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## Assimilation Aborted

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## **Assimilation Aborted: Henry Clerk and the Limits of Anglo-Scottish Integration in the Age of Union**

In his virulently anti-Scottish poem, *The Prophecy of Famine* (1763), Charles Churchill bemoaned the uncanny ability of Scots migrants to worm their way into English society. ‘Into our places, states, and beds they creep’, Churchill complained, ‘They’ve sense to get what we want sense to keep’.<sup>1</sup> Churchill’s verse was rooted firmly in its time, being part of the vicious print response to the unpopular ministry of the Scottish prime minister, John Stuart, 3<sup>rd</sup> earl of Bute, but the general idea that Scottish migrants to early modern England were singularly skilled and successful at exploiting the opportunities presented by their new homeland was much older. It began to emerge soon after the first influx of Scottish migrants in 1603, responding to the regal union of England and Scotland in the person of James VI and I. Moreover, *The Prophecy of Famine* was part of a wider canon of hostile comment, liberally shot through with envy, which established the avaricious Scot-on-the-make as a staple of English imagination. Yet not all Scottish migrants conformed to the pattern of successful assimilation that underpinned Churchill’s narrative. There was a minority of Scottish migrants who, for a variety of reasons, found they could not make a success of their lives south of the border and returned home.<sup>2</sup> One example of this abortive diaspora was Henry Clerk, son of a middle-ranking Midlothian baronet who made a doomed effort to build a new life for himself in London between 1698 and 1702. A series of dozens of surviving letters

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Churchill, *The Prophecy of Famine: A Scots Pastoral* (London, 1763), p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> K. M. Brown, A. Kennedy and S. Talbott, ‘Scots and Scabs from North-by-Tweed’: Undesirable Scottish Migrants in Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Century England’, working paper; K. M. Brown and A. Kennedy, ‘Their Maxim is *Vestigia nulla retrorsum*’: Scottish Return Migration from England, 1603-c.1760’, *Journal of Social History*, forthcoming.

between Clerk and his family members in Scotland allow us to trace his migration experience in unusual detail. This evidence makes his case an excellent candidate for micro-historical reconstruction, and in undertaking such an exercise this article seeks to ask what the nature and circumstances of his failure can tell us about the wider process of migrant assimilation in early modern Britain, as well as the challenges confronted by individuals seeking to make a new life in a new location.

Henry Clerk was the second son of Sir John Clerk, 1<sup>st</sup> baronet of Penicuik, a hard-nosed Presbyterian who possessed a landed estate in Midlothian (albeit a recently-acquired one, purchased by his father in 1646) and a baronetcy, while retaining significant business connections, especially in coal-mining, and a strong personal interest in science and technology. This was an austere, morally unbending and highly practical man, traits that would shape Henry's experiences at home and in London. Penicuik's was a large family; he had a total of fifteen children, all of whom survived at least into early adulthood.<sup>3</sup> Henry was born in 1678 on the family lands, and probably followed his elder brother John, the future 2<sup>nd</sup> baronet, to Penicuik's reputedly severe parish school, before attending university, probably at Glasgow. As an adult he followed a naval career, being commissioned second lieutenant on HMS *Royal Mary* in 1705, and was by his elder brother's account 'a very ingenious lad, and much given to mathematics and philosophical studies'. Having never married, he died of consumption in April 1715, at the age of thirty-seven.<sup>4</sup> For most of his life, Henry Clerk's

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<sup>3</sup> R. A. Houston, 'Clerk, Sir John, of Penicuik, First Baronet (1649/50-1722)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* [ODNB], <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/47927>, accessed 12 December 2017; John Clerk, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir John Clerk of Penicuik* ed. J. M. Grey (Edinburgh, 1892), p. 10 and at p. 113.

<sup>4</sup> NRS, Clerk of Penicuik Papers, GD18/2049, Commission to Henry Clerk, 22 December 1705; Clerk, *Memoirs*, p. 44, p. 86 and at p. 118.

home was Penicuik, but the focus of this article is the four-year period between 1698 and 1702 when, as a young man in his early twenties and under the tight if distant supervision of his father, he attempted to establish himself as a marine navigator in London, with a view to emerging as an international merchant. Escorted by his paternal uncle, William (notionally a physician but, in reality, more or less a professional traveller who reappeared regularly in London during Henry's stay there), he arrived in the capital in March 1698. He found a city beginning to grow prosperous on the burgeoning imperial trade that would sustain its eighteenth-century expansion, but which was still recovering from the political and economic dislocation of the Nine Years War (1689-97). Nonetheless, he quickly secured an apprenticeship. The move, however, proved a failure. After just two overseas trips – to Anatolia from July 1698 to August 1699, and to India from November 1700 to September 1702 – Henry returned permanently to Scotland in November 1702.

Henry Clerk's four-year attempt to build a new life in England was undertaken at the direction of his father, Penicuik, who made his aims clear in March 1698:

Tho yow are not (if yow be wise) to refuse q[uha]t yow see others do in [th]e vessell but chearfully to offer [and] solicitously to desire [th]e knowledge [and] practise of those things (as [th]e emporor of Russia [and] his nobles at [the] coure of Inland are learning) yett yow are not to think [tha]t a [*sic*] design yow for to be a drudge [and] tarpallion but a captain [and] master of such slaves.<sup>5</sup>

Later, in April 1700, he was still determined that his son should 'gain a solid reputation in England', which he could achieve by applying himself 'diligently' to the 'duties of your general calling of being a christian indeed: and of your particular calling and trade of being a

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<sup>5</sup> NRS, GD18/5213, Penicuik to Henry Clerk, 5 March 1698.

virtuous honest laborious man indeed'.<sup>6</sup> Penicuik's wish, in other words, was to establish his son as a prosperous professional in England.

There was a strong tradition of Scottish migration south of the border by the early eighteenth century, following on from the Stuart dynasty itself. Scots could be found throughout much of England, although the greatest concentrations were in the north-east around Newcastle and in London. Numbers are impossible to pin down, but in the main centre of Scottish settlement, London, rough estimates suggest there might have been around 35,000 resident Scots in 1700, growing to more like 60,000 fifty years later – meaning that London boasted the second biggest urban population of Scots in the British Isles, after Edinburgh.<sup>7</sup> Some of these individuals, who embraced all ranks in society but were predominantly male, proved astonishingly successful at achieving advancement in English society. Indeed, just as Henry Clerk was trying to establish himself in 1698-1702, several other high-profile Scots were making their mark on London society. David Hamilton, for example, was a famed man-midwife and physician to both Queen Anne (1712) and Caroline, princess of Wales (1714). Throughout her reign, Anne was also served by another Scottish physician, John Arbuthnot. David Gregory, professor of astronomy at Oxford, was sufficiently renowned as a mathematician that he was appointed mathematics tutor to the second-in-line to the throne, William, duke of Gloucester, in 1699. David Mitchell, appointed vice-admiral of the white in 1701 and Lord High Admiral in 1702, spoke to the impact made

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<sup>6</sup> NRS, GD18/5218/23, Penicuik to Henry Clerk, Penicuik, 2 April 1700.

