

## Witchcraft and magic in eighteenth-century Scotland

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On 20 October 1711 Defoe published in the periodical *Review* his well-known and unambiguous opinion on the subject of witches:

There are, and ever have been such People in the World, who converse Familiarly with the Devil, enter into Compact with him, and receive Power from him, both to hurt and deceive, and these have been in all Ages call'd *Witches*, and it is these, that our Law and God's Law Condemn's as such; and I think there can be no more debate of the Matter.

He was not alone in this opinion, but it may be significant that it was written only a few months after one of his extended stays in Scotland; for Defoe was a man who knew the Scottish Lowlands well and had even been on an extended trip via the east coast, the north, and the west coast of the *Gaidhealtachd*. Can we suggest, then, that his attitude was, or at least may have been, influenced by the popular beliefs and judicial practices he saw or heard there? If we were to judge from one Scottish reaction to the repeal of the Witchcraft Acts in 1736, we might be tempted to do so. 'The *Law of God* hath been despised, and a *Toleration* upon the Matter, given to *Diabolical Arts* and *Practices*, by the *Act* repealing the penal *Statutes* against *Witches*', was a stern rebuke delivered to the Associate Presbytery at Edinburgh on 3 February 1743.<sup>1</sup> But it was given by Seceders, that is to say by clergymen who thought the official Presbyterian establishment had compromised with rationalism on the one hand and 'enthusiasm' on the other, thereby betraying fundamental doctrines and diluting the Calvinist confession.

The Scotland with which Defoe had acquaintance was, in fact, no unified or monolithic state, but a concatenation of cultural and religious systems existing uneasily with each other – the *Gaidhealtachd* and the islands (still largely Gaelic speaking), the Lowlands and the Borders, much more open to English influences, each harbouring and cherishing its own differences, each ill at ease with the others, each diverse, indeed, within itself. A description of Scotland, therefore – or perhaps one should more accurately say, a

description of the various activities of witches – must take these divergences, rivalries and suspicions into account.

The geography of Scotland, for example, matters. Beyond the southern Lowlands there were no big roads to speak of, which meant that communications were extremely awkward. Roads were, in fact, the tracks left by generations of feet both animal and human, and for obvious practical reasons skirted any difficulties, such as peat bogs, which lay in their path. After the 1745 rebellion, however, these drove roads were supplemented by nearly a thousand miles of military highways, built first by General Wade and then by William Caulfield, which opened up certain parts of the Highlands (but by no means all) to influences from further south, the Lowlands and England.<sup>2</sup> As far as the Highlands were concerned, the most obvious changes were social and cultural. As Allan MacInnes has put it, ‘The immediate aftermath of the Forty-Five was marked by systematic state terrorism, characterised by a genocidal intent that verged on ethnic cleansing ... chiefs and leading gentry abandoned their traditional obligations as protectors and patrons in pursuit of their commercial aspirations as proprietors’.<sup>3</sup> A flavour of the official tone can be gathered from a sermon preached in St Giles Kirk, Edinburgh on Monday, 6 January 1746: ‘This Rebellion owes its Rise and Progress to Ignorance and Superstition; it began in the most ignorant, wild, and barbarous Part of our Country; it has been chiefly supported by the most ignorant and superstitious of our Countrymen, the most savage of the Highland Clans.’<sup>4</sup> State-sponsored terror, then, gave way, to some extent, in the later part of the century to what both Lowlanders and English saw as a ‘civilising’ process, based on the long-standing perception of the Gael as a cattle-thieving, superstitious savage.<sup>5</sup>

This colonisation was accompanied by deliberate attacks upon Gaelic as a medium of instruction in religion and education, which led to an erosion in its general use; and with its slow decline there began to vanish the culture which it expressed, a decline scarcely halted by the establishment of Gaelic Societies among middle-class town-dwellers in the early nineteenth century. The language employed by Patrick Sellar, factor of the notorious Sutherlands, in regard to Gaelic was no less violent than that of James Yorke in relation to the Gael:

Their obstinate adherence to the barbarous jargon of the times when Europe *was possessed by Savages*, their *rejection* of any of the several languages now used in Europe ... places them, with relation to the enlightened nations of Europe, in a position not very different from that betwixt the American Colonists and the Aborigines of that Country.<sup>6</sup>

Widespread dispossession, too, hastened the dispersal abroad, if not the death, of Gaelic culture – not for nothing was 1792 known as *am bliadhna nan caoraich*, ‘the year of the sheep’ – while at home the pain and anger attendant

upon these changes was channelled, at least in part during the 1790s and early 1800s, into a short-lived wave of religious enthusiasm which swept through much of the Highlands.<sup>7</sup>

The attack upon Gaelic was both encouraged and led by the Churches. The eighteenth century did not look kindly upon either the Episcopal Church, which found itself in disgrace after 1745 because of its alleged support for the Stuart cause or the Presbyterian Kirk, which was more and more plagued by controversy. For it, as well as secular society, suffered from the increasingly alienating pretensions of Scotland's landowning classes, the right to appoint ministers, for example, being removed from congregations in 1712 and given to local landlords, a move bound to exacerbate the fissiparous tendency within Scottish Presbyterian theology, and create the impression that the Kirk was little more than a mouthpiece of the lairds.<sup>8</sup>

One also needs to take note of the way people grouped themselves into diverse communities. Most people still lived in very small dispersed groupings known as 'touns'. Some, such as *ferm touns*, consisted of about six or twelve households jointly working a farm; whereas a *kirk toun*, as the name suggests, clustered about a church whose local significance could enhance both the size and standing of its *toun* (although in the *Gaidhealtachd* churches and chapels often stood apart in slightly mysterious isolation). Fisher *touns* stretched out in rows beside the seashore, their way of life quite distinct from other communities. Smaller than these were individual dwellings scattered within the landscape; larger were the burghs and a few important cities such as Glasgow or Edinburgh.<sup>9</sup> But settlement patterns were changing, especially in the Lowlands, throughout the eighteenth century as, despite large-scale emigration, the population rose, agricultural improvements took hold or were enforced, and then industrial development – such as the making of jute in Dundee or the building of ships on the Clyde – began to make a difference to rural as well as to urban social structures.<sup>10</sup>

Finally, it is also worth bearing in mind that Scottish women were not in the least passive or docile members of their communities. They actively participated in riots during the early eighteenth century, for example, and were noted as being more violent than the men. Nor were they few in number. In Dumfries and Galloway there were four major riots between 1711 and 1718, and the crowds consisted almost entirely of women. In mid-century, too, they were prominent in religious affairs, combining to resist, again with violence, the imposition of new ministers of whom they disapproved.<sup>11</sup> Scottish society during the eighteenth century, therefore, presents several features which are highly unusual: military occupation; ethnic cleansing of part of the population; immense social and economic changes in a small society widely dispersed over an extensive geographic area, much of which had been and continued to be very difficult of access; the deliberately attempted destruction of half the country's language and

culture in favour of others imported from an alien state; more than one 'national' church, with the principal Kirk riven by disputatiousness; and a female population which often showed itself to be forthright, aggressive and not easily amenable to attempted official control.

