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## THE HONOURS OF SCOTLAND SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION



# THE HONOURS OF SCOTLAND – SOME SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

John G. Harrison

This short report is as a supplement to more comprehensive work by Caldwell on the stone, by Dean on the Honours themselves and by Mann on the use of the Honours and related items in the ritual of Scots parliaments, historical and modern.<sup>i</sup> Unlike those, this Report is not the outcome of an extended project, rather it records details, located incidentally in the course of other work, mainly from the unpublished Treasurers' Accounts of the 17th century. These highlight use of the Honours at knighting ceremonies. Some evidence for repairs and some about other artefacts, not usually considered amongst the Honours but used in the same rituals, is included. The ritual of the baptism of Prince Henry in 1594 also provides tangential hints.

One of the best-known descriptions of the Honours is Thomson's inventory used by Dean.<sup>ii</sup> Another listing, of 1543, relates to the re-organisation of the Wardrobe department after the death of James V and throws some additional light.<sup>iii</sup>

## Kingis croun & sceptor

Item imprimis deliverit by Johnne Tennent to Williame Baillie of Lammingtoun and Johnne Kirkcaldy at my Lord governors command and precept gevin be him thereupoun subscrivit with his hand the kingis grace croun set all with precius staines and orient perle togidder with ane sceptor set with an great beriall<sup>iv</sup> in the heid of it.<sup>v</sup>

## Swerdis of honour

... twa swerdis of honour with twa beltis ane of thame wantand four stuthis.

## Rob royall

... ane Rob royall of purpor vevot lynit with armying<sup>vi</sup> and ane kirtill of the samyn velvot lynit in the breistis with armying with any hude lynit all throughout with armyng.

## Papis hat<sup>vii</sup>

... ane hat of gray velvot with the halie gaist upoun it set all or with perle quhilk come fra the paip.

There then follow the various 'Orders' (of the Garter, Cockle, etc.), and then

## The quenis croun and sceptre

... The quenis grace croun hail set with perle and precius staines with an sceptor haffand ane quhite hand upoun the heid thereof.

Dean identifies the major occasions when the Honours (however defined) were used. A striking addition is their use at the baptism of Prince Henry in 1594, when much emphasis was (also) placed on the Pale (mentioned tentatively by Dean).<sup>viii</sup>

At the baptism of Prince Henry, whilst the escorting party was still in the palace, before the baptism proper began, it is said:

Then they removed themselves to the utter chalmer, where there was a fair high pale made fouresquare, of crimson velvet attending, which was laid on with rich pasments, and fringed with gold.

The Pale was carried by four barons (Buccleuch, Constable of Dundee, Kerr of Cessford and laird of Traquair) and under it were the various ambassadors, so clearly it was a sort of canopy, a *pallium*, as Dean suspected. At a later stage of the ceremony, in the chapel, however, the account says, 'The Barons that carried the Pale about the Prince moued towards the Pulpit'.<sup>ix</sup> It is not clear if this was a second pale or not.

At this event, the king's Honours (not detailed) were carried by lords.<sup>x</sup> But the Prince had his own 'Honours':

Next followed the prince's honours, borne by these noblemen; the Lord Sempill carrying a laver of water; the Lord Seton, a fair bason, the Lord Levingston a towel; and the Lord Home, a low crowne competent for a duke, richly set with diamonds, sapphires, rubies, and emeralds; who approaching near the pulpit, where these honours were received from them by the master of the ceremonies, and by him placed on the table before the pulpit; the noblemen retyring backe to their appointed places.<sup>xi</sup>

Dean discusses the design and symbolism of the Robe Royal at some length, emphasising the mystical significance and the mode of wearing. Three new records amplify the earlier material.

In August 1571, the five-year-old James VI formally attended the parliament in Stirling, a contemporary account noting that he wore his Robe Royal as well as the other regalia, albeit all were substitutes (perhaps even 'fakes', the 'real' items being in Edinburgh Castle, held by the queen's men).<sup>xii</sup> Such a proceeding emphasises the symbolic significance of the items.<sup>xiii</sup>

The baptism of Prince Henry also featured a Robe Royal for the prince. Fowler, who was closely involved in the planning and execution of the ceremonies, says that, within the palace, before the main ceremony began:

In like manner, the prince's robe royall, being of purple velvet, very richly set with pearle, was delivered to the duke of Lennox, who put the same about the prince, the train whereof, was born up by the Lord Sinclair, and the Lord Urquhart.<sup>xiv</sup>

This was, presumably, different from the massive, ermine-trimmed robes of an adult king, as described by Dean, perhaps a recognition of some of the practical issues involved with ritual dress for children.