<sup>7</sup> E. A. Wrigley, 'A Simple Model of London's Importance in Changing English Society and Economy', *Past and Present*, 37, 1 (1967), pp. 45-63; J. Wareing, 'Migration to London and Transatlantic Emigration of Indentured Servants, 1683-1775', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 7, 4 (1981), pp. 356-78; J. White, *London in the Eighteenth Century: A Great and Monstrous Thing* (London, 2012), p. 90.

on London by Scottish military men. Scottish merchants were equally to the fore, with one of the most successful being Alexander Man, whose possession of the first royal warrant to supply coffee in the 1670s helped him become a fabulously wealthy coffee-house owner by the time of his death in 1714.<sup>8</sup> Besides these prominent individuals there was an array of more anonymous figures working in commercial, professional and artisanal trades of myriad kinds.<sup>9</sup>

From a theoretical perspective, economic successes like these are expected, ultimately, to lead to assimilation – that is, the severing of meaningful links with the home country in favour of complete identification with the host country.<sup>10</sup> For some Scots, such as the famously assimilation-hungry poet David Mallet, who changed his surname from the original, more unambiguously Scottish ‘Malloch’ to ease his integration, this certainly

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<sup>8</sup> E. Baigent, ‘Hamilton, Sir David (1663–1721)’, *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/12058>, accessed 10 Oct 2016; A. Guerrini, ‘Gregory, David (1659–1708)’, *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11456>, accessed 10 Oct 2016; J. B. Hattendorf, ‘Mitchell, Sir David (c.1650–1710)’, *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18836>, accessed 10 Oct 2016; A. Ross, ‘Arbuthnot [Arbuthnott], John (bap.1667, d.1735)’, *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-610>, accessed 2 May 2018]; B. Lillywhite, *London Coffee Houses: A Reference Book of Coffee Houses of the Seventeenth, Eighteenth, and Nineteenth Centuries* (London, 1963), pp. 351-7.

<sup>9</sup> The fullest treatment of the Scottish community in London in S. Nenadic (ed), *Scots in London in the Eighteenth Century* (Lewisburg, 2010).

<sup>10</sup> For a recent discussion of assimilation theory as it applies to Scottish migrants, albeit for a later period, see T. Bueltmann, A. Hinson and G. Morton, *The Scottish Diaspora* (Edinburgh, 2013).

happened.<sup>11</sup> Yet there were plenty of examples of Scottish migrants who did not assimilate, and who in some cases, like Clerk's, abandoned altogether the attempt to build a life in England. The flow of Scottish aristocrats southwards on the coat-tails of James VI as he took up the thrones of England and Ireland in 1603 was substantially reversed within a few years, as many courtiers, lacking the funds to support a London lifestyle, returned home.<sup>12</sup> Successful merchants and professionals often retained links to Scotland, commonly in the form of landholdings, that necessarily complicated their efforts to blend in, while others, like the famed man-midwife William Smellie, who capped a twenty-year career in London by retiring to Lanark in 1759, nursed a longing to return home.<sup>13</sup> And there was an unquantifiable but probably substantial grouping of poor, exiled, vagrant or criminal Scots whose experiences in England, marked by marginality and persecution, positively inhibited assimilation.<sup>14</sup> Even for highly Anglicised Scots, assimilation might not be entirely seamless; the fact that Dr John Monro (1715-92), attending physician at Bethlam Asylum, was still widely known as a 'Scotch' physician, despite being a third-generation migrant whose family

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<sup>11</sup> S. Jung, *David Mallet, Anglo-Scot: Poetry, Patronage and Politics in the Age of Union* (Newark, 2008).

<sup>12</sup> K. M. Brown, 'Aristocracy, Anglicization and the Court, 1603-38', *Historical Journal*, 36 (1993), pp. 534-76; K. M. Brown, 'The Origins of a British Aristocracy: Integration and its Limitations before the Treaty of Union', in S. G. Ellis and S. Barber (eds), *Conquest and Union: Fashioning a British State 1485-1725* (London, 1995), pp. 222-49.

<sup>13</sup> D. Hancock, *Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community, 1735-1785* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 48-59; A. Wilson, *The Making of Man-Midwifery: Childbirth in England, 1660-1770* (London, 1995), pp. 123-31.

<sup>14</sup> Brown *et al*, "Scots and Scabs".

had not lived in Scotland since 1690, testifies to the persistent sense of ‘otherness’ that could cling to even the most assimilated of migrants.<sup>15</sup>

These examples should be read alongside a substantial theoretical literature on the failure of migration experiences. The observable persistence of non-integrated identities among some contemporary immigrant groups, especially in the United States, has underpinned much of this analysis. ‘Ethnic disadvantage’ offers one model, suggesting that continuing barriers, most usually native prejudice, can retard migrant assimilation. More subtly, ‘segmented assimilation’ theory suggests that discrete groups within a migrant community can experience differing degrees of resistance due to variations in structural factors like access to education, leading, over the course of generations, to the division of these communities into distinct blocks marked by differing degrees of assimilation.<sup>16</sup> Whether failure to assimilate necessarily constitutes a failed migration experience, especially when accompanied by economic success, is debatable. A much more unambiguous signal of ‘failure’, and certainly of failure to assimilate, is returning home, and theorists have attempted to unpack the phenomenon of return migration. Early frameworks tended to perceive three broad categories of experience, and this approach has proved broadly resilient. Firstly, some migrants intend to move permanently, but fail, and have to return home – a perspective generally known as ‘neoclassical economics’. Secondly, migrants might always

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<sup>15</sup> K. M. Brown and A. Kennedy, ‘Becoming English: The Monro Family and Scottish Assimilation in Early Modern England’, working paper; J. Andrews and A. Scull, *Undertaker of the Mind: John Monro and Mad-Doctoring in Eighteenth-Century England* (London, 2001).

<sup>16</sup> N. Glazer and D. P. Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City* (Cambridge, 1963); A. Portes and M. Zhou, ‘The New Second Generation: Segmented Assimilation and its Variants’, *Annals of the American Academy of Political Science*, 530 (1993), pp. 74-96



intend to return home after achieving some pre-set goal, usually in terms of self-betterment or capital-accumulation; this is the ‘new economics of labour migration’ approach. Thirdly, a ‘structuralist’ perspective interprets return migration as a cost/benefit analysis, with migrants returning home when they judge that their economic interests are better serviced in the place of origin. Further refinements have tended to retain these broad categories, while demonstrating an increasing awareness that returning home might not be the end of the story, since some migrants can maintain on-going dialogue and contact with their destination, perhaps even physically returning at various points.<sup>17</sup> More recently, the concept of ‘mobility capital’, which seeks to predict the likely success or failure of a group’s or individual’s migration experience with reference to their particular collection of ‘assets, competences, or dispositions’, has offered a more flexible means of conceptualising ‘failed’ migration which, as in the case of Henry Clerk, allows for the fact that migrants do not always behave with strict economic rationality.<sup>18</sup> Against this theoretical backdrop, the experiences of Henry Clerk offer an intensive micro-historical perspective that can shed qualitative light on the wider contours of Scottish assimilation in early modern England – a curiously under-explored aspect of the otherwise booming field of Scottish migration studies, certainly in the period before the Hanoverian succession in 1714.<sup>19</sup> But Clerk’s story can do more than merely fill an

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<sup>17</sup> F. P. Cerase, ‘Expectations and Reality: A Case Study of Return Migration from the United States to Southern Italy’, *International Migration Review*, 8, 2 (1974), pp. 245-262; G. Gmelch, ‘Return Migration’, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 9 (1980), pp. 135-159; J-P. Cassarino, ‘Theorising Return Migration: The Conceptual Approach to Return Migrants Revisited’, *International Journal of Multicultural Societies*, 6, 2 (2004), pp. 253-279

<sup>18</sup> J. Chatterji, ‘Disposition and Destinations: Refugee Agency and “Mobility Capital” in the Bengal Diaspora, 1947-2007’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 55, 2 (2013), pp. 273-304.