Now the relevance of all this to witchcraft is obvious but deserves emphasis. For the instruments of any attempt to unify Scotland's remarkable diversity were the Law and the Kirk, and it is a remarkable fact that, London government and commercialising landlord apart, neither appears to have exerted itself overmuch in relation to crimes of magic (or, after 1736, the pretended 'use or exercise [of] any kind of Witchcraft, Sorcery, Inchantment, or Conjurat[i]on').<sup>12</sup> To put it bluntly, the criminal records after 1700 when 22 witchcraft cases were deserted (abandoned) in a single session contain few references to witches, and these rapidly fade to nothing after the 1720s. Within this period, to be sure, we can find examples of stern dealing, but these are often explained by the presence of one individual who, for reasons of private conviction or public pressure, decides to take the initiative. Let us take a single example. On 24 May 1704 the kirk session records of Pittenweem, a small fishing community in Fife, note that Jean Durkie appeared before the session where,

the Minister laid before her some scandalous language that she had used to Nickolas Lowson, to wit, 'O Nickolas! Learn me to be a witch, that I may be avenged on the magistrates for sending my husband to fflanders'; and that she did use horrible imprecations and curses against them in the streets, all which she confessed: which was referred to the presbytery for advice.<sup>13</sup>

The presbytery took nearly a month to reply, almost certainly because further problems relating to witchcraft had come to the brethren's notice. These were recorded by Pittenweem on 29 May. Isobel Adam, Beatrix Laing, Nicholas Lowson and Janet Coreset confessed to a compact with the Devil, gave a detailed account of their several meetings with him (although these details do not appear in the kirk session record), and delated others the session does not name.<sup>14</sup> Not surprisingly, perhaps, St Andrews presbytery decided to hold two sessions on 19 and 28 June in Pittenweem where, at the first session, it examined the principal confessing witches, and on the second looked into Jean Durkie's case.<sup>15</sup>

As far as the kirk and presbytery session records are concerned, that is now the end of the matter. The presbytery delayed any decision over Jean Durkie so often that nothing was done, while Isobel Adam and another confessing witch, Janet Cornfoot, were placed under their minister's tutelage with the recommendation that he 'bring them to a better sense of the case'. Investigation of other sources, however, reveals that the whole incident had been caused by the vivid imagination of a sixteen-year-old boy who had listened eagerly to the local minister's readings from Lord Cullen's

*Sadducismus Debellatus*, an account of Christian Shaw, the so-called 'Bargarran Imposter', who had manufactured a serious witchcraft scare in Glasgow in 1697.<sup>16</sup> This same minister, persuaded by the boy's imitative fits and hallucinations, pursued those he accused with a determined, indeed ruthless vigour, Janet Cornfoot being subjected to a brutal flogging by the minister himself. She was later lynched by a mob from Pittenweem, after which the minister refused to give her a Christian burial. Moreover, on 13 June, only a week before the presbytery came to Pittenweem to examine Nicholas Lawson and the others, the kirk had applied to the Privy Council to appoint a commission to try the case in a criminal court. Lack of detail in the official records, therefore, may be misleading and one must be careful not to make sweeping assumptions about the officially perceived importance or unimportance of witchcraft, based only upon these documents.

Nevertheless, extensive acquaintance with them does enable one to notice when a kirk or presbytery session, for example, is taking a particular interest in a case; and the lack of enthusiasm to pursue witchcraft accusations as far as criminal prosecution is by no means confined to the eighteenth century. Compared with the Kirk's intense scrutiny of adulterers and fornicators and her eagerness to punish their sins, the pursuit of witches can sometimes seem almost desultory. After the 1704 incident in Pittenweem, for example, the next notice of a witch occurs on 11 November 1708 when Isobel Adam, who had played a part in the 1704 scandal, was referred back to her local kirk by the presbytery of Edinburgh so that she might receive local censure, and was promptly shuffled off to the presbytery of St Andrews, who proceeded (apparently) to ignore her.<sup>17</sup> Thereafter, Pittenweem has nothing to say about witchcraft until 5 July 1719 when Barbara Westwood appealed to the session to accuse Janet Logan of calling her father a warlock.<sup>18</sup> What was the cause of these lengthy interstices? Are we to understand that the practice of magic ceased within the parish; or, as seems much more likely, given our knowledge of the early modern period, did the congregation, its minister and elders simply turn their attention elsewhere once the immediate and peculiar reason for the accusation of witchcraft in a particular case had run its course and been resolved to local satisfaction, while the usual magical operations attendant upon daily life continued as before?

If this latter appears to fit the known facts somewhat better anent kirk and presbytery, it may also apply equally well to the criminal courts which were also more preoccupied with adultery and fornication than witchcraft, as any porteous roll (list of cases coming up for trial) will demonstrate. The circuit court meeting in Dumfries in 1709, for example, heard witchcraft cases against Janet Hairstanes (who was acquitted) and Elspeth Rule (who was found guilty, branded on the cheek and banished), but spent most of its time on cases of adultery.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, throughout the initial decades of the eighteenth century, the courts heard more cases of bestiality than they did of witchcraft,

and the crime of bestiality, as opposed to that of witchcraft, was not even on the statute book in Scotland.

