

PRESBYTERIAN AND JACOBITE “SPIRITS” IN EARLY MODERN SCOTLAND

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Abstract: Early modern Scotland was a thriving and effervescent society, one which had sustained a noteworthy level of cultural activity, maintained its liberty from its determined and more powerful Southern neighbor England, and made its mark in Europe. As everywhere in the world, alcohol marked the important rites of passage of birth, marriage and death, as well as festivals of both the liturgical year and the agricultural calendar were occasions for drinking. In spite of the exhilarating moment in 1603 when a Scottish king succeeded to the English throne, the seventeenth century, by contrast, seems to be overhung with an air of cheerlessness, even gloom, as a harsh and saintly Calvinist Kirk imposed a new level of regulation, launching an unparalleled assault on decadence and on up till now unquestioned delightful pursuits such as song, dance, theater, and alcohol. Later, Scotland had to face the political turmoil of hosting the Jacobite rebellions (1688–1746) supported by the greatest part of the Episcopal Highlander clans (agitated by James II from his exile in France, or by his heirs)—or to live in the harsh consequences of the Jacobite defeat at Culloden in 1746.

Keywords: Presbyterianism, whisky, festivals, drunkenness, Scotland, temperance.