<sup>19</sup> S. Murdoch, ‘Scotland, Europe and the English ‘Missing Link’’, *History Compass*, 5, 3 (2007), 890-913. The mid- to late-eighteenth century is better served, particularly by Nenadic, *Scots in London*.

historiographical gap. In assessing the reasons for his failure in an enterprise at which many contemporary countrymen, often of similar means and backgrounds, succeeded, we can gain fresh insights into the opportunities for, and process of, assimilation. Perhaps more significantly, we can shed some light on the dynamics, and limitations, of Anglo-Scottish convergence and integration in the era of union.

One straightforward factor in Henry Clerk's failure in England is that he was placed on an unsuitable professional path. His father, casting around for ideas about what to do with a son who he later claimed suffered from a woeful lack of direction, had decided that he should learn marine navigation, with the intention of training him up as an international merchant specialising in East Indian trade.<sup>20</sup> Consequently, Henry was on 20 April 1698 bound apprentice, for a fee of £45, to the master mariner Andrew Seile of 'Redrise' in Surrey, a man recommended by one Mr Colson, a contact in London of Henry's uncle, William Clerk.<sup>21</sup> Clerk was initially enthusiastic about his new calling, reporting in May that Seile was a kind and discreet master, and throwing himself wholeheartedly into his maiden voyage to Smyrna in 1698-9. Soon, however, there were indications that Henry was dissatisfied with his paternally-selected career path. He itched to spread his wings, asking his father in August 1699 whether he might use the off-season to attend 'writing School', teaching himself merchant accounting, and expressing an interest in studying French or Italian. William Clerk, during one of his periodic reappearances in London, was sufficiently concerned about his nephew's wandering attention to advise in September 1699 that Penicuik write a stiffly-worded letter instructing Henry to remain focused on navigation so that he might learn practical skills, such as rigging and stowing. Ultimately, Henry grew contemptuous of the

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<sup>20</sup> NRS, GD18/5218/1, Penicuik to William Clerk, Edinburgh, 5 March 1698.

<sup>21</sup> NRS, GD18/2308, Indenture of Henry Clerk, 20 April 1698.

navigation trade. Any London gentleman, he insisted in June 1700, would ‘before he should send his son to sea ... rather send him to Virginia a slave’. Although he had initially regarded it as ‘the finest trade in the world’, Henry had seen ‘all the basness that is committed in it which makes me abhoare it and repent that ever I should have knowen so much of it as I doe’.<sup>22</sup> He spent much of the year desperately trying to persuade his father to let him leave the trade, but an implacable Penicuik forced him to remain and submit, with sullen bad grace, to a lengthy second voyage, this time to India in 1700-2.<sup>23</sup> Yet not even paternal displeasure was enough to stop Clerk from abandoning the trade upon his return from India and moving back to Scotland.<sup>24</sup> Thus, a basic reason for the failure of Clerk’s life in London was that, from the start, he was locked into a career that he did not like and soon wished to escape. This is a reminder that, in seeking to understand what is in essence an assemblage of individual stories, scholars of migration need to be alert to profoundly personal factors as much as to grander meta-narratives.

Clerk’s dissatisfaction with his career was strengthened by a number of unhappy personal experiences. He claimed to have been involved in several quarrels, and perhaps even physical fights, during his early months in London.<sup>25</sup> While he generally seems to have enjoyed his first voyage, it contained its share of hair-raising moments, including an encounter with two hostile men-of-war off the coast of Spain, an uncomfortable run-in with the ‘uncivell’ people of Messina who were ‘ready to cut our throats for our purses’, and an unpleasant stay in a plague-ravaged Scanderoun (modern Iskenderun), where he was ‘forcd to stop my nose uith my napkin to keep away the stink’. He was angered that, having made

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<sup>22</sup> NRS, GD18/5218/30, Henry Clerk to Penicuik, London, 3 June 1700.

<sup>23</sup> NRS, GD18/5218/44, Henry Clerk to Penicuik, London, 24 October 1700.

<sup>24</sup> NRS, GD18/5218/56, Henry Clerk to Penicuik, London, 19 November 1702.

<sup>25</sup> NRS, GD18/5229, Henry Clerk to John Clerk, younger of Penicuik, 5 February 1700.

some small investments in the ship's cargo (mainly consisting of cloth), he was unable to make a profit or even recoup his outlay.<sup>26</sup> Back in London, Clerk's professional life was marred by the intrigues of his master's trouble-making wife, who, it was reported, grew tired of his company and tried to drive him away by constantly sowing discord between him and Seile.<sup>27</sup> As we will see shortly, the preparations for his trip to India were highly disagreeable, while the journey itself, during which he was troubled with dropsy and repeated bouts of 'ague', was little better. Clerk's personal circumstances grew even more worrisome upon his return to England in 1702, since he was almost immediately accosted by a press-gang and drafted into naval service aboard HMS *Royal Oak*, then bound for Spain to assist in the allied attempt to capture Cadiz, an early action in the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1713). The failure of the Cadiz expedition in September appears to have nullified Clerk's impressment, but he was concerned that remaining in England would invite a repeat experience. In the meantime, the grounding of England's commercial fleet as a result of the war made it impossible for him to continue his navigational training without a long delay. This became Clerk's immediate excuse for returning home in the autumn of 1702 – a reminder of the potential impact of big geopolitical developments on highly personal migration stories.<sup>28</sup> The catalogue of unhappy experiences Clerk endured over a short space of time surely makes his diminished enthusiasm for a life in England understandable.

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<sup>26</sup> NRS, GD18/5218/12, Henry Clerk to Penicuik, 26 August 1699; GD18/5218/15, Henry Clerk to Penicuik, London, 25 September 1699.

<sup>27</sup> NRS, GD18/5218/25, James Harris to Penicuik, Little Tower, 14 May 1700.

<sup>28</sup> NRS, GD18/5218/52, Henry Clerk to Penicuik, London, 25 September 1702; GD18/5218/54, Duncan Forbes to Penicuik, Edinburgh, 10 October 1702; GD18/5218/56, Henry Clerk to Penicuik, London, 19 November 1702.

Underlining the personal aspect of Clerk's story, his initial admiration for his master, Andrew Seile, was soon called into question. After returning from Smyrna, Clerk mentioned to his father in March 1700 that he had been forced to outlay twenty to thirty shillings 'by reason of going errands by water', for which 'some tymes my master gives me money but very seldom'.<sup>29</sup> Penicuik was understandably unhappy about this, explaining to his son that he had a right to expect reimbursement.<sup>30</sup> More unsavoury intelligence came from the linen-draper James Harris, with whom Clerk seems to have maintained London lodgings and who wrote to Penicuik in May 1700 to bemoan Clerk's situation. Having quarrelled with the owners of his ship, the *Cezar*, and thereby lost his commission, Seile was, according to Harris, unlikely to gain another command for the foreseeable future, meaning that his ability to teach Clerk much was limited. Harris confirmed Seile's habit of making Clerk meet business expenses without repayment, while adding that Seile asked him to provide false testimony in a number of legal cases. Furthermore, Harris offered damning judgement on the personal habits of both Seile and his wife:

[Seile is] a Great Swerer and Sure I ame that is but a very badd example for any man to be in their Company but More especially when Youth is under their tuition, as such that is so Addicted and as for the Captains wife I ame told that she iss a very Prowd woman and high spirited and seeks to pick Quarrells.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> NRS, GD18/5218/20, Henry Clerk to Penicuik, London, 7 March 1700.