But was this apparent relaxation of interest the result of a diminution of magical belief and practice in the country at large, as so many clergy in particular liked to imagine? These gentlemen were very much mistaken. Lachlan Shaw noted in 1760 with some distaste that 'in their sentiments the people are extremely wedded to prejudice and in their manners to old custom', and proceeded to give examples. 'They made the *Deas-Soil* [clockwise movement] about their fields of corn, with burning torches of wood in their hands, to obtain a blessing on their corns. This I have often seen, more indeed in the Lowlands than in the Highlands.'<sup>20</sup> In 1776 the minister of Deskford had to warn his congregation against what he called the superstitious and heathenish practices he had observed of bonfires and other idolatrous customs. Beltane fires, however, continued to be lit. On Coll, Samuel Johnson asked about local superstitions and was told that the people there would not cut peat while the moon was waxing. The minister protested. 'It's not a superstition', he said, 'it's a whim.' But the minister was merely being ingenuous in the face of visitors from England. Clearly he did not wish them to suppose either that his parishioners were backward and primitive, or that he himself had been unable to withdraw them from undesirable beliefs and practices.<sup>21</sup>

*Sithean* (fairies) also continued to play an important role in the lives of country folk, as they had always done. As late as 1770, dairymaids on Skye used to pour out some milk every day as an offering to the *gruagach* (brownie); in Suddie parish, not far from Inverness, children who suffered from a wasting illness were said to be having their substance removed by the *sithean* and were taken to a particular well in the hope of a cure; Adam Donald, the so-called 'Prophet of Bethelnie' (1703–80), was said to have been a changeling left by the fairies, a status which clearly enhanced the magical and divinatory powers with which he was credited, and because of which he was consulted by large numbers of people from as far away as thirty miles beyond his dwelling-place.<sup>22</sup> Thomas Pennant observed in 1772 that 'a Highlander, in order to protect himself from any harms apprehended from the Fairy tribe, will draw round himself a circle with a sapling of an oak'; and Alexander MacGregor was acquainted with an old man in Skye, born in the last decade of the eighteenth century, who 'so firmly believed in fairies and other superstitions that in his grace before meat he prayed thus –O Blessed One ... preserve the aged and the young, our wives and our children, our sheep and our cattle, from the power and dominion of the fairies (*sithichean*), and from the malicious effects of every evil eye'.<sup>23</sup>

The use of charms and amulets was common. During his travels in Scotland, Pennant was given two amulets, one of which was to cure pains in the joints; MacNeill of Carskey recorded in his estate journal that one should

'take the skine of a serpent and bind it to the thigh of the woman that is in labour and she will be delivered presently'. William Shaw, compiler of a Gaelic dictionary, defined *leice* as 'a large crystal, of a figure somewhat oval, which priests kept to work charms by. Water poured upon it, at this day, is given to cattle against diseases. These stones are now preserved for the same purposes by the oldest and most superstitious in the country'; and as late as 1795 knives were being enclosed in the walls of houses of Orkney to ward off the attacks of witches.<sup>24</sup> People also resorted to wells, often those standing near or in the churchyards of former Catholic chapels. Saint Walloch's well in Aberdeenshire was 'much frequented by sick folk', according to a report of 1724; the well at Keith in Banff was visited until at least the mid-eighteenth century; in 1729 the kirk session of Speymouth published a warning from the Synod 'anent the superstitious going to the well of Spey'; and near a ruined Catholic chapel in Muthill in central Perthshire was a well 'which the ignorant and superstitious people pay a great respect unto and from which they expect cures to be wrought upon themselves and their beasts'.<sup>25</sup>

The gift of second sight – 'two sights' in Gaelic – was universally held to belong to Highlanders and the people of the Western Isles in particular. As MacCulloch remarked, 'to have navigated the Western Isles without even mentioning the second sight, would be unpardonable'. Martin Martin defined it thus: 'a singular Faculty of Seeing an otherwise invisible Object, without any previous Means us'd by the Person that sees it for that end; the Vision makes such a lively impression upon the Seer, that they neither see nor think of any thing else, except the Vision, as long as it continues'. The seeing most often referred to a vision of the recently dead or of someone whose death was imminent, and examples of both abound throughout both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. 'Second sight is firmly believed at this time', said Pennant, and the accuracy of his observation can be seen several times in the account given by James Boswell of the visit he and Samuel Johnson made to the islands in 1773. Even Boswell himself thought he might have had a touch of the gift at one point (although he questioned the possibility of the idea since he was not a Highlander), and continued to discuss the ability in spite of his being snubbed by the Duchess of Argyll. 'I said something of my belief in the second sight. The Duchess said, "I fancy ... you will be a Methodist".' Of particular interest is his recounting that

Mrs. MacKinnon ... told us her father was one day riding in Skye, and some women who were at work in a field on the side of the road told him they heard two *taisks* [ghosts], that is, two voices of persons about to die; 'and what', said they, 'is extraordinary, one of them is an English *taisk*, which we never heard before'.

This aural aspect to the second sight is confirmed by modern experience which explains that, as well as seeing an image, one may hear, too.<sup>26</sup>

Divination of various kinds was also common. The kirk session of Speymouth instructed its minister on 10 April 1737 to have a word with Robert Innes who had gone to consult a man who claimed to find stolen goods with the help of a prophetic spirit. The advice or censure clearly made little impression, for in June the following year Innes had to be censured again for what looks like a second offence, together with John Allan who had also consulted a seer for a similar purpose.<sup>27</sup> In Stirlingshire, several people from Kilsyth found themselves in trouble in 1723 for enquiring about stolen goods, and on 9 August 1724, 'John Elgin in Wester Alves [near Elgin] is accused before the session to one that had converse with the Devil, called John Fraser, mason at Balveny, to get information of a web belonging to the Lady Kirton, stolen as he said out of his house'. Likewise, Isobel Crawford was summoned before the kirk session of Old Aberdeen on 15 January 1727,

as being a woman guiltie of charmes and a teller of fortunes, such as telling what a man any woman will be married with, and what a woman a man will be married with: as also that she could give ane account that if any person had any thing stolen from them, she could tell them if it could be got back againe; and that if any persons who went abroad, she would give ane account if they were dead or alive, and the lyke.<sup>28</sup>

The evil eye, too, was still feared. Thomas Pennant, for example, observed its consequences on Islay in 1772:

If the good housewife perceives the effect of the malicious on any of her kine, she takes as much milk as she can drain from the enchanted herd, for the witch generally leaves very little. She then boils it with certain herbs, and adds to them flints and tempered steel: after that she secures the door, and invokes the three sacred persons [of the Trinity]. This puts the witch into such an agony, that she comes nilling-willing to the house, begs to be admitted, to obtain relief by touching the powerful pot.<sup>29</sup>