In 1633, during the planning for the coronation of Charles I, notes were made of instructions made in preparation for the royal visit of 1617; these range from supplies, through control of hunting to allocation of lodgings. According to these an Act instructing Sir Gideon Murray to send 'his maties robe royall to Ingland to the effect ane new one may be made conform thereto' was passed on either 17 or 18 March 1617.<sup>xv</sup> That is far from a confirmation that the robe was sent and the replacement received; it might help to explain the ambiguity, noted by Dean, about the robes used for Charles I in 1633.

Another ancillary item is worthy of note. In April 1604, a payment is recorded for carrying in the great coffer with the honours and silver work out of the castle to

the abbey (Holyrood) – £40.<sup>xvi</sup> This is the only reference to a coffer to contain the Honours noted before the 19th century. The occasion appears to be the first parliament after James left Scotland, which began to sit on 10 April.<sup>xvii</sup> It is not clear if, on later occasions, the Honours were also brought in a coffer or not.

The story of the Honours being secreted at Dunottar by Christian Fletcher during the Cromwellian occupation is well known. She was voted a substantial reward by the Scots parliament in 1661. Two entries in the accounts confirm payments of two tranches of this reward.

To Dam Christian Fletcher the sum of fiftie pound sterling in full payment ... for preserving his Matis royall honours ... with consent of James Abercrombie her husband ... £600.

To Dam Christian Fletcher Lady Abercrombie ... £1080.<sup>xviii</sup>

This would still leave the total payment at less than the £2,000 Scots promised, but it was a substantial sum, nonetheless, and it is possible that further payments were made (perhaps from other sources) and have been overlooked.

An account for glazing at Stirling Castle in 1676 is most likely explained by the Honours having been hidden there at an earlier stage, as it describes glazing in the King's Study 'where the Honours were kept'.<sup>xix</sup> An aumbrie in the 'study' would provide a suitable store-place.

The Scots parliament was opened on 12 June 1673 and continued to sit, at least until September, when there was a substantial break till November 1673.<sup>xx</sup> The following two entries suggest that the Honours might have remained out of the castle through this extended period.

paid in drink money Twenty Rex Dolours at bringing the honours out of Edinburgh Castle upon the 11 June 1672 ... £58

in drink money at carrying the honours back again...upon 3 December 1673 ... £28 8s.<sup>xxi</sup>

The Honours were used again for the parliament in 1681, when there is a payment for bringing down the Honours for the third parliament, attended by the Duke of Albany.<sup>xxii</sup>

There are several records of the Honours being used in connection with knightings in the late 17th century.

for bringing the honours of Scotland out of the castle of Edinburgh when three Lords of Session viz Lords Forret, Glendoick and Reidfoord received the honour of knighthood, 6 July 1676 ... £14 10s.<sup>xxiii</sup>

Two more records of knightings follow.

To the Lord Chancellors coachman at bringing down the sword of honour to knight Provost Kennedy 5 Rex dolours and to the Earl of Morrays coachmen when the Honours returned to the Castle after the parliament 10 Rex Dolours without receipt £43 10s.<sup>xxiv</sup>

To the Lord Chancellors coachman and footmen ten Rex dollours at bringing down the honours from Edinburgh Castle at the solemnitie of making the Knights of the Thistle and when Sir Hugh Wallace of Woolmett was knighted £29.<sup>xxv</sup>

The second of these is of particular importance, since it clearly relates to the first Order of the Thistle ceremony in 1687 when the order was created by James VII and II. There is no separated payment for the return journey – presumably because it all happened in one day, unlike a parliament extended over a period of weeks or months. It is slightly anomalous that some of these records refer to the Honours being used for knighting and some only to the sword. This also raises the question of what happened after the Union, when, it is assumed, the Honours were put away in a kist in Edinburgh Castle and forgotten about but, of course, knighthoods (of the Thistle and otherwise) continued to be conferred.