<sup>30</sup> NRS, GD18/5218/23, Penicuik to Henry Clerk, Penicuik, 2 April 1700.

<sup>31</sup> NRS, GD18/5218/25, James Harris to Penicuik, Little Tower, 14 May 1700.

By the summer of that year, Clerk shared this view of Seile, whom he lambasted as a rogue and a villain, prone to dishonesty, sloth, drunkenness and theft.<sup>32</sup> Although Clerk's hostility cooled, Seile remained unable to secure him further employment. The fact that the success or failure of Clerk's attempts to succeed in London was dependent on the tutelage of an unsatisfactory master was no doubt a painful misfortune, underlining the extent to which his failure, just like the experiences of all other migrants, can be explained in part by his unique individual circumstances.

Nonetheless, Clerk's inability to build a satisfactory life in London offers more general insights. One is the role of co-national networking. Scottish emigrants were known throughout early modern Europe for their clannishness.<sup>33</sup> Despite his uncle's early advice that success could best be achieved by keeping his distance from other London-Scots, the names of some of Clerk's known acquaintances, such as James Galloway (minister to a dissenting congregation in Horsleydown), David Middleton (a merchant) and a 'Mr Straiton' – these latter two being among three 'noble bruits' with whom Clerk caroused immediately before his embarkation for India in late 1700 – suggest that he socialised with his fellow countrymen.<sup>34</sup> In his business affairs, too, Clerk seems to have preferred interacting with other Scots, since the merchants from whom he most commonly bought his day-to-day necessities (always on credit) included Scotsmen James Foulis and Thomas Coutts (both merchants connected to the Royal Scottish Corporation), along with several others about whom nothing is known but whose names, John Pitcairn, Michael Kincaid, William Troup

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<sup>32</sup> NRS, GD18/5218/30, Henry Clerk to Penicuik, London, 3 June 1700.

<sup>33</sup> S. Murdoch, *Network North: Scottish Kin, Commercial and Covert Associations in Northern Europe 1603-1746* (Leiden, 2006).

<sup>34</sup> NRS, GD18/5218/4, William Clerk to Penicuik, London, 26 March 1698; NRS, GD18/5218/47, Henry Clerk to Penicuik younger, aboard the Stratham at Gravesend, 5 November 1700.

and William Bowden, suggest Scottish ancestry.<sup>35</sup> The role of social networks like these in facilitating assimilation has been the subject of significant theoretical enquiry, and, in the context of early modern migration, is cited as a vital mechanism by which incomers could access pre-existing support and patronage networks.<sup>36</sup> Clerk had opportunities to use his Scottish networks to establish himself and make a home in London like many other Scots he encountered. It was, for example, principally via his elder brother, John, that Clerk was able to secure the attention of Wriothesley Russell, marquess of Tavistock (the future 2<sup>nd</sup> duke of Bedford), whom John Clerk had got to know while visiting Rome in 1697 and who secured Henry a commission on one of his East India Company vessels, probably a rare opportunity for a Scot at this time, and thereby facilitated Clerk's long sojourn to India in 1700-2.<sup>37</sup> Networking was again to the fore in the autumn of 1702, when Clerk, back in London, found himself pressed into naval service. Penicuik advised that he could improve his condition by making 'application' to 'your freinds and relations' serendipitously in London 'to concert the designd union between In gland and Scotland'. This group included Clerk's brother, but also John Dalrymple, 2<sup>nd</sup> viscount of Stair and Archibald Primrose, 1<sup>st</sup> earl of Rosebery. These people, Penicuik was sure, could help secure Clerk an officer's commission so that he could serve his tour much more social advantageously as a midshipman, rather than a common

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<sup>35</sup> NRS, GD18/2201.

<sup>36</sup> B. A. Prescosolido, 'The Sociology of Social Networks' in C.D. Byant and D.L. Peck (eds), *21<sup>st</sup> Century Sociology: A Reference Handbook* (London, 2007), pp. 208-217; Murdoch, *Network North*.

<sup>37</sup> NRS, GD18/5218/36, James Galloway to Penicuik, London, 28 July 1700; GD18/5218/40, Henry Clerk to Penicuik, London, 4 September 1700; Clerk, *Memoirs*, p. 28. Seile was also useful to Henry in gaining Tavistock's attention, since he was acquainted with the captain of one of Tavistock's ships, GD18/5218/38, Henry Clerk to Penicuik, London, 2 August 1700. On Scottish challenges in the East India Company, see A. Mackillop, 'A Union for Empire? Scotland, the English East India Company and the British Union', *Scottish Historical Review*, 87, 2 (supplement) (2008), pp. 116-34.

seaman. Ultimately, Clerk did not go to sea at this point, returning home instead, but Penicuik's instinct to seek the patronage of other London-Scots reflects the role co-national networking might have played in ensuring Clerk's successful assimilation.<sup>38</sup>

However, theorists have noted that strong co-national networks can sometimes work to retard assimilation through a form of cultural ghettoisation, artificially restricting migrants to their own community and reducing their access to wider social opportunity. This effect is likely to be most severe in migrant communities with high levels of 'institutional completeness', that is, with a well-developed infrastructure of culturally specific institutions like schools, clubs, societies, newspapers, churches and so on.<sup>39</sup> Despite a few associational bodies, for example the Scots brotherhoods in Poland-Lithuania, Scottish migrants in early modern Europe did not tend to build societies-within-societies of this type, and the emigre community in London was no different.<sup>40</sup> Aside from the charitable Scots Corporation, formally founded in 1665, although in existence much earlier, and dedicated to helping poverty-stricken Scots in the capital, there were no formal Scottish associational organisations prior to the late eighteenth century, and no other institutions like Scottish schools, newspapers or cultural clubs.<sup>41</sup> One of the few other potential foci of Scottish identity in early modern London was the Scots Church, but the congregation was based at

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<sup>38</sup> NRS, GD18/5218/55, Penicuik to Henry Clerk, Penicuik, 12 October 1702.

<sup>39</sup> R. Breton, 'Institutional Completeness of Ethnic Communities and the Personal Relations of Immigrants', *American Journal of Sociology*, 7, 2 (1964), pp. 193-205.

<sup>40</sup> W. Kowalski, 'Scoti, Cives Cracovienses: Their Ethnic and Social Identity, 1570-1660' in D. Worthington (ed), *British and Irish Emigrants and Exiles in Europe, 1603-1688* (Leiden, 2010), pp. 67-85, at pp. 72-4.

<sup>41</sup> J. Taylor, *A Cup of Kindness: The History of the Royal Scottish Corporation, a London Charity, 1603-2003* (East Linton, 2003).



Founder's Hall, not in Clerk's locale of Surrey.<sup>42</sup> Clerk reported that the nearest surrogates – English Presbyterian congregations – were wary of newcomers. That may simply have been an excuse offered to his pious father to cover poor attendance, although it was to some extent corroborated by James Galloway (whom Clerk claimed 'to go [to] and hear' whenever possible), who noted that most congregations refused to admit new communicants as young as Clerk. In any case, Clerk's landlady allegedly insisted on bringing him along to Anglican Church services.<sup>43</sup> The lax, unorthodox nature of Clerk's spiritual observance in London appears to have worried his father, but it also had the effect of insulating him from the potentially association-building influence of religion.