But equally feared were a magical operator's words. In 1725 the kirk session of Rathven heard that Katharine Symson had prayed that Janet Forbes might get a cold armful of her husband, and in 1727 that Marjorie Wilson had turned her face to the sun upon a Sabbath day and cursed her son, Patrick, wishing him a sudden death which, sure enough, ensued.<sup>30</sup> There was a fine line between cursing and magical imprecation. In August 1708, for example, James Leslie deposed to the authorities in Aberdeen that Elizabeth Fraser 'went to the house of William Donald, shoemaker, ther in his presence, at his own fyre syde, sett doune on her knees, blasphemed the name of God, and prayed Gods curse and her upon him and family, and severall uther imprecations'.<sup>31</sup> It is the combination of kneeling and blasphemy, ritual action and hostile words, which suggests that in this case the cursing was more than a simple loss of temper. The authorities in Dumfries remarked the difference when, in May 1709, it was noted of Elspeth Rule that she was 'knoun to have

used imprecations and cursings which have actualie succeeded against severall persons';<sup>32</sup> and Sir Walter Scott recounts an incident, the circumstances of which he says were well known to him, in which an old woman asked a neighbour for a favour and, upon being refused, ill-wished him. An accident to five or six sacks of his corn followed and the neighbour immediately went to the sheriff of the county to have the woman charged as a witch, only to find, much to his consternation, that the relevant law had been repealed. It is perhaps significant that the neighbour's reaction should have been to have recourse to the law rather than complain to the kirk; but even more significant is the old woman's reaction to the sheriff when he told her to mind her language lest it irritate her neighbours. 'I would be laith to wish ony ill either to you or yours, sir', she said, 'for I kenna how it is, but something aye comes after my words when I am ill-guided and speak ower fast.'<sup>33</sup> In short, she was convinced that her words had genuine power to harm and that her magic was real enough. Equally convinced, it seems, was her neighbour; and this is an incident that dates to about the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Mutual belief such as this could and did lead to violence. In July 1750 the Presbytery of Tain heard a long case relating to the parish of Rosskeen, a coastal parish of north-east Ross and Cromarty. One family, the Frasers, was attacked by the men of another, the Munros. John and Hugh Munro, along with another John Munro from a different *toun*, broke into John Fraser's house at about midnight with drawn swords and proceeded to terrorise him, his wife, and his daughter, 'using most horrid cursings and imprecations, calling them Witches and Divils'. They scored the Frasers' foreheads with an iron tool 'to the Effusion of their blood, calling them Witches', and then forcibly exacted from their victims an oath that they would not reveal who had attacked them. After this, the Munros went on to the house of Isobel MacKenzie and her daughter, whom they maltreated in like fashion, and then to the house of a William Munro where they cut the forehead of his servant, Christian MacKenzie.<sup>34</sup>

News of serious assault such as this was almost bound to reach the local authorities sooner or later, of course, and the choice of complaining to the local kirk or the local sheriff may have been guided, at least in part, by very particular considerations. For example, the minister himself might be suspected of practising magic, as was John Brown of Haddington who, in 1745, was accused of being in league with witches, apparently because he was very learned and possessed a Greek New Testament; or Donald Fraser, minister of Killearnan in Ross and Cromarty during the 1740s, who may have suffered from mild narcolepsy or advanced boredom, for he tended to fall asleep at frequent intervals. Donald Sage wrote of him,

In what this singular ailment originated is not known; the country people attributed it to witchcraft, and he himself thought so too. The tradition is

that, in the public exercise of ministerial duty, he had given offence to two women in the parish who were dread as witches, and that they had, according to their diabolical art, made a clay effigy of him, laid it in the dung-hill, and stuck it round with pins. On this Mr. Fraser got ill, and felt pains in his body which terminated in somnolency.<sup>35</sup>

Perhaps the most interesting part of this anecdote is the admission that the minister himself accepted he had been bewitched. This may or may not have been unusual among the clergy. Until a full account has been made of both kirk and presbytery session records, the extent of ministers' willing or unwilling involvement in or association with magic cannot be ascertained.<sup>36</sup> We do know of one kirk elder, however, who seems to have engaged directly in magical operations. In July 1703 Robert Bailyie, an elder of Oyne, was summoned to answer charges of 'hanging a dog within the house, taking out his crook at the lamb, extinguishing the fyre with piss, burying a cat under the hearth, etc.' on the occasion of his moving from one residence to another. It is the 'etc.' which catches one's attention, although the further details are not given in the record. Bailyie denied all the allegations except the one relating to the crook. This refers to the large hook from which pots were hung over the fire, and obviously he would have wanted to take it with him to his new house. He was obliged to climb on to the roof to get it loose, he said, from 'besyde the lamb', that is, from beside the chimney (*lum*). William Elphing, the man who took over the tenancy from him, however, maintained that Bailyie did piss on the fire and remove the hook, although he would not vouch for the truth of the details about the dog or the cat; and it turned out that William Davidson and Geillis Anderson who had told Elphing about the dog had merely seen Bailyie carry a dead dog and throw or lay it down beside the peat stack.

To us these details may seem innocent enough, but the fire and the hearth were places very sensitive to magic and any action involving them which might strike an onlooker as odd, suspicious or untoward could easily turn into a conjecture of magic and thence, as here, into an outright allegation. After several weeks of consideration, the kirk session suspended Bailyie from his eldership and required him to ask pardon of the congregation. This Bailyie refused to do, defying the minister in the very body of the kirk during the course of a Sabbath service. 'I am now in the midst of the congregation', he retorted to the minister's repeated commands, 'and let him that is free of sin cast the first stone at me'. The incident now became a struggle of wills between the kirk and presbytery on the one hand and Bailyie on the other. Bailyie held out for nearly twelve months, but on 2 July 1704 eventually submitted and was duly absolved.<sup>37</sup>

Was he actually guilty? The cat under the hearth – a very suspicious detail – disappeared from the proceedings, and the 'etc.' was never explained or explored. Certainly it will not do to dismiss the story as a piece of muddle

or foolishness. The kirk would not have wasted its time during the initial stages had it felt there was nothing to investigate, and we know of ministers who fully accepted, for example, such details of traditional witchcraft as the Devil's mark. One such was James Bell, minister at Gladsmuir, who wrote of the mark in 1705, 'I myself have seen it in the body of a confessing witch, like a little powder-mark, of a blue colour, somewhat hard, and withall insensible, so as it did not bleed when I pricked it.'<sup>38</sup>

