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Reformation and Romance

Scottish national identity in a nineteenth century British age
of reform, through the Edinburgh political press

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Abstract

In the nineteenth century, Scottish national identity among the political elite of Scotland was a contested field. Rather than there being a single conception of ‘Scottishness’ among this elite, the Whigs contributors of the *Edinburgh Review* and the Tory contributors of *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* each embodied a distinctive Whig and Tory Scottish identity: a Whig identity based on Scotland’s future progress within the United Kingdom and dismissive of Scotland’s ‘backward’ pre-Union heritage; and a Tory identity that romanticised and celebrated Scottish history, while casting itself as the ‘defender’ of Scottish nationhood within the United Kingdom. This study explores these different Scottish identities. It considers both how they responded to, and how they were changed by the British age of reform. Three reforms in particular – the Test and Corporation Acts repeal of 1828, Catholic Emancipation in 1829, and the Great Reform Act of 1832 – form the focus. Using magazine articles authored by prominent Scottish Whigs and Tories of the day, the research shows how these identities shifted. Scottish Whigs ardently supported all three reforms, seeing it as representing Scotland’s ‘British progress’ and ‘enlightenment’. But their arguments also employed language of Scottish exceptionalism and patriotism that they claimed to oppose. Scottish Tories, zealously opposed to reform, expressed opposition using Scottish patriotic language, particularly by portraying reforms as representing a threat to Scotland’s ancient nationhood. This dissertation argues that by the end of this reforming era, the victorious Scottish Whig identity had adopted the patriotic arguments of the Scottish Tories, who ultimately faded. It provides valuable insight into how Scotland’s governing elite viewed Scottish identity and nationhood, particularly within a wider British context, and how these identities shifted as part of the transformative effects of reform on Scotland and Britain.

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Introduction

Scotland in the nineteenth century presents a contradiction. Scotland and England had together forged a British identity, based on shared enemies, empire, and Protestantism. But this new British identity coexisted alongside an older Scottish identity. In the early nineteenth century an age of reform heralded transformative and sweeping changes for Britain, with consequences for how the Scottish nation defined itself, particularly regarding its place within the British state. Understanding this Scottish identity, particularly in regarding Scotland as a distinctive nation within the wider British nation, is critical to understanding how Scottish identity contributed to and affected the British age of reform, and how those reforms in turned affected Scottish identity.

The dissertation uses the most read political-literary magazines in early-nineteenth-century Scotland, the *Edinburgh Review* and *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (Maga). Using these, it considers how Scotland's distinctive national identity was shaped and affected by major political events during this age of reform, and how it related to wider British debates over reform. 'National identity' is a broad term that implies a singular shared identity. However, these magazines illustrate that the early nineteenth century definition of 'Scottish national identity' was contested. The magazines encapsulate two key schools of nineteenth-century Scottish political identity: the 'enlightened Whig' looking toward Scotland's reformed future, and the 'romantic Tory' who idealised Scotland's past. Both identities were British unionist, committed to the development of Britain, and to strengthening Scotland's place within Britain.¹ The *Review* was founded in 1803 and become a 'Whig Bible' among Whig political circles.² It articulated a Scottish identity defined by Alvin Jackson as 'liberal-unionism' where the Union represented the enlightenment of Scotland, viewing Scottish history as 'little more than archaic uncouthness, even with its virtues preserved at the cost of extreme political backwardness.'³ The *Review* endorsed both reforms arguing they represented a continuation of this 'improvement' of Scotland. Maga represented Scottish ultra-Toryism, hostile to reforms of almost any form.

¹ A. Jackson, *The Two Unions: Ireland, Scotland, and the Survival of the United Kingdom, 1707-2007*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2012, pp. 239-240.

² L. Mitchell, *The Whig World*, London, Hambledon and London, 2005, pp. 99-102.

³ A. Jackson, *The Two Unions*, p. 239.

Founded in 1817 by William Blackwood to challenge the Whig *Review*, it became both renowned and infamous for its aggressive commentary.⁴ Unlike the Scottish Whig identity, which viewed Scottish history contemptuously as a pre-Enlightenment embarrassment, Maga indulged in Scottish historical romanticism. It praised the nation's long and independent heritage, celebrating that which distinguished Scotland, particularly from England.⁵

The dissertation is divided into two chapters. Chapter one considers religious reforms and Scottish national identity. Under the terms of the Union the Presbyterian Church of Scotland had been preserved. Therefore, Scotland maintained a distinctive religious identity, separate from England and its established Church. Despite some differences, both Churches were Protestant and this shared Protestantism formed the core of a new British identity.⁶ Despite this, however, Scotland maintained a religious identity distinct from its southern neighbour. Scottish religious identity would come to the fore during the British debates concerning religious reform in the 1820s. The first of these reforms was the 1828 repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, which legally prohibited Protestants outside the Church of England from certain English offices. The *Review*, Scottish Whigs, and Scottish Tories all supported this, and all utilised Scottish patriotic arguments to argue in favour. The second reform was Catholic Emancipation in 1829, which repealed political restrictions against Roman Catholics. The *Review* enthusiastically supported Emancipation, citing Scotland's status within the Union as proving religious pluralism was compatible with Britishness. By contrast, Maga opposed Emancipation, but eschewed exclusively 'Scottish' arguments opposing the reform. Maga's notable silence on a 'Scottish' element to religious reform is explained by the *Review's* embrace of Scottish patriotic language. The Scottish exceptionalism Maga traditionally championed provided a clear example of religious pluralism and toleration that the *Review* favoured.