It is, therefore, not plausible to argue that the Scottish community around Clerk was so cohesive as to inhibit assimilation. Nevertheless, as we have seen, Clerk's social circle was sufficiently Scottish as to rule out the alternative explanation, derived from 'segmented assimilation' theory, suggesting that the absolute absence of ethnic networks blocks assimilation by denying new migrants a vital bridge between their old and new worlds.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, co-national networks can function as a direct link to the homeland, potentially helping to draw migrants physically homewards.<sup>45</sup> Ultimately, this is what happened to Henry Clerk. After he returned to London from India in 1702, his key associates were Rosebery and Stair, about whose influence on him he was explicit:

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<sup>42</sup> G. G. Cameron, *The Scots Kirk in London* (Oxford, 1979).

<sup>43</sup> NRS, GD18/5218/37, James Galloway to Penicuik, 2 August 1700; GD18/5218/38, Clerk to Penicuik, London, 2 August 1700.

<sup>44</sup> A. Portes and R. Rumbaut, *Immigrant America: A Portrait* (Oakley and London, 2014), pp. 282-86.

<sup>45</sup> T. Reynolds, 'Transnational Family Relationships, Social Networks and Return Migration among British-Caribbean Young People', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 35, 2 (2010), pp. 797-815.

I have been with My Lord Rosberrie and Mr Lord Staire and the[y] think it most convenient that I should go home to Scotland for which reasone I am just a coming home in the packet boat uith the first occasione.<sup>46</sup>

Rosebery and Stair were prominent members of the Scottish community in London who were serving as commissioners in the Anglo-Scottish union talks. Why they advised Clerk to abandon the capital, given their own success there, is unclear, although it may have been related to the deteriorating relationship between England and Scotland around this time (discussed further below), something about which both men would have been cognizant. Whatever the reason, Clerk thought that his decision to return to Scotland was rooted in their advice, suggesting that his maintenance of Scottish connections may have hastened the end of his migration experiment.

If Clerk's curation of Scottish networks eventually undermined his chances of assimilation rather than advancing them, he was equally unable to capitalise on his capacity for forging English acquaintances. His first London landlord in 1698 was an Englishman, a Mr Colson, whose establishment presented opportunities for Clerk to 'Convers [with] Severall young gentliman son that are studing Navigation'. Unfortunately, Clerk soon moved out to Seile's house in Surrey, making his opportunity for holding such conversations fleeting.<sup>47</sup> Clerk was sufficiently friendly with a later landlord, James Harris, that the latter felt able to write an unsolicited letter to Clerk's father at Penicuik in May 1700, while his navigation master, Seile, was English, and so too, in all probability, was the other, unnamed

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<sup>46</sup> NRS, GD18/5218/56, Henry Clerk to Penicuik, London, 19 November 1702.

<sup>47</sup> NRS, GD18/5218/4, William Clerk to Penicuik, London, 26 March 1698.

apprentice who worked alongside Clerk.<sup>48</sup> He also developed a relationship with a local boatswain to whom he paid a regular retainer so as he could learn navigational skills like rope-splicing and block-sizing.<sup>49</sup> There was probably a social aspect to some of these relationships. Certainly the desire, expressed in a letter to his father, to spend money in order to impress English observers (see below) implies some degree of social interaction, and such socialising may have continued, since the third of the ‘noble bruits’ with whom Clerk marked his imminent departure for India late 1700, one Mr Tanton, bore an English surname.<sup>50</sup> Establishing primary-group relationships has long been recognised as one of the foundational steps on the path towards migrant assimilation, opening up vital avenues for further and deeper penetration.<sup>51</sup> Clerk’s example serves as a reminder that achieving this end was no guarantee of further assimilation.

Furthermore, Clerk’s experience highlights the challenges involved in the interplay of personal and family motives. Pre-modern migration strategies were often based around the family rather than the individual, the intention being that the establishment of a family-member elsewhere offered a means of enhancing the family income. This was particularly true in landed families anxious to prop up their estates or, in much of Europe, to avoid the dangers of partible inheritance.<sup>52</sup> Familial strategies of this kind were common for Scottish

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<sup>48</sup> NRS, GD18/5218/25, James Harris to Penicuik, Little Tower, 14 May 1700; NRS, GD18/5218/20, Henry Clerk to Penicuik, London, 7 March 1700.

<sup>49</sup> NRS, GD18/5229, Henry Clerk to John Clerk, younger of Penicuik, 5 February 1700.

<sup>50</sup> NRS, GD18/5218/47, Henry Clerk to Penicuik younger, aboard the Stratham at Gravesend, 5 November 1700.

<sup>51</sup> It is, for example, step two in Milton Gordon’s seven-stage theory. M. M. Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins* (Oxford, 1964), pp. 70-1.

<sup>52</sup> L. P. Moch, *Moving Europeans: Migration in Western Europe since 1650* (Bloomington, 2003), p. 14 and at p. 37.

migrants, so that younger sons would often have their destinations determined by the needs of the wider kindred, and subsequently could function as overseas agents or investors.<sup>53</sup> This was the case with the Henry's family. Penicuik was a careful and frugal manager of his family's resources, and it was a hallmark of his leadership that his sons were trained for respectable and potentially lucrative professions. His first son, John, became an advocate, as did his third, William, and his fifth, Robert, while his sixth son, Hugh, grew up to be a merchant.<sup>54</sup> Henry's settlement in London-based trade fitted within this approach, while serving to broaden out the family's reach beyond the environs of Edinburgh, but it was marked by an ultimately irreconcilable disconnect between personal desire and familial strategy. This was laid bare in the summer of 1700 when Henry told his father that he found his trade increasingly intolerable, wishing to give it up, return to Scotland and select some other occupation.<sup>55</sup> Penicuik responded forcefully, sending two lengthy letters that provided an itemised list of twelve distinct reasons for Henry to continue. The longest of these, revealingly, touched on familial strategy:

There is nothing then left to you for a portion, or to any of my younger children; but what I can scrape together out of the rents of my estate ... However I reckon (if the Lord will) that I may not only be able to give you five hundred pound sterline of

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<sup>53</sup> The dynamics of such family strategies have recently been reconstructed in detail for one minor landed family from south-western Scotland. E. Rothschild, *The Inner Life of Empires: An Eighteenth-Century History* (Princeton, 2011).

<sup>54</sup> Clerk, *Memoirs*, 114, 139 and at 222. Of the remaining sons, the two youngest – David and Alexander – were still minors when Penicuik died in 1722, while the career of his fourth son, James, is unknown.

<sup>55</sup> NRS, GD18/5218/30, Henry Clerk to Penicuik, London, 3 June 1700.

portion: but likewise I may be in many small things usefull for you, if the Lord spare and bless me in my undertakings, providing you behave yourseff sutably.<sup>56</sup>

Given the sheer size of his family which, as well as his eight sons, included seven daughters, six of whom married and therefore required dowries, Penicuik's concerns were understandable. Clerk, however, entertained nagging doubts that 'my father had sent me abroad to make a sacrifice of me', and that Penicuik's whole-family approach merely boiled down to a design to 'gather ane estate to the eldest child and so send the rest up and doune the world as vagabounds to the merceyes of the 4 Elements'.<sup>57</sup> Ultimately he concluded that these fears were baseless, but a more pertinent objection was that he did not see why Penicuik's strategising should necessitate his own misery. Navigation, he claimed, was 'abominable and hatfull and beastly', and he asked plaintively 'most I follow a thing that is alltogether against my inclinationes most I ruine my body [and] soule to follow a thing which is as hattfull as poison to me'.<sup>58</sup> Only filial loyalty (and self-interest) persuaded him to submit to his father's wishes long enough to embark for India in 1700, but by the time he returned even that was not enough to stop him returning home – thereby breaching an unspoken covenant to serve the family interests and consequently initiating a rift with his father that would last for years. This estrangement was rooted in a fundamental conceptual misalignment; Henry viewed his migration experience largely in personal terms, whereas for Penicuik it was part of a wider strategy of family settlement. Failing to appreciate one

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<sup>56</sup> NRS, GD18/5218/32, Penicuik to Henry Clerk, Penicuik, 5 July 1700.