As was constantly the case throughout the centuries, however, the authorities, ecclesiastical and lay, were also faced by magical operators who worked or claimed to work beneficently. Lachlan Shaw recorded that 'in hectic and consumptive diseases, they pare the nails of the fingers and toes of the patient, put these parings into a rag cut from his clothes, then wave their hand with the rag thrice round his head crying *Deas-Soil* [clockwise], after which they bury the rag in some unknown place. I have seen this done', he added. In Elgin, in 1734, Duncan Gregor was referred to the presbytery for curing fevers, and in Strathblane in Stirlingshire, Katharine Cameron and William Muldoe were brought before the kirk session for curing a horse by passing a cat three times round and over it.<sup>39</sup>

Magic and witchcraft therefore constituted the scenery, and often the script, of everyone's life during the eighteenth century as much as it had ever done in the seventeenth or sixteenth. But it cannot be denied that the script had begun to change. This is partly our perception. The majority of clerical and lay travellers who recorded their journeys or published diaries of their working lives concentrated upon the *Gaidhealtachd* and found what they were looking for. By tradition Highlanders were 'primitive', 'backward' and 'uncivilised' – unanglicised, too, as witness the attempts to eradicate their language — and so if magic and witchcraft, now firmly associated in the educated middle-class mind with Popery and the Middle Ages (a religion and a time, they said, of direst superstition), were to be found anywhere in Scotland, it would surely be there. So we must beware of our sources. Moreover, by labelling Highlanders as backward and superstitious, Lowlanders were helping to define themselves as people apart: modern and rational. They were Scots, not English, but Scots who had seen the way the world was going and were proclaiming, via their condemnation or patronising description of Highland people and Highland ways, that they should be taken seriously by the faraway political authorities in London.

In addition to this, we must take into account the nervousness, in some cases bordering upon fear, with which the Presbyterian Kirk realised that it was not being altogether successful in stamping out that same Catholicism which, they said, harboured magic and superstition. On 26 August 1760, for example, the kirk session of Elgin appointed ministers 'to exhort Alexander B. in Mostourie, who had taken his wife, labouring under trouble of mind, to a Popish priest in the Enzie, that he by his exorcisms might give her ease;

as also that Alexander H. in Colledge had gone with his son to the same priest to be relieved of the like trouble. The session *in abhorrence to such hellish practices* appointed that the above persons concerned be privately spoken to, and that Mr. Shaw intimate to the congregation that the above practices be guarded against by all in time coming'.<sup>40</sup> The number of Catholics, indeed, was not diminishing. A list of Papists in Keith in 1704 contained twenty-three names; by 1732 the number had grown to thirty-six. The same progression and the same nervous, hostile reaction can be seen in the presbytery book of Fordyce throughout the eighteenth century.

These nerves were caused, at least in part, because the Presbyterian Kirk was by no means a monolithic institution in Scotland, with an iron grip on all its ministers and congregations. It is therefore simple Protestant propaganda which makes people think of Scotland as a Presbyterian country. There were Catholic enclaves in plenty; the Episcopalian Church (essentially an Anglican version or imitation), flourished in various parts of the Lowlands; and a variety of -isms which rose to bestrew the religious landscape, like mushrooms in the night.<sup>41</sup> In 1690, to be sure, the Westminster Parliament had attempted to impose Presbyterian government on Scotland by statute, but the results were not what that body intended. From now on, for example, anyone who might deviate from the résumé of faith known as the 'Westminster Confession' could be challenged in a court of law and perhaps, were he a minister or teacher, deprived of his livelihood; and in 1714 the law claimed its first notable victim when John Simson, Professor of Divinity at Glasgow, was charged with heresy because he had been denying the doctrine of predestination. In 1728 he abjured the errors imputed to him, but this made little difference and the following year he was suspended from teaching. The Westminster Parliament passed two more imprudent Acts. One granted toleration to Episcopal ministers, the other restored the rights of a patron to present someone of his choice to a ministry, and both by creating a breeding-ground for discontent threatened the stability of the proposed Presbyterian settlement.

Not surprisingly, therefore, the 1730s saw what is known as the 'First' or 'Original' Secession from the established Church of Scotland. The complaint against the repeal of the Witchcraft Acts issued by a seceding presbytery in 1743, which I quoted earlier, is thus an objection motivated by ecclesiastical politics as well as by theological conviction. Evangelical movements inspired by Wesley's Methodism made some inroad into Presbyterian orthodoxy, and a second secession in 1761 muddied the doctrinal waters still further – to all of which, of course, one should add the fashionable rationalism or deism which were pervasive in the drawing-rooms of Edinburgh, and the continuing covert, but effective, missionary work of Catholic priests in various parts of the country.<sup>42</sup>

No wonder, then, if the kirk and presbytery sessions alike tended to

concentrate their energies on those aspects of their parishioners' conduct which most affected them in these disturbed times. The old concerns (sabbath-breaking, adultery, swearing) sat alongside the new (ecclesiastical legitimacy, theological correctness, payment of stipends), and the Devil's helpers took second place to these. For the immediate was with doctrinal dissenters, the encroaching power of the state, the pretensions of heretical or superstitious bodies. Most witches, as far as the Kirk could see (and the records bear this out), were ignorant charmers, not enemies of the Church in league with Satan.<sup>43</sup> If they had been his devotees in the seventeenth century, they had apparently ceased to be so regarded in the eighteenth, and although commissions continued to be sent out for the delation of 'whatsoever felonies or capital crimes, witchcrafts, enchantments, magical arts, sorceries', and the like, witches tended to make their appearance as part of a very mixed company of offenders – adulterers, fornicators, thieves, bigamists – or a gallimaufry of crimes such as treason, murder, manslaughter, incest, and the illegal fishing of salmon.<sup>44</sup>

The Kirk and its officers therefore had other fish to fry, and this is equally true of the state. As we saw earlier, Scotland has never been a unitary culture and the differences between its component parts were emphasised rather than played down during the 1700s. First, and perhaps most important, during the eighteenth century Scotland, having surrendered herself to a political union which has been likened to that of a mouse lying down with an elephant, was to all intents and purposes ruled by a foreign country whose capital was four hundred miles away to the south. Rebellions against this political disposition in 1715 and 1745 subjected large parts of Scotland to military reprisal and then military occupation. At the same time, Scotland's aristocracy and landed gentry were conducting agricultural reforms and experiments which often resulted, designedly or not, in the displacement of large numbers of her population to the margins of the land or overseas in waves of both voluntary and enforced emigration. These changes and experiments needed a change in peasant attitude. Industriousness and honesty became the watchwords of the new culture being thrust upon the lower orders throughout both Highlands and Lowlands, although the latter were deemed to be naturally more receptive to it. In the *Gaidhealtachd*, on the other hand, the old social order was breaking down and Gaelic culture came under attack as the Kirk sought to impose both itself and the new secular notions of 'progress' on unpromising material, with varying degrees of success. 'Idleness, intemperance, and debauchery are abandoned; and, on the other hand, industry, integrity, and mutual confidence are introduced ... Agriculture, arts, and commerce are advanced', trumpeted Mr R. Henry in a sermon to the SPCK in 1773.<sup>45</sup> But, like those who confidently announced the end of superstition, his claims were premature.

