conventional voices', but to do so in the most classical form, that of a high political narrative based on the principle of constructing the story mainly from archival elements, may seem antediluvian.⁵⁸

To the dismay of gainsayers and critics of narrative history alike, the historiographical, or to use Mark Phillips' term, the historiological, debate has received a new impetus because of novel phenomena introduced to the field, but also because of the critical attention they attract. The issues in the debate on the written expression of history range from the increasingly fragmented and interdisciplinary nature of historical inquiry, and the concomitant surge of the discourse-spawned jargon, to a search for a holistic literary medium. This quest for a broadly applicable literary representation of history has also led to a reappraisal of narrative.⁵⁹ Lawrence Stone's seminal article of 1979 on the revival of narrative can claim some responsibility for the spirited character of this debate. Stone argued that 'a widespread disillusionment with the economic determinist model of historical explanation', had caused practising historians to cast a vote of no confidence in the direction of the erstwhile promising potential of the new, or scientific historians.⁶⁰ According to Burke, the criticism levelled against the proponents of the new histories is 'that the analysis of structures is static and so in a sense unhistorical'.⁶¹ In a similar vein Bernard Bailyn asserted that:

historians must be, not analysts of isolated technical problems abstracted from the past, but narrators of worlds in motion . . . The historian must re-tell, with a new richness, the story of what some one of the worlds of the past was, how it ceased to be what it was, how it faded and blended into new configurations, how at every stage what was, was the product of what had been, and developed into what no one could have anticipated.⁶²

By contrast, narrative history is generally accessible, that is, user-friendly, and is thus better suited to act as a conduit with an interested lay audience. Nevertheless, Stone, Burke and Phillips agree that a resurrected narrative history should not, and cannot, simply manifest itself in its original shape, as it would have to accommodate the intellectual fruits of the post-Second World War revisionists' rebellion against the narrative historians of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁶³ Whatever the final literary innovation will turn out to be, more comprehensive, detailed, impressionistic, or eclectic, there can be no doubt that the concept of narrative history has its uses in modern historical writing.

A more important issue within the context of this debate, it seems to me, is the application of a mode of writing to a specific historical genre. Even more than generic narrative history, political narrative has been specifically targeted and ostracized by the new historians of the past generation; compared to its former position of primacy in the historical profession, it has almost fallen into abeyance. Stone noted that it was 'a belated recognition of the importance of power, of personal political decisions by individuals, of the chances of battle', which, in his opinion, 'have forced historians back to the narrative mode, whether they like it or not'.⁶⁴ Because of the individualistic character of the Jacobite movement, almost any historical inquiry concerned with Jacobitism is bound to be oriented by the maxim of emphasizing the historical actor in circumstances, rather than the circumstances surrounding man. The descriptive quality of a narrative account may be better suited to capture the story of actors on the historical stage than an approach based on quantification and category. In dealing with the highly politicized, volatile and disparate Jacobite elite, I have found Stone's observation to be correct. For the present study, the marriage of narrative with political history has yielded productive results.

The decision to employ narrative also implies a few considerations intricately linked with the source material at hand. The amount of archival evidence, at times fragmentary, ambivalent, and diverse, outweighs secondary material in the present book. In such a case, the danger of subordinating the evidence to structural and conceptual devices cannot be stressed enough. Therefore, narrative, and its implicit emphasis on explanation rather than analysis, here again presents itself as the more flexible, and accommodating alternative to the application of a rigid methodological template. After all, the Jacobites were a heterogeneous, and often conflicting, lot, and historians have struggled to define Jacobitism in ideological, religious, political, and even social terms.⁶⁵ At one point or another, we must come to recognize the multifaceted nature of Jacobitism which defies a strong definition but not a close description. In reaching conclusions, the intemperate use of forceful analysis as a *passé partout* is not without its drawbacks: we may risk overstraining the actual content of existing evidence by interpreting it according to demands imposed by conceptual criteria. The

method of descriptive explication, a less rigid analytical variant, seems better suited to the illustration of a history only partially reconstructible because of the gaps and ambiguities of its sources.

The methodological idea underlying this book was to guard against the temptation of making the content and extent of the evidence meet requirements set by a conceptual agenda; in accordance with the maxim that the past is dead and incomplete, no attempt has been made to establish an academically conceived 'truth'.⁶⁶ At the same time, the critical examination of the sources, and the achievement of a better sense of the historical context by an intense study of the primary material, have remained an integral part of my approach. The criterion set for the present selection of an appropriate literary mode and methodology is that both must accommodate the disparate and problematic nature of the primary sources involved. With these goals in mind, and difficulties at hand, a narrative of the last phase of Jacobitism, in which descriptive explication somewhat balances definitive analysis, has been a sensible choice.

The Manuscript Sources

As the recent secondary sources have received ample treatment in the first section of this chapter, and because this book is predominantly based on primary evidence, the present section is concerned with the archives consulted in the course of this project.