<sup>57</sup> NRS, GD18/5218/39, Henry Clerk to Penicuik, London, 2 August 1700.

<sup>58</sup> NRS, GD18/5218/29, Henry Clerk to William Clerk, London, June 1700; GD18/5218/57, Penicuik to Henry Clerk, with answers, Penicuik, 2 July 1703.

another's viewpoint, they were unable to bridge the gap, and save Henry's London life, when their interests diverged.

A more tangible factor in the failure of Clerk's London adventure, and the issue upon which he dwelt the most fully in his letters, was money. London was expensive, with the cost of living being appreciably higher than in provincial England and with entrenched inflation making the situation particularly acute towards the end of the seventeenth century.<sup>59</sup> Crippling exchange rates around 1700, which, Clerk calculated, caused Scottish currency to lose around fifteen per cent of its value when exchanged for Sterling, did not help matters for Scottish incomers.<sup>60</sup> London, indeed, had a track-record of repelling even the wealthiest of Scottish migrants, and Clerk, not being part of this affluent elite, found the financial burden of life in the capital a constant headache.<sup>61</sup> Upon leaving for good in November 1702, he claimed to have spent £30 in three months 'when my state I feare is not worth 30 in the whole year' and observed that 'here I can not live without spent of my crowne a day that is gently for ther is nothing that I have but I must pay for my cloathes lodging bed and board and washing'.<sup>62</sup> He had put things a little more crudely in a letter to his brother in February 1700:

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<sup>59</sup> J. Boulton, 'Food Prices and the Standard of Living in London in the 'Century of Revolution', 1580-1700', *Economic History Review*, 53, 3 (2000), pp. 455-92.

<sup>60</sup> NRS, GD18/5218/12, Henry Clerk to Penicuik, London, 26 August 1699.

<sup>61</sup> K. M. Brown, *Noble Society in Scotland: Wealth, Family and Culture from Reformation to Revolution* (Edinburgh 2004), pp. 87-9.

<sup>62</sup> NRS, GD18/5218/56, Henry Clerk to Penicuik, London, 19 November 1702. The 'state' referred to here was the yield on Clerk's disputed inheritance from his grandmother, on which see below. Given that Clerk's brother outlaid £43, of which £21 went on accommodation and incidental expenses alone, during a six-week stay in London in 1706, Henry's assessment of his needs was likely not unrealistic), NRS, GD18/2211, John Clerk, 'Jurnall of my expences on my London expedition as a commissioner for the treaty of Union in anno 1706'.

Yow may winder how I can spend so much money but since yow ar a traveller yow may well enough understand how it goes for abroad here yoe can hardly piss uthout paying of money for it.<sup>63</sup>

Clerk was convinced that ostentatious wealth, advertised through lavish socialising and generosity, was vital for being accepted in London society – as he explained, ‘a great maney of the English do think of us poor Scots as they call us frequently and the more money they see I have the more trust uill they give me’.<sup>64</sup> At the same time the bright lights of the metropolis proved hard to resist; as he confessed to his brother, ‘when I go up to the city I am now and then curious to see such and such things quhich can not be done uthout mone’. He hinted at London’s capacity to sate seedier appetites by noting that ‘it is well said *Alea, Bachus, amor mulierum, reddit egenum Nunquam qui sequchir hec tria dives erit* [roughly ‘dice, wine and the love of whores makes one poor; none who follows these three shall become rich’].<sup>65</sup> Keeping up with these various pressures was financially exhausting. He had been provided with around £10 in cash upon leaving for London in March 1698, but his wages from Seile were sufficiently meagre that he had to receive top-ups of around £10 in

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<sup>63</sup> NRS, GD18/5229, Henry Clerk to John Clerk, younger of Penicuik, 5 February 1700.

<sup>64</sup> NRS, GD18/5218/20, Henry Clerk to Penicuik, London, 7 March 1700.

<sup>65</sup> NRS, GD18/5229, Henry Clerk to John Clerk, younger of Penicuik, 5 February 1700. The seedier side of London’s allure was widely enough recognised to become something of a trope in popular culture – witness, for example, one bawdy ballad published in 1682, which narrated the travails of a Scotsman called ‘Sawny’ who comes to London and finds himself exploited by a worldly ‘London Quean’ who pretends to love him so as to drain him of all his money. Anon., *Jennies Answer to Sawny. Wherein Loves Cruelty is Requited, Or, The Inconstant Lover Justly Despised* (London, 1682).

February 1700 and about £5 five months later. On top of this, Clerk regularly purchased goods from London merchants on his father's credit, forcing Penicuik to settle bills totalling at least £95 in 1698, £60 in 1700 and £17 in 1702.<sup>66</sup> And still Clerk pleaded poverty, repeatedly begging his father to send more money, to such an extent that Penicuik rebuked him in April 1700 for only ever writing when he was in need of additional funds.<sup>67</sup> Clerk even enlisted third parties to help press his case; fellow Scot, John Galloway, wrote to Penicuik in May 1700 observing that Clerk's meagre financial resources placed him under 'great discouragements' and hoping Penicuik would 'be pleased to give greater encouragement to your son here' since 'at present his equipage is so ordinary that he appears no more than a common seaman; than which nothing can more obstruct his advancement here'.<sup>68</sup>

Clerk's financial distress forced him to partake in a humiliating farce prior to his departure for India in 1700. Having travelled to port at Gravesend, he realised that additional preparations had to be made, and so spent the last of his money returning to London. There, however, he discovered that his father's history of scrupling over bill payments had led every one of his usual London creditors to withdraw their support. Instead he had to cobble together money borrowed from his landlord, an unnamed shoemaker, and an acquaintance named Mr Langley.<sup>69</sup> The whole affair threw him into a deep depression:

I would desire it of yow to pray to god that he may not leave me to my selfe in this condition which is miserable and can hardly be born uith ... seeing how all things go

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<sup>66</sup> NRS, GD18/2201, Accounts etc of Henry Clerk, 1696-1706.

<sup>67</sup> NRS, GD18/5218/23, Penicuik to Henry Clerk, Penicuik, 2 April 1700.

<sup>68</sup> NRS, GD18/5218/27, John Galloway to Penicuik, London, 28 May 1700.

<sup>69</sup> NRS, GD18/5218/47, Henry Clerk to Penicuik younger, aboard the Stratham at Gravesend, 5 November 1700.



against me I am resolved if it please God to dy rather then live for if I should live I am sure I should turne distracted.<sup>70</sup>

Things were no better when he returned in 1702, since he lacked the funds to carry himself from Gravesend back to London, being forced to write to his erstwhile landlady in an unsuccessful attempt to elicit some money. Ultimately he had to rely on the charity of a stranger, a Dutchman whom he met in Gravesend, to carry him back to the capital, provide him with clothes, and give him with somewhere to lodge.<sup>71</sup> This pattern of feeling too financially overstretched to remain in England was hardly unusual for Scottish migrants (even wealthy peers like James Hamilton, 3<sup>rd</sup> marquis of Hamilton, who declined an invitation to attend court in 1628 on the grounds that it would be too expensive, were not immune from this pressure), and it is therefore not especially surprising that Clerk found it impossible to fund a London lifestyle.<sup>72</sup>

If Henry Clerk's efforts at establishing a life in London came up against a range of practical difficulties, they were also hampered by issues of identity. The eighteenth century was the crucible of 'British' identity, even if its exact nature remains uncertain – the most extensive examination, characterising it as a shared project of global leadership and informed by the four pillars of commerce, Protestantism, Francophobia and empire, remains

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<sup>70</sup> NRS, GD18/5218/46, Henry Clerk to Penicuik, aboard the Stratham at Gravesend, 5 November 1700.