⁴ D. Finkelstein, *The House of Blackwood: Author-Publisher Relations in the Victorian Era*, United States, Pennsylvania University Press, 2002, pp. 8-9.

⁵ M. Schoenfield, *British Periodicals and Romantic Identity: the "Literary Lower Empire"*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p. 100.

⁶ L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1992; J. Wolffe, *The Protestant Crusade in Great Britain 1829-1860*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1991; S. J. Brown, *The National Churches of England, Ireland and Scotland 1801-46*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2001.

Chapter two focuses on political reform, particularly the Reform Act of 1832. It considers how political reform affected Scotland's distinctive civic identity, expressed through the institutions that governed Scotland: most prominently the separate legal system, education system, and civil society. Such institutions had been explicitly preserved under the terms of the Union, and by the early nineteenth century they had become integral as the means of sustaining Scottish nationhood within the Union.⁷ It analyses the Scottish debate over parliamentary reform, particularly how the magazines framed their positions on reform within the context of Scottish identity and patriotism. *Maga* dogmatically opposed nearly all political reform, casting itself as Scotland's 'defender'. For *Maga*, opposing reform was more than posturing: it was the proper position for patriotic Scots. By contrast, the *Review* embraced political reform, arguing that Scotland showed its necessity. Where *Maga* and the Tories embraced and celebrated Scotland's distinctive and ancient institutions, the Whigs of the *Review* saw vestiges of Scotland's pre-Union 'backwardness', and supported reform as the latest Union 'improvement' of Scotland, allowing it to progress further from that past. The reform debate within the *Review* and *Maga* represent two distinct and competing visions of Scottish identity. *Maga* advocated an identity that celebrated the nation's history, and defended its historic institutions. For the *Review*, it advocated an identity fixated on Scotland's future, which required further embrace of the new British identity, and casting away anachronistic Scottish institutions.

The magazines were accessed in the University of Canterbury Library – which holds the *Review* in print and *Maga* on microfilm – as well as online, through the Haithi Trust Digital Library.⁸ Consideration and selection of individual articles was primarily done through consulting *The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals*.⁹ Initially, articles were selected based on the titles, as read through the index. This provided a good starting position into the primary material, however it required repeated consultations of the index, as basing the selection of articles on a cursory read of their titles left potential for important articles to be overlooked where the title

⁷ M. Fry, *Power and Patronage: A Political History of Modern Scotland*, Aberdeen, Aberdeen University Press, 1987, p. 29.

⁸ *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, Haithi Trust Digital Library, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000496214>; *Edinburgh Review*, Haithi Trust Digital Library, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000530182>.

⁹ W. E. Houghton (ed.), *The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals, 1824-1900*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1966.

was innocuous, or appeared irrelevant. As the research progressed, new consultations of the index were undertaken, resulting in further articles being located. The magazine articles were also examined within a strictly defined period, from the founding year of each magazine, until 1833.

An evident limitation of using the *Review* and *Maga* as primary sources for a study of Scottish national identity regards how far the *Review* or *Maga* conception of Scotland can be attributed to wider Scottish society. Neither magazine necessarily reflected the wider Scottish public views on religious or political matters as the magazines were written and consumed amongst the political elite of Scotland – particularly those based in Edinburgh – and not the Scottish public at large. A distinction must, therefore, be acknowledged between wider public views of Scottish national identity, compared to how the magazines defined and portrayed Scottish identity. It is also necessary to differentiate between what contributors and article authors of the magazine meant or intended their words to convey, what they appear to convey, and how the readers may have interpreted their words. This study is concerned primarily with the views of the magazine contributors, using their texts to make wider observations around Scottish national identity amongst the Scottish elite and governing class. Given the influence and power this group held at the time, uncovering such views on Scottish identity is valuable. Michael Fry laid much of the foundation for Scottish political histories when he criticised the failure of scholars to provide a Scottish political historiography. According to Fry, ‘good general accounts of modern Scotland exist, but politics are granted only a subordinate part in them’; therefore he aimed ‘to demonstrate that a Scottish political tradition can be disinterred from oblivion and neglect’.¹⁰ Gordon Pentland is the most significant scholar to examine the relationship between Scottish politics and identity, focusing particularly on the height of reform between 1820 and 1833.¹¹ One of Pentland’s stated goals is ‘to deliver a nuanced interpretation of a range of Scottish and British identities and of how these were articulated in the practice of politics.’¹² Here, this research aligns with Pentland’s scholarship – particularly when considering this elite identity. Pentland references the magazine sources used in this study, although he uses them to

¹⁰ Fry, *Power and Patronage*, p. 1.