In fact from a judicial perspective at least, the state, rather like the Kirk,

had been progressively losing interest in witches from the beginning of the century. To be sure, the offence continued to appear in legal textbooks of the period, but that may be ascribed to the innate conservatism of lawyers and their publishers rather than any deep or active concern in the crime of magic. It would seem that there was neither an outright rejection of the concept of witchcraft nor a great willingness to prosecute. Legal thought on the matter was far from unified though. George Mackenzie, writing in 1678, expressed scepticism regarding the prosecution of witchcraft and rebuked the willingness of judges to accept dubious evidence, yet over forty years later William Forbes was more accepting of the continued relevance of the crime.<sup>46</sup>

But more important, perhaps, in its effects than these considerations, though intimately connected with them, was the breakdown in dialogue between the various groups of contemporary Scottish society. Favret-Saada has drawn attention to witchcraft as a kind of talking among and about one's neighbours – 'the witch is the person referred to by those who utter the discourse on witchcraft (bewitched and unwitchers)'<sup>47</sup> – and this entails the important consequence that if one or more parts of a society cease, for whatever reason, to take part in that common discourse, a fragmentation takes place and mutual understanding will come to an end. Favret-Saada gives the example of the believing and unbelieving priest:

An 'unbelieving' priest wears lay clothes, speeds along in his small car, condemns 'superstitions' wholesale (he even sends the bewitched [person] to the psychiatric hospital) ... preaches against drugs ... and advocates an 'enlightened' faith. Whatever his social origin, he identifies with urban values and represents the party of the Enlightenment along with the schoolmaster and the doctor. A 'believing' priest ... walks around the village reading his Latin breviary, agrees to sing the *Dies Irae* during funerals ... venerates the popular saints, and ... agrees to bless farmers and their belongings.<sup>48</sup>

Evidence of breakdown in Scotland can be seen quite early in the century. In March 1710, for example, people within the sheriffdom of Kincardine were asked (and this was a regular feature of Scottish life) to provide information about a wide variety of crimes such as treason, murder, incest, adultery, etc., including witchcraft and charming. Their replies indicated a willingness to depone about adultery, illegal fishing of salmon, incest, and so forth: but not a word was said about witchcraft or any other form of magic.<sup>49</sup> Reports of parish visitations by kirk officers frequently record much the same. Are we, then, to imagine that the practice of magic had largely ceased throughout the country? The body of evidence we reviewed earlier suggests it had certainly not, and in consequence we must allow for the possibility that its apparent increasing absence from the official records of both the Kirk and the law indicates a cessation of one type of discourse between certain groups in society.

This cessation, in fact, mirrors the physical separation that began to take place in society's living arrangements. From 1767 onwards, for example, members of the landed gentry and the professional classes – especially advocates and doctors – who had lived cheek by jowl with the other social classes in the tenements and lands of Edinburgh's Old Town began to move away to the Georgian elegance and distance of the New Town, thereby helping to create not only a physical but also a mental and emotional series of ghettos from what had been a relatively cohesive, if turbulent, urban society.

*Mutatis mutandis*, parallels can be drawn elsewhere, in both the Highlands and Lowlands, and the Islands and the Borders. What is involved is not necessarily, or certainly not exclusively, the presence of disbelief among the educated classes; but the advocates, the politicians and the ministers had other pressing concerns, and became used to seeing the whole of Scottish society through their own limited prism, consciously or unconsciously surrendering to the common tendency of a dominant social group to subsume the differences of beliefs and assumptions other than their own into a homogeneous *lumpen Zeitgeist* which is easier to understand and easier to try to control or eliminate. Meanwhile the rest of society continued to talk within itself much as it always had done and gradually became accustomed, not simply to not talking to the advocates and ministers about witches and magic, but to not talking to them at all about anything.

## Notes

- 1 *Answers by the Associate Presbytery to Reasons of Dissent* (Edinburgh, 1744).
- 2 See A. R. B. Haldane, *The Drover Roads of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1952), pp. 20–44.
- 3 A. I. MacInnes, *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart 1603–1788* (Tuckwell, 1996), p. 211.
- 4 R. Wallace, *Ignorance and Superstition a Source of Violence and Cruelty, and in particular the Cause of the Present Rebellion* (Edinburgh, 1746), p. 31.
- 5 The language of the aftermath of the '45 employed such emotive terms as *crush*, *thieves*, *plunderers* and *robbers*: J. Hunter, *Last of the Free* (Edinburgh, 1999), p. 198. James Yorke, aide-de-camp to the Duke of Cumberland, wrote to his father, 'I hope ... we shall be able to ... extirpate the Race if we are not stopt by lenity', quoted in W. A. Speck, *The Butcher* (Oxford, 1981), p. 113. Even forty or so years later, in 1792, when the Lowlander Robert Heron arrived at Perth, 'the mouth of the Highlands', as he termed it, he expected to find that the Highlanders would be crude and uncivilised, and expressed himself surprised but gratified to find they were not: Robert Heron, *Observations Made in a Journey Through the Western Counties of Scotland in the Autumn of 1792*, 2 vols (Perth, 1793), vol. 1, pp. 58–9. Even so, he went on to produce the astonishing remark, relating to Perth's 'having been civilised and instructed in several of the useful arts by Cromwell's soldiers' (p. 74).
- 6 Quoted in R. J. Adam (ed.), *Papers Relating to Sutherland Estate Management, 1811–1816*, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1972).
- 7 C. A. Whatley, *Scottish Society, 1707–1830* (Manchester, 2000), pp. 291–2.