On 18 October 1644 there is a payment for mending of the sword of honour – £63 [Scots].<sup>xxvi</sup>

The occasion of the final record is uncertain, but the black cloth suggests that it might be in connection with the death of Charles II (d. 6 February 1685). It is not clear what is meant by the ‘Lord Chancellors mane’. This appears to be the only record of ‘cushens of state’; perhaps the Honours were placed on them, for display at the destination?

To Alexander Reid, goldsmith, John Chancellor, merchant, William Douglas, tailor and Robert Newlands, furrier the sum of four hundred forty seven pounds 16 shillings Scots conform to their several accompts for dressing and lyming the Crown and helping of the Lord Chancellors mane and for black cloath for covering the cushens of state and other particulars as by their accompts and receipts appears £447 16s.xxvii

## ABBREVIATIONS

NAS National Archives of Scotland

NRS National Records of Scotland

RPS Records of the Parliaments of Scotland

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### Notes

<sup>i</sup> David H. Caldwell, ‘The Stone of Scone: Updating the Scholarship’, HES research paper; Lucinda H. Dean, ‘The Scottish Royal Honours: Objects, Ceremony and Use’, HES research paper; A. J. Mann, ‘Continuity and Change: The Culture of Ritual and Procession in the Parliaments of Scotland’, in E. Crewe and M. G. Müller (eds), *Rituals in Parliaments, Political, Anthropological and Historical Perspectives on Europe and the United States* (Frankfurt am Main, 2006), pp 135–58.

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- ii T. Thomson, *A collection of inventories and other records of the royal wardrobe and jewelhouse; and of artillery and munitions in some of the royal castles MCCCCLXXXVIII-MDCVI* (Bannatyne Club, Edinburgh, 1815).
- iii J. Harrison, 'The Wardrobe Inventories of James V (Particularly BL Royal 18C XIV F.184-215)' <http://docplayer.net/36718265-Stirling-castle-palace.html> [accessed 26 November 2018].
- iv Beryl.
- v The king's crown, swords, robe, pope's hat, orders and queen's crown appear in Thomson, 1815, 76.
- vi Ermine.
- vii NAS GD18/3104, Clerk of Penicuik papers, has 'the hatt that come fra the Paip of gray velvet with the Haly Gaist sett all with orient perle'.
- viii W. Fowler, 'The True Reportarie of the Baptisme of the Prince of Scotland', pp. 165-95 in H. W. Meikle (ed.), *The Works of William Fowler* (Scottish Text Society, Edinburgh, 1936).
- ix Fowler, 1936, 182.
- x Fowler, 1936, 181.
- xi Fowler, 1936, 181-2.
- xii *A Diurnal of Remarkable Occurrents that have passed within the country of Scotland since the Death of King James the Fourth til the Year MDLXXV [1575] From the manuscript of the Sixteenth Century, in the possession of Sir John Maxwell of Pollock, Baronet* (Edinburgh, 1833), 242.
- xiii A. L. Juhala, 'The Household and Court of King James VI of Scotland, 1567-1603', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2000.
- xiv Fowler, 1936, 181.
- xv NRS E35/50 item 1, p 1, item 3, p 3.
- xvi NRS E21/77 fol. 52r.
- xvii RPS, <http://www.rps.ac.uk/> [accessed 26 November 2018].
- xviii NRS E26/11/1, pp 35 and 160.
- xix NRS E36/37/6, *Accompt of the New Inghlish Glass furnished and wrought by John Maisterton, Glasier att ye Pallace & Castle of Stryveling in Anno 1676.*
- xx RPS, 1672/6/1.
- xxi NRS E26/11/2, p 130.
- xxii NRS E26/11/4, p 307; RPS, 1681/7/1.
- xxiii NRS E26/11/3, p 225.
- xxiv These entries are undated, but the account covers 19 April 1684-1 March 1686. This, the first parliament of James VIII and II, started in April 1685.
- xxv NRS E26/12/3, pp 186 and 187.
- xxvi NRS E27/1, fol. 33.
- xxvii NRS E26/12/2, p 102 - the account covers 1 February 1684-1 March 1686.



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