The Stuart papers at the Royal Archives are the most important source for the Jacobite movement, and though problematic, both the collections' documentary wealth and vast extent indubitably make it an indispensable asset for any historian of Jacobitism. With the notable exception of Frank McLynn and Claude Nordmann, no recently published work in the field has drawn upon the section concerned with the years 1746–59.⁶⁷ Understandably so, as it has been widely held in the field that the Jacobite movement had become obsolete after 1746. The Stuart papers for this period tell us much about, among other points of interest, the inner trappings of the Jacobite movement in exile, its contacts with other powers and its agents in Britain. The much smaller holdings of the West Highland Museum at Inverness also include Jacobite correspondence, but of no lesser interest. The museum's repository holds some letters relating to the immediate post-Culloden period written in the field by the Jacobite regimental commanders, Donald Cameron of Lochiel and Ewan MacPherson of Cluny. These are illustrative of Lochiel's last attempt at rallying the western clans in an effort to resist government troops in the late spring of 1746.⁶⁸ Of equal value for the aftermath of the 'Forty-five in Scotland, albeit from the Hanoverian side, are the Loudon papers held at the Huntington Library in San Marino. The military correspondence of John Campbell, 4th Earl of Loudon, a general officer serving under the Duke of Cumberland, who played a key role in the

suppression of the rising after Culloden, clearly documents a situation of prolonged strife in the Highlands throughout the remainder of the year 1746. Furthermore, the Earl's letters are illustrative of the government forces' movements, especially those of the native auxiliary troops in western and northern Scotland. The Loudon papers represent an under-used source for early modern and eighteenth-century Highland history.⁶⁹

The two most significant Scottish archives from which I have drawn heavily to document the situation in the Highlands, and affairs connected with Jacobite activity in the West of Scotland for this period are the National Library of Scotland and the Scottish Record Office. From among the rich holdings of the National Library, the correspondence of Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun, Lord Justice Clerk Milton in his judicial capacity as a Lord of Session, and that of his successor, Charles Erskine, Lord Justice Clerk Tinwald, have proven invaluable, as the incumbents of this office also served as the Scottish liaison with the English ministers.⁷⁰ Overall, the holdings of this archive have presented me with a treasure of relevant evidence. Among the Gifts and Deposits lodged at the Scottish Record Office, fewer, but no less substantial, collections relating to the post-Culloden period may be found. Though the political correspondence of those involved in the last rising, or its suppression, and the following decade, is sparse, the Campbell of Stonefield papers, among others, proved helpful indeed.⁷¹ Last, but not least, the MacBean Special Collection housed at the University of Aberdeen holds a rich assortment of printed primary and secondary Jacobitiana. Although kept in England, at the Royal Archives, the Cumberland papers also relate to the aftermath of the 'Forty-five in Scotland. Combined, and contrasted with the other pertinent collections of the Scottish archives, and the Stuart and the Loudon papers, the manuscripts in the Duke of Cumberland's papers complete a picture not easily seen if used on their own.⁷²

Not only Scottish, but also English archival resources feature prominently in this monograph. The most significant individual discovery I made in the course of my research was a series of documents belonging to the Pelham papers lodged at Nottingham University's Hallward Library, which have conclusively established the identity of the most successful Hanoverian mole, 'Pickle', alias Alasdair Ruadh MacDonell of Glengarry. Though Andrew Lang's brilliant case against Glengarry, based on a staggering amount of circumstantial evidence, is convincing, and has been accepted by many historians, it hitherto lacked an irrefutable character, which my investigation has been able to provide just over one century after the publication of *Pickle the Spy*.⁷³ Again, McLynn has been the only other historian on Jacobitism to date who has made use of Henry Pelham's correspondence for this period.⁷⁴

As with most projects dealing with the British institutional apparatus, the present book is no different in that it draws on the vast amount of State papers kept at the Public Record Office. The domestic papers can be

subdivided into two groups: those pertaining to England, and those relating to Scotland. Whereas the former constitute a well-known body of evidence, the latter, classed as SP 54, have remained an under-used, but extremely rich, resource on the nature and proceedings of the British military administration in Scotland for the period under scrutiny here. The State Papers Foreign made use of are those containing the diplomatic dispatches of the British envoys and residents of France, Prussia, Saxony-Poland and Tuscany. With France officially or clandestinely linked to the Jacobite cause over a long period of time, the importance of the diplomatic correspondence sent by the British mission in Paris is self-explanatory. Intelligence reports transmitted through British diplomatic channels from Saxony-Poland and Prussia are relevant because of the Stuarts' close relation to the Sobieskis, the former king-elects of the Polish Diet who had been driven from their throne by the Saxon ruler August III; and also because of Frederick II's flirt with the Jacobites; and more generally, with the peripatetic Charles, whose closely guarded incognito, at least in the eyes of his Hanoverian pursuers, turned him into an evanescent phantom roaming the Continent.⁷⁵ The voluminous correspondence of Horace Mann, the British resident in Florence, includes detailed reports on the Jacobite court in exile at Rome, and information relating to Jacobite activities in general. Mann's proximity to the Palazzo Muti allowed him to establish a stable communications network with correspondents in Rome sending him intelligence, which he, in turn relayed back to Whitehall.⁷⁶