- 8 As Whatley says, 'the hegemony of the Scottish Kirk was in certain respects more apparent than real. It certainly acted as an important bulwark for the Hanoverians ... Generally ... the more extreme the Calvinism, the stronger the adherence to a Protestant monarch': Whatley, *Scottish Society*, p. 166.
- 9 See further I. G. Whyte, *Scotland before the Industrial Revolution*, pp. 132–5; G. Whittington, 'Agriculture and Society in Lowland Scotland, 1750–1870', in G. Whittington and I. D. Whyte (eds), *An Historical Geography of Scotland* (London, 1983), pp. 156–68.
- 10 T. Devine, *Clanship to Crofters' War: The Social Transformation of the Scottish Highlands* (Manchester, 1994), pp. 32–53.
- 11 Whatley, *Scottish Society*, pp. 197–200. See, for example, the experience of a new Presbyterian minister who in January 1715 intruded upon the parish of Rathven currently held by an Episcopalian. 'When he was coming near to the church, he was mett by a great company of women who desired him to go back, otherwise he might come to smart for it; and he, offering to go forward, they laid hold on his horse bridle, struck him in the face, throwing a great many stones at himself to the effusion of his blood', Kirk and Presbytery Sessions Records, National Archives of Scotland (hereafter *CH*) 2/158/5: recorded 1 February 1715.
- 12 High Court Justiciary documents, National Archives of Scotland (hereafter *JC*) 3/1.
- 13 *CH* 2/833/3, pp. 237–8.
- 14 *CH* 2/833/3, p. 238.
- 15 *CH* 2/1132/5, pp. 292–6.
- 16 See, for example, *A True and Full Relation of the Witches at Pittenweem* (Edinburgh, 1704).
- 17 *CH* 2/833/4.
- 18 *CH* 2/833/4.
- 19 *JC* 26/88/D342. *JC* 26/91/D456 and 457.
- 20 Lachlan Shaw, *The History of the Province of Moray*, 3 vols (2nd edn, Glasgow, 1882), vol. 2, p. 203; vol. 3, p. 146. He also observed, 'Apparitions, fairies, witches, tarans [spirits of unbaptised children], have disappeared; and few regard the stories concerning them, except stupid old people who cannot shake off their prejudices, and bigoted Papists who give implicit faith to their Priests', vol. 3, p. 331.
- 21 *CH* 2/91/2. A. MacGregor, *Highland Superstitions* (Stirling, 1922), p. 52; J. Boswell, *A Tour to the Hebrides*, ed. F. A. Pottle and C. H. Bennett (London, 1936), p. 286.
- 22 MacGregor, *Highland Superstitions*, p. 42; W. MacFarlane (ed.), *Geographical Collections Relating to Scotland*, 3 vols (Edinburgh, 1906–8), vol. 1, pp. 207–8; W. Alexander, *Notes and Sketches Illustrative of Northern Rural Life in the Eighteenth Century* (Edinburgh, 1877), pp. 193–7. Bethelnie is in Aberdeenshire.
- 23 T. Pennant, *A Tour in Scotland and Voyage to the Hebrides, 1772* (2nd edn, London, 1776), vol. 2, p. 46; MacGregor, *Highland Superstitions*, p. 23. The *Gaidhealtachd* was particularly associated with the belief in *sithean*, as the poet William Collins makes clear in the second stanza of his *Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands of Scotland*, 'Tis Fancy's land to which thou sett'st thy feet; Where still, 'tis said, the Fairy people meet, Beneath each birken shade, or mead, or hill', in Mrs Barbauld (ed.), *The Poetical Works of Mr William Collins* (London, 1797).
- 24 Pennant, *Tour*, vol. 1, p. 265; F. f. MacKay (ed.), *MacNeill of Carskey, his Estate Journal, 1703–43* (Edinburgh, 1955), p. 104; W. Shaw, *A Gaelic and English Dictionary* (London, 1780); Ralph Merrifield, *The Archaeology of Ritual and Magic* (London, 1987), p. 162. Sir Walter Scott's mother had a toadstone amulet which she lent out to protect new-born children and their mothers from the fairies: letter to Joanna Baillie, 4 April 1815.

- 25 MacFarlane, *Geographical Collections Relating to Scotland*, vol. 1, p. 132; J. M. MacKinlay, *Folklore of Scottish Lochs and Springs* (Glasgow, 1893), p. 27; *CH* 2/839/4, 12 January. Consider also Pennant, 'The superstition of making pilgrimages to certain wells or chapels is still preserved', *Tour*, vol. 2, p. 46; and Heron's remarks on the pool at Strath Fillan to which, he says, nearly two hundred people were brought every year to cure their madness. Small presents for the saint were left on a nearby cairn. 'The patient is then thrice immersed in the sacred pool. After the immersion, he is bound hand and foot, and left for the night in a chapel which stands near. If the maniac is found loose in the morning, good hopes are conceived for a full recovery. If he is still bound, his cure remains doubtful': Heron, *Observations*, vol. 1, pp. 282–3.
- 26 J. MacCulloch, *A Description of the Western Isles of Scotland*, 3 vols (London, 1819), vol. 2, p. 32; M. Martin, *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland* (London, 1703), p. 300; Pennant, *Tour*, vol. 1, p. 323; Boswell, *Journal of a Tour*, pp. 87–8, 188–9, 311, 355. Colonel D. Stewart, while dismissing the second sight in 1822 as 'ridiculous', gave two examples from 1773 and 1775, the former of which was an experience related to him personally by 'a young gentleman [who] was not a professed seer. This was his first and his last vision; and, as he told me, it was sufficient. No reasoning or argument could convince him that the appearance was an illusion' – a circumstance which clearly puzzled Stewart, since the youth was 'a man of education and of general knowledge of the world': D. Stewart, *Sketches of the Character, Manners, and Present State of the Highlanders of Scotland*, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1822), Appendix T. The eighteenth century was fascinated by the subject and saw the publication of several treatises upon it, as J. Frazer, *Deuteroscopia: or A Brief Discourse Concerning the Second Sight* (Edinburgh, 1707), and 'Theophilus Insulanus', *A Treatise on the Second Sight*, (Edinburgh 1763).
- 27 *CH* 2/839/4.
- 28 *CH* 2/216/2. *CH* 2/1020/12. Cf. Archibald Reddie from Fife who was consulted in 1723 anent stolen clothes, *CH* 2/49/3, pp. 32–3. Widely reputed to be a charmer, he was also consulted in the case of sick horses.
- 29 Pennant, *Tour*, vol. 1, pp. 264–5. See also Collins, *Ode*, stanza 4. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, MacCulloch wrote of St Kilda that 'here, as elsewhere, the ancient popular superstitions seem to have disappeared; that of the power of the evil eye, the only existing one, is equally common even in the Lowlands to this day': MacCulloch, *Description*, vol. 2, p. 31. Like so many educated middle-class commentators of the period, MacCulloch's assertions were actually based on little more than hope and blindness, either intentional or unintentional. Evidence of reality is constantly turning up in sad little remarks, such as that by the minister of Kirkwall and S. Ola in 1793: 'many of the lower class of people are still so ignorant as to be under the baneful influence of superstition': J. Sinclair, *The Statistical Account of Scotland*, 21 vols (Edinburgh, 1791–99), vol. 7, p. 560. Note also the following, 'It was during the ministry of [Robert Robertson of Loch], and from his parish, that the last unhappy woman that suffered for witchcraft in Scotland was executed. She was burnt at Dornoch; and the common people entertain strong prejudices against her relations to this day [1793]': Sinclair, *Statistical Account*, vol. 6, p. 321.
- 30 *CH* 2/308/1. Cf. Sinclair, *Statistical Account*, vol. 6, p. 321 and *CH* 2/541/6 for similar curses in 1714 and 1748.
- 31 *JC* 16/1, p. 24. Cf. Sinclair, *Statistical Account*, vol. 6, p. 89.
- 32 *JC* 26/88/D342. She was found guilty and sentenced to be burned on the cheek and banished, *JC* 26/91/D457. See also Bessie Chisholm who was fined twenty shillings by the presbytery session of Fordyce in 1729 for wishing that some persons might fall and tumble nineteen times in their illness, *CH* 2/158/6.
- 33 Walter Scott, *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* (London, 1830), pp. 273–5.