<sup>71</sup> NRS, GD18/5218/56, Henry Clerk to Penicuik, London, 19 November 1702.

<sup>72</sup> K. M. Brown, *Noble Society in Scotland: Wealth, Family and Culture from Reformation to Revolution* (Edinburgh, 2004), pp. 87–9

controversial.<sup>73</sup> To this could be added a long history of grappling with the idea of Britain in Scottish political thought that stretched back to the sixteenth century, providing an intellectual framework that allowed some migrants to trade their Scottishness for this new, more synthetic identity.<sup>74</sup> All this is highly conceptual and is unlikely to have wielded much practical influence on a young man like Henry Clerk, and in any case there is little to suggest that a meaningful sense of ‘Britishness’ existed at all, let alone among the Scottish diasporic community in England, as early as c.1700. But adopting a British identity was not the only route available to Scottish migrants. Some simply dropped their Scottishness altogether, transforming themselves into Englishmen. This was, presumably, the aim of Alexander Mylne, a native of Queensferry and a contemporary of Clerk’s, who applied for and received English naturalisation in 1700.<sup>75</sup> A different model was expounded much later by James Boswell, whose reflections on his own attempts to blend into London society in the 1770s emphasised the importance of acquiring a robust veneer of English manners and habits to counterbalance, but not eradicate, his innate Scottishness.<sup>76</sup> Such a pattern of ‘Anglo-

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<sup>73</sup> L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven and London, 2012). A Marxist-inspired challenge to Colley’s thesis, which argues from a Scottish perspective that her emphasis on religion and war with France should be downplayed in favour of even closer focus on empire, is N. Davidson, *The Origins of Scottish Nationhood* (London, 2000).

<sup>74</sup> R. A. Mason, ‘Debating Britain in Seventeenth-Century Scotland: Multiple Monarchy and Scottish Sovereignty’, *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, 35, 1 (2015), pp. 1-24; R. A. Mason, ‘Kingship, Nobility and Anglo-Scottish Union: John Mair’s *History of Greater Britain*’, *Innes Review*, 41 (1990), pp. 182-222.

<sup>75</sup> W. A. Shaw (ed), *Letters of Denization and Acts of Naturalization for Aliens in England 1603-1700*, 2 vols (Lymington, 1911-1923), i, p. 302

<sup>76</sup> J. J. Caudle, ‘James Boswell (*H. Scoticus Londoniensis*)’ in Nenadic, *Scots in London*, 109-38, at 110.

Scottishness', neither wholly English nor completely Scottish, was displayed by people like the weaver, James Kynneir, who lived in London from at least the 1660s until his death in 1681. Kynneir celebrated his Scottish birth through heavy involvement in and patronisation of the Royal Scottish Corporation, but he seems never to have returned home and, in his will, he kept almost all of his money and possessions in England.<sup>77</sup> Clerk, however, embraced neither Anglicisation nor 'Anglo-Scottishness', and he was arguably too early to take advantage of a 'British' identity.<sup>78</sup> Instead, he regarded himself very much as a Scot, and that led him to develop a distinct sense of otherness that ran through his brief time in London. An informal will written just before his voyage to India contained the revealing provision that 'if any thing of mortality should hapen to me ... all things belonging to me shall be sent home to Scotland as [I do not care] to leave any thing here to a parcell of stangers'.<sup>79</sup> This lack of identification with England was stoked by his continuing strong personal ties to Scotland. He retained in Scotland a cash inheritance from his grandmother, Elizabeth Drummond, of nearly £6,000 Scots, or about £500 Sterling. Penicuik disputed this legacy, however, claiming that the money had not been Drummond's to gift, but had previously been disposed to Penicuik himself. Father and son would continue to argue about this long after Clerk returned home, but while he was in London the spectre of his grandmother's legacy tended to drag Clerk's

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<sup>77</sup> The National Archives, Kew, Prerogative Court of Canterbury: Wills, Prob 11/375/329; Taylor, *Cup of Kindness*, pp. 33-5.

<sup>78</sup> Colley, *Britons*, pp. 120-2; Davidson, *Scottish Nationhood*, pp. 112-27; A. Murdoch, *British History 1660-1832: National Identity and Local Culture* (Basingstoke and London, 1998), pp. 70-1.

<sup>79</sup> NRS, GD18/5218/44, Henry Clerk to Penicuik, London, 24 October 1700.

attentions northwards.<sup>80</sup> More immediately, the bulk of his large family remained behind, and the constant stream of letters to and from his father, siblings and family friends like Duncan Forbes of Culloden testifies to his attachment to them. So, too, does his hunger for family gossip; one letter from 1700 contains substantial, breathless discussion of various family developments such as the birth of an illegitimate nephew, whose bearing of Henry's name he greeted with muted pleasure ('the compliment had been greater if it had been a honest and lawfull begoten on'), the death of 'Uncle Larnie', the poor health of 'Cusin Will', his elder brother's new friendship with 'yowng Pannygorick', and his father's struggle with gout.<sup>81</sup>

Clerk's sense of disconnect, of being fundamentally a foreigner, led him to develop a hyper-sensitivity to Scotophobic sentiment. Early modern England, while in some respects a reasonably open society in its absorption of incomers, was prone to outbreaks of xenophobia. Thus unflattering, popular stereotypes of Scots, tending to emphasise poverty, avariciousness, uncleanliness and uncouthness, were well-established.<sup>82</sup> The relative seriousness of English Scotophobia compared to other xenophobic variants is difficult to measure, although it does appear that, outside of political flash-points like the union debates of 1603-8, the Civil Wars,

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<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*; NRS, GD18/2201, Accounts etc of Henry Clerk, 1696-1706; GD18/5218/32, Penicuik to Henry Clerk, 5 July 1700; GD18/5229/59, John Clerk, younger of Penicuik, to Henry Clerk, Edinburgh, 19 October 1703. Ultimately Penicuik's view prevailed.

<sup>81</sup> NRS, GD18/5229, Henry Clerk to John Clerk, younger of Penicuik, 5 February 1700.