Finally, the archival staple diet of the eighteenth-century political historian, the various, well-known collections in the British Library, have allowed me to gain insight into the trappings and proceedings of the English ministry. The papers of Philip Yorke, 1st Earl of Hardwicke, Chief Justice of the Court of King's Bench, Attorney-General and later Lord Chancellor of the realm, and those belonging to Thomas Holles, 1st Duke of Newcastle, successively Secretary of State for the Southern and the Northern Departments, and as of 1754, First Commissioner of the Treasury, can be found among the Additional Manuscripts of the British Library. Like Henry Pelham, these two Whig grandees were intimately concerned with Jacobite affairs and the security of the state. Their papers are supplemented by the correspondence of Robert D'Arcy, 4th Earl of Holderness, which can be found among the Egerton collection. He served the government as Secretary of State in the Southern and Northern Departments from 1751 to 54, and from 1757 to 1761. Because of financial limitations, and time constraints, the following archives, though of interest, have not been investigated. In order to determine the full extent of Frederick II's involvement in the Elbank conspiracy, a thorough search through Prussian diplomatic and domestic correspondence could possibly have turned up some interesting leads, or even evidence of an incriminating nature. A potential starting point could be the unpublished Prussian diplomatic correspondence, hitherto kept at Merseburg, but

transferred to the Berliner Staatsarchiv since the reunification of Germany.⁷⁷ Likewise beyond the scope of this project were the indubitably relevant French documents in the Archives Étrangères at the Quai d'Orsay, and the archive of the Ministry of War at the Château de Vincennes. A collection in the private hands of the present Duke of Argyll, alternatively referred to as the Inveraray or Argyll papers, apparently remains inaccessible to graduate students.⁷⁸

Though the variety of the manuscript material used is not comprehensive, I hope the selection of evidence to be at least sufficiently representative. As this project is constructed on two, at times conflicting Jacobite and Whig/Hanoverian, perceptions of the post-Culloden period in Britain and France, the archives consulted are accordingly diverse. This is, however, not to say that every manuscript collection yielded only one, exclusive point of view; depositions in the State papers would at times also mirror Jacobite viewpoints, albeit in a distorted fashion, and Hanoverian attitudes were equally projected, though through an antagonistic lens, in the correspondence belonging to the Stuart papers. Attitudes and opinions on either side were almost invariably heterogeneous, often issue-oriented, cloaked, ambivalent and largely inconsistent. Most important, the inestimable amount of the evidence lost should remain ever present in the mind of the reader.

The Main Body of the Book

As this chapter has attempted to determine the position of the present book by portraying the modern debate on Jacobitism, to explain methodological precepts and discuss the manuscript evidence used, those which follow will try to give a chronological and narrative account of the Jacobites' fate from Culloden to Quiberon Bay. The two main themes in Chapter 2 are, on the one hand, the changing nature of Jacobite resistance, and, on the other, the response of the British military and administration in the months following the battle of Culloden. The most significant conclusions of this chapter are the underrated extent of continued, albeit localized, Jacobite military activities, and the protracted failure of Hanoverian troops to restore order in the Highlands into early 1747.

Chapter 3 explores the activities of the exiled Jacobites in France from 1746 to 1748, where, it would seem, their ardour to inveigle the French to support a resuscitation of the rising was not much dampened by the setback suffered at Culloden. Owing to the complex detail surrounding Jacobite clandestine activities in the period after the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle (1748), the emphasis of the two following chapters is of a reconstructive and descriptive rather than an analytical nature.

The period following Charles' expulsion from France in late 1748 to the failure of the Elibank plot in 1753 is dealt with in some depth in the next chapter; Chapter 4 is mainly concerned with the multitude of Jacobite

initiatives culminating in the abortive schemes referred to as the Elibank conspiracy, and traces, some of them new, linking Frederick II of Prussia to Jacobite projects. The fifth and last of the narrative chapters, constituting the main body of the book, is an exposition on the resumption of Franco-Jacobite relations shortly before the outbreak of the Seven Years' War to the last attempt at restoring the Stuarts with French aid in October 1759, but also seeks to adumbrate a genealogy of Jacobite plans shortly before the Diplomatic Revolution. The sixth and final chapter attempts to draw together the main themes of the book in a conclusion; therein, I have also attempted to link my conclusions to larger perspectives in mid-eighteenth-century political history.

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