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Adventurers and Exiles: The Great Scottish Exodus (review)

Alan L. Karras

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between loyalists and revolutionaries, radical egalitarians and aristocratic parties, and city and backcountry further subdivided most groups, including at the parochial level, often parallel to similar divisions in Ireland. On both sides of the Atlantic, the temporary ecumenicity of Irishness dissolved under these and other social pressures. The results are still with us today, a point the authors make but do not labour.

The authors' arguments regarding the evolution of these identities appear in the introduction but then lie mostly dormant, if latent, in much of the subsequent material. They come to the fore only in Section VII, on politics and war, where they are finally explicated at greater length and given documentary substantiation. Many readers, not knowing that this awaits them, may be frustrated to find in the intervening four hundred pages that they are expected to accept on faith these arguments that form important context for much of what they read. Reading Section VII after Section I or II will almost certainly give greater satisfaction.

The breadth and importance of this volume will appeal to scholars working in a variety of fields on both sides of the Atlantic. It is also quite well resourced for reading by the interested layman, and even considering it as a collection of edited texts alone it would be worthy of its space on the shelves of many libraries, both academic and public.

University of St Andrews

WILLIAM H. CAMPBELL

Adventurers and Exiles: The Great Scottish Exodus.

By Marjory Harper. Pp. 438.

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London: Profile Books. 2004. £9.99.

For many historians, Scotland remains an unknown, somewhat exotic, place. The country's small size and population has caused its people and their experiences to remain peripheral within the fields of both world history and British imperial studies. As a result, with several notable exceptions covering the eighteenth century, Scottish history has remained somewhat separate from other Atlantic histories. Despite the fact that Scots played a significantly large role running Britain's nineteenth-century empire and were instrumental in industrialization—arguably the most important world-historical process—Scottish studies have for the most part remained a piecemeal affair. Concerned more with people than with process, the existing scholarship has not yet connected itself to the growing historical fields of internationalization and globalization. Instead, because the Scots went everywhere in the world during this period, most establishing new lives and leaving scores of descendants, genealogists looking to trace a reverse path to Scotland regularly seek out and share information on family experiences. Blessed with excellent archival material, Scotland is often at the centre of genealogical trips to the British Isles. It is therefore puzzling to ponder the country's centrality to genealogy and its peripheral character where scholarship is concerned.

Every so often, a book comes along that holds enormous promise for bridging this gap between genealogical research and historical scholarship. Typically such works seek to make Scotland more central to world-historical processes. These books, while full of systematic and careful scholarship, are also extremely easy reading. In this way, a wider audience becomes possible, and the limitations of Scotland's small size can be more easily overcome. Marjory Harper's *Adventurers and Exiles: The Great Scottish Exodus* clearly attempts to be such a work. Concerned with telling the stories of Scottish migrants who lived mostly, but not

entirely, in the nineteenth century, the book envisions itself as filling a gap in the scholarly literature. It puts 'the remarkable nineteenth-century diaspora at the hub'; in so doing, it attempts to assert Scotland's centrality in European, if not world, affairs (p. 1).

Having said that, however, *Adventurers and Exiles* is much better genealogy than it is history and, as a result, unfortunately does not fulfil its own scholarly ambitions. While much of the data the author presents is intriguing—and sometimes makes for a good read—the parts never add up to an overarching argument of significance. If the Scots were significant in their migration patterns, as the author argues in Chapter 1, then the author needs to tell us why—beyond showing, simply, that Scots traversed the globe in far larger numbers relative to their population than other Europeans. If there are any patterns to this migration, or if there were any meaningful changes over time, then these have not been fully fleshed out.

Part of the problem lies in the book's organization. The author has chosen an interesting and potentially exciting approach. Rather than looking at the impact of Scots in different receiving societies or looking at changes in migratory patterns and processes over time, the book uses a process-centred structure. Looking at the factors that inform the act of migration, the book has chapters on migration's push factors, its pull factors, and those who recruited migrants. So too does it look at benevolent aid (a response to industrialization), children's migrations, the oceanic voyages, and settlement experiences. *Adventurers and Exiles* even considers sojourning (a term that my own work *Sojourners in the Sun* introduced to the field a decade ago) and identity as part of the process of migration. Within each of these sections are a series of (sometimes) entertaining anecdotes and illustrations from around the globe. But at the same time, scholarly readers will get little or no sense of change over time, or of the comparative experiences of Scots in different places, or even of the international networks that Scots maintained as they left their homeland. In short, the book's anecdotes are only loosely connected within these thematic chapters. Perhaps as importantly, if not more so, the chapters themselves are just not tied together well at all.