<sup>82</sup> S. Hindle: 'A Sense of Place? Becoming and Belonging in the Rural Parish, 1550-1650' in A. Shepard and P. Withington (eds), *Communities in Early Modern England: Networks, Place, Rhetoric* (Manchester, 2000), pp. 96-114; P. Clark, 'Migrants in the City: The Process of Social Adaptation in English Towns, 1500-1800' in P. Clark and D. Souden (eds), *Migration and Society in Early Modern England* (London, 1987), pp. 267-91

the Jacobite risings and the Bute ministry, active discrimination was muted.<sup>83</sup> But Clerk was operating precisely within one of these periods of heightened tension. The disastrous collapse of Scotland's attempt in the 1690s to found a colony on the Isthmus of Panama, blamed by many in Scotland on English interference, combined with diverging English and Scottish views on the royal succession and the pressures of the War of the Spanish Succession from 1701, ensured that Anglo-Scottish relations were unusually acrimonious during the opening years of the eighteenth century.<sup>84</sup> This poisonous atmosphere coloured Henry Clerk's experiences in London where he bristled at English stereotypes of Scottish poverty, and his father's calm response that 'the English think very justly of us quhen they call us poore Scots' can have done little to assuage his irritation.<sup>85</sup> He remained sensitive to English slights, complaining in 1700 about a Newcastle man, Mr Norton, who accused Clerk's brother of being ungrateful with the words 'that was like their Scots tricks', and confessing in 1702 that 'here in England I doe beleave there is no notice taken of any Scots mans

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<sup>83</sup> J. Wormald, 'Gunpowder, Treason and Scots', *Journal of British Studies*, 24, 2 (1985), pp. 141-68; P. Rogers, 'Johnson, Boswell, and Anti-Scottish Sentiment', in P. Rogers (ed), *Johnson and Boswell: the Transit of Caledonia* (Oxford, 1995), pp. 192-215; K. W. Schweizer, 'English Xenophobia in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century: The Case of Lord Bute', *Scottish Tradition*, 22 (1997), pp. 6-26; P. Langford, 'South Britons' Reception of North Britons, 1707-1820' in T. C. Smout (ed), *Anglo-Scottish Relations from 1603 to 1900* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 144-69; A. Rounce, "'Stuarts without End': Wilkes, Churchill and Anti-Scottishness', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 29, 3 (2005), pp. 20-43; G. Pentland, "'We Speak for the Ready': Images of Scots in Political Prints, 1701-1832", *Scottish Historical Review*, 90, 1 (2011), pp. 64-95.

<sup>84</sup> C. A. Whatley and D. J. Patrick, *The Scots and the Union* (Edinburgh, 2007), pp. 202-14.

<sup>85</sup> NRS, GD18/5218/23, Penicuik to Henry Clerk, Penicuik, 2 April 1700.

recommendation or any such thing'.<sup>86</sup> By his own confession, his instinctive response to this condescension was to play into another Scottish stereotype – excessive pride and querulousness – by ‘picking some plea or other’ and ‘always a fighting’, especially when his (as he saw it) genteel lineage was not properly acknowledged.<sup>87</sup> In the longer term, Clerk’s wounded national pride led him to develop a marked dislike of England and an enduring longing to return home, expressed most baldly in August 1700:

I wish I could but get bread and water to live upon at home in any part of Scotland I would be more contented then here with all there roasted meat and fine liquers for here I shall never settell ... In short I wish I had never seen England.<sup>88</sup>

Clerk responded to his move to London neither by Anglicising nor by embracing an embryonic Britishness. Instead, influenced by the contemporaneous worsening of Anglo-Scottish relations, he remained firm in his Scottish identity, and it ultimately proved impossible for him to reconcile this with the Scotophobic slights to which he felt himself perpetually subject.

There has been significant debate in recent years about the value of micro-historical methodologies in advancing historical understanding. Tightly-focused, detailed

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<sup>86</sup> NRS, GD18/5218/38, Henry Clerk to Penicuik, London, 2 August 1700; NRS, GD18/5218/56, Henry Clerk to Penicuik, London, 19 November 1702.

<sup>87</sup> GD18/5229, Henry Clerk to John Clerk, younger of Penicuik, 5 February 1700. Allegedly his father pricked Henry’s pride with the rather blunt observation ‘penycooks sone peny-farts sone is all one for none will respect yow the more for it’.

<sup>88</sup> NRS, GD18/5218/38, Henry Clerk to Penicuik, London, 2 August 1700.

reconstruction of the individual experiences of past actors can be accused of self-indulgence, ultimately adding little to general understanding. Conversely, proponents of micro-history suggest that it boasts unparalleled potential for yielding qualitative evidence, while holding out the possibility of providing revelatory details that would otherwise be lost.<sup>89</sup> In the context of this debate, what can micro-historical analysis of Henry Clerk's unsuccessful migration experience tell us about the broader context of Anglo-Scottish migration and integration in the early modern period?

Clerk's experience represents a clear example of the 'neoclassical economic' theory of migration failure. His move to London initially was not intended as a temporary expedient, as would be required under the 'new economics of labour migration' paradigm. Similarly, there is little to suggest, as per a 'structuralist' approach, that his return to Scotland was informed by any form of cost/benefit analysis. Instead, he expected to move to London and start a new life there as a marine navigator and, ultimately, merchant, and his return home represented the straightforward collapse of this design. Yet in tracing the wider significance of Clerk's 'neoclassical economic' experience, a degree of circumspection is needed since his failure was rooted partly in intensely personal factors. Prominent among these were dissatisfaction with marine navigation as a career path (perhaps inevitably in light of his brother's later comments about Henry's intellectual curiosity), his disintegrating relationship with the man chosen to teach it to him, and a catalogue of unpleasant events.

More pertinently, however, Clerk's decision to return to Scotland was influenced by a range of more structural factors. Money was the most fundamental, since the poverty to which Clerk was reduced, or, at least, to which he felt himself reduced, irrevocably soured his

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<sup>89</sup> J. Brewer, 'Microhistory and the Histories of Everyday Life', *Cultural and Social History*, 7, 1 (2010) pp. 87-109; F. de Vivo, 'Prospect or Refuge? Microhistory, History on the Large Scale', *Cultural and Social History*, 7, 3 (2010), pp. 387-97.

attitude towards London, stopping him playing a full part in the genteel society to which he unrealistically aspired. His social networks, heavily populated with fellow London-Scots, while reserving room for English contacts, look, on first sight, similar to the associational strategies often credited by historians with allowing Scottish migrants to achieve success throughout early modern Europe. Clerk's case provides a useful counter-point to this narrative, since for him networking was of limited benefit in assimilationist terms and, indeed, may have hastened his abandonment of London. Similarly, Clerk shows us that the fluidity of early modern identities, and migrants' ability to develop new models of self-description, whether, in this case, 'British', 'North-British' or even 'English', should not be over-stated. Clerk's resolute Scottishness led him, in the context of the poor contemporary relationship between England and Scotland, to develop a pronounced sense of alienation and victimhood that undermined his chances of successful assimilation. All of these issues were enhanced by the pressures of familial strategy. That Clerk moved to London as part of a family-wide plan was in itself not unusual, but his inability to reconcile this blueprint with his own personal desires is a reminder of the potentially fatal tension between individual and collective good.

What Clerk's case demonstrates is that macro-level modelling should not be allowed to obscure the infinite variation of individual experience. Here it might be useful to return to the theory of 'mobility capital'.<sup>90</sup> Many mobile Scots exploited high levels of 'mobility capital' – indeed, this was arguably a key factor in their diasporic success – and Clerk, on one level, was no different. He was literate, well-connected and at least moderately wealthy. He was part of an ethnic group with a long history of migration and assimilation, living in a host community accustomed to absorbing Scottish incomers. But none of this could overcome the simple fact that he hated the trade into which he had entered at the behest of his father.

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<sup>90</sup> Chatterji, 'Disposition and Destinations'.



Absent of this one crucial piece of ‘mobility capital’, that is, the right temperament and mind-set, even somebody with Clerk’s advantages was unlikely to integrate. The eighteenth century was a period of astonishing Scottish success in English, particularly London, society, as well as being the crucible of ‘British’ identity.<sup>91</sup> But these trends were only dimly observable in the era of union. The Scots, for all their advantages and England’s relative openness to them, were still immigrants, and as such some of them, like Henry Clerk, lacked the disposition to succeed.

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<sup>91</sup> White, *London in the Eighteenth Century*, pp. 94-9.