- 34 CH 2/348/8, pp. 266–72.
- 35 D. Butler, *The Ancient Church and Parish of Abernethy* (Edinburgh, 1897), pp. 482–4; D. Sage, *Memorabilia Domestica: Parish Life in the North of Scotland* (Wick, 1889), p. 60.
- 36 This work is being done and the results will be published in the fourth volume of my history of magic and witchcraft in Scotland. A possible limitation upon one's knowing about magic and the clergy is the fact that it was the minister or one of his trusted congregation, such as the schoolmaster, who tended to write the ecclesiastical records.
- 37 CH 2/293/2, pp. 37–56.
- 38 Quoted in C. K. Sharpe, *A Historical Account of Witchcraft in Scotland* (Glasgow and London, 1884), pp. 208–9. See Burt's story of his attempt to persuade a Highland laird that the laird's account of a witch's changing shape could not be literally true. A minister was present, and when Burt finally paused for breath, the laird turned to the minister and said, 'Sir, you must not mind Mr. [Burt], for he is an atheist': E. Burt, *Letters from a Gentleman in the North of Scotland*, 2 vols (2nd edn, London, [1754] 1815), vol. 2, pp. 267–9.
- 39 L. Shaw, *The History of the Province of Moray*, 3 vols (2nd edn, Glasgow, [1760] 1882), vol. 3, p. 154. CH 2/144/6. CH 2/510/3.
- 40 CH 2/144/7. My italics. Sermons preached annually before the SPCK in both Edinburgh and London throughout the eighteenth century constantly emphasised the energetic survival of Catholicism in various parts of the Highlands and Islands.
- 41 For example, the Macmillanites whose leader, John MacMillan (1670–1753) founded a reformed presbytery after being deposed from his ministry by the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright for disorderly and schismatical practices. Lay people might also express heterodox opinions. John Nichol, an exciseman, was cited before the kirk session of Pittenweem in Fife in November 1719 for openly saying that 'it is not in the power of God to save an ignorant person; that the Alcoran is preferable to the Bible; that the Whig ministers are worse than devils, lading people to Hell; and that they are dropping to Hell like peats out of a cart', CH 2/833/4.
- 42 See further J. Watts, *Scalan, a Highland Seminary, 1716–1799* (Tuckwell, 1999). See also 'Information of the presbytery of Kinkarden O'Neil against Popish priests, Jesuits, and their receptors, trafiqueing Papists, within the bounds of the said presbytery', JC 26/100/D898.
- 43 I have found scarcely any evidence that Satan was overtly named as a partner in crime in eighteenth-century witchcraft. Janet Hairstanes was alleged to have been 'in correspondence with the Devil', JC 26/88/D342, and Lilius Adie copulated with the Devil who had cold skin and cloven feet and kept his hat on, CH 2/355/2: 29 July 1704; but so far that is about it.
- 44 C. A. Malcolm (ed.), *The Minutes of the Justices of the Peace for Lanarkshire, 1707–1723* (Edinburgh, 1931), pp. 44–5 (1708); JC 26/89/D386 (1709); JC 26/92/D631 (1710).
- 45 *Revelation*, 5–6. The Kirk was in the forefront of this drive to modernism. In 1750 another sermon to the SPCK noted, as usual, that the Highlands were superstitious, rude, uncivilised, ignorant, disaffected, useless, and dangerous, [Hugh Blair], *The Importance of Religious Knowledge to the Happiness of Mankind* (Edinburgh, 1750), pp. 30–3. But the published version noted that 'the Society are authorised, by a second Patent obtained from the Crown, in the Year 1738, to cause such of the Children as they shall think fit, to be instructed and bred up to Husbandry, Trades and Manufacture, or to such other manual Operations as the Society shall think proper', *ibid.*, 33, note. On the theoretical bases on which many of these modernising practices were introduced in Scotland, see David Spadafora, *The Idea of Progress in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (New Haven, 1990), pp. 253–320.

- 46 George MacKenzie, *The Laws and Customes of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1678); William Forbes, *The Institutes of the Law of Scotland*, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1722–30). See also Edward J. Cowan and Lizanne Henderson, ‘The Last of the Witches? The Survival of Scottish Witch Belief’, in Julian Goodare (ed.), *The Scottish Witch-Hunt in Context* (Manchester, 2002), p. 200.
- 47 Jeanne Favret-Saada, *Deadly Words: Witchcraft in the Bocage* (Cambridge, 1977), p. 24. This concept is of the first importance in coming to grips with the realities of magic and witchcraft in both the past and the present. See also the experiences of Perle Möhl, *Village Voices: Co-existence and Communication in a Rural Community in Central France* (Copenhagen, 1997), pp. 73–131.
- 48 Jeanne Favret-Saada, ‘Unwitching as Therapy’, *American Ethnologist* 16 (1989) 42.
- 49 *JC* 26/92/D631.