Scholarly readers of this book should also be aware of two significant flaws, especially relative to the book's ambitions. The first is that the data that is presented here comes disproportionately from Aberdeen and the northeast. In a certain sense this is not surprising given the author's geographic proximity to those sources. And, to be sure, there are some Highlanders and Lowlanders who appear. But the majority of documentary illustrations come from only one of Scotland's many regions. There is some justification for this, as previous scholarship has tended to focus elsewhere, but only experts would know this. By no means ought non-expert scholars to consider Aberdonians representative of Scots migrating into the nineteenth-century British empire. The second, and related, problem with the narrative sources is that they overwhelmingly look at Scots in Canada. To be sure, references are regularly made to Scots migrants in the Caribbean, Ceylon, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. But these illustrations pale when compared with the number of Scots who went to Canada. As significantly, these experiences are generalized to the point that there is little room either for regional differentiation or for trans-national connections to be identified. The Empire, to which all of these Scots migrated, is simply absent as an analytical concept or construct in this work. It is much worse off than it ought to be as a direct result of this absence.

What this amounts to, in my view, is a lack of context. This is not a book about Scots in the Empire, though it could have been one. Nor is this a book about Scottish migration in world history, though it could also have been that. Nor, really, is this a book about the 'Scottish diaspora' that the author attempts to

address in the conclusion (pp. 369-72) because, of course, we don't really see the idea of a diaspora work its way through the book's chapters. The book's lack of historical context and overarching argument will leave many scholarly readers puzzling over its significance. Though this is a book that tells the story of Scottish migrants, a scholarly audience requires more than a good story to keep it happy. Indeed, we require a road map that shows us how a specific person or sequence of events relates to a larger process. Without either a strong introduction with a solid historiographical overview or a strong conclusion, it is incumbent upon an author to weave a narrative thread through its chapters to guide readers' thinking. This book lacks all of these attributes.

In general, migration studies can contribute to at least three different historical literatures: that of the sending society, that of the receiving society, and that of a trans-national, or process-centred field, such as either world history or imperial studies. Judged within each of these fields, *Adventurers and Exiles* is problematic. Where it has its best success is in locating some Scots migrants within the nineteenth-century Scottish regional past. This is Scottish history that puts into the public domain more archival sources than were previously available. The book has much more trouble in trying to establish a connection between Scots migrants and the histories of their new societies. And it has even more trouble in trying to map out any sort of Scottish contribution that might have transcended national boundaries. As a result, we know little of the Scots who are mentioned beyond their specific experiences in specific locations; their larger contributions, if they existed, are absent. This then becomes something like genealogy passing for historical scholarship.

Finally, scholars would do very well to note that the book contains indications of either sloppy scholarship or hasty editing.

Several other issues will prove problematic for scholars using this book. Related to the lack of an overarching argument that connects the chapters, the book also lacks a satisfying introduction and conclusion, both useful in directing scholars to areas of particular interest. In addition, there are at least a dozen places where the quoted archival material extends to a page or more in length (pp. 57-58, 59, 146-7, 152-3, 213, 216-18, 219-20, 234, 241-2, 243, 249-50, 251-2). Careful editing or a stronger authorial voice, more likely from another scholar, would better lead the reader through this material. Even less helpful, the endnotes to the book consist largely of simple archival citations and page numbers: absent are the useful explanatory and historiographical notes that scholars of any discipline require.

Moreover, and somewhat troubling, is the author's almost complete omission of secondary sources in both the text and the notes. I found myself reading (p. 285) a fairly complete summary of the fifth chapter of my book *Sojourners in the Sun* without either a footnote to the argument that I made or a textual reference to the book itself. But there is more: the book's first illustration, 'The Caledonian Voyage to Money-Land' (p. 10), has an attribution of 'early nineteenth century'. The correct date of the illustration is 1762; it appeared in a publication entitled *The British Antidote to Caledonian Poison* which makes its significance to a larger argument, missed by the author, quite plain. While I am not an expert on Scots in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, or Canada, it would not be surprising to learn that there were similar errors and omissions in those areas. These details are not insignificant. Rather, they greatly contribute to scholarly confidence in any work. This book, as a result, is best used as a collection of primary source material and not as the much-needed scholarly interpretation that it could have been.