¹¹ G. Pentland, *Radicalism, Reform and National Identity in Scotland, 1820-1833*, Woodbridge, Boydell, 2008, pp. 4-6.

¹² Pentland, p. 4.

complement his principal sources of parliamentary debates, letters and newspaper coverage. This disparity in sources mirrors a disparity in the scholarship. Pentland's other principal question considers 'whether Britishness was a kind of civic patriotism that filtered down from elites, or was a more flexible and popular phenomenon that was shaped from below', ultimately concluding the latter concerning nineteenth-century Scotland.¹³ By contrast, this study considers the *Review* and *Maga* exclusively, ascertaining what they constructed 'Scottishness' to mean within Scotland's elite milieu. It does not consider questions of national identity beyond this elite class, amongst the wider Scottish population, for which further scholarship, in addition to Pentland, remains necessary.

This research is part of wider trends in twentieth- and twenty-first-century British and Scottish historiography. Formerly, the idea of treating the British nations as separate entities within historical scholarship was rare. Instead, a 'pan-British' school dominated, where 'Britain' was considered a single subject for study, with Scottish history placed within a 'British' framework. Contemporary examples of such scholarship include Hugh Cunningham, Jeremy Black and Donald MacRaild, and Frank O'Gorman'.¹⁴ Such histories have historiographical value, particularly in providing overviews exploring the British nations together. However, Fry criticised this approach as having the effect of relegating 'Scottish history' to a position of being 'provincial' or unimportant.¹⁵ Instead of focusing on the history of 'Britain' as a single entity, with the common consequence of Anglo-centric histories, there was a shift to the 'four nations' school, which recognises England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland as interrelated, but individual subjects for scholarship, complementing scholarship that considers the 'British' perspective. Hugh Kearney is a key example, having advocating a shift towards a multi-nation approach in historiography, partly to remedy the common 'Anglo-centric' nature of 'British' histories.¹⁶ Linda Colley provides an example of recent scholarship that considers how each nation

¹³ Pentland, p. 4.

¹⁴ H. Cunningham, *The Challenge of Democracy, Britain 1832-1918*, Great Britain, Pearson Education, 2001, pp. 1-3; J. Black and D. M. MacRaild, *Nineteenth-Century Britain*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, pp. xcii-xix; F. O'Gorman, *The Emergence of the British Two-Party System*, London, Edward Arnold, 1982.

¹⁵ M. Fry, 'Politics' in A. Cooke I. Donnachie, A. MacSween and C. A. Walley (ed.), *Modern Scottish History: 1707 to the present*, East Lothian, Tuckwell Press, 1998, pp. 43-44.

¹⁶ H. Kearney, *The British Isles: A History of Four Nations*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006.

participated, or did not participate, in building a shared ‘British’ identity, distinct from their existing national identities.¹⁷ This study fits the ‘four nations’ approach, considering both the history of Scotland as an individual nation, and how that Scottish nation interacted with wider questions of British identity and politics.

Away from questions around how Scotland is considered within British historiography, there are other trends related in Scottish historiography. Such histories were traditionally, as Fry noted, discarded as ‘provincial’.¹⁸ For the history of Scottish national identity, this was even more pronounced. Graeme Morton describes the nineteenth century as the ‘missing century of Scottish nationalism’, with histories largely ignoring questions concerning identity.¹⁹ Where it was covered, it tended to focus on cultural, as opposed to political, expressions; the most obvious example being the extensive research into the development of tartan and Highland dress as an expression of Scottish identity.²⁰ In recent decades, historians – particularly Fry, Pentland and Jackson – have contributed towards discovering this ‘missing’ element. Scottish historiography has also tended to follow political trends of modern Scotland, namely the twentieth-century emergence, and twenty-first-century ascendancy, of modern Scottish political nationalism. Thus recent decades have seen histories dedicated exclusively to Scotland as a separate political unit become increasingly common, particularly the work of Fry and Tom Devine.²¹ It is in the latest stage of Scottish historiography where questions of national identity have developed, and where this research sits. Both the *Review* and *Maga* have typically been researched with consideration given to their literary and romantic elements.²²

¹⁷ L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1992.

¹⁸ Fry, *Modern Scottish History*, pp. 43-44.

¹⁹ G. Morton, ‘What if?: The Significance of Scotland’s Missing Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century’, in D. Broun, R. J. Finlay and M. Lynch, *Image and Identity: The Making and Remaking of Scotland Through the Ages*, Edinburgh, Bell & Bain, 1998, pp. 157-176.

²⁰ D. Horbroch, ‘Tae See Oursels as Ithers See Us?: Scottish Military Identity from the Covenant to Victoria, 1637-1837’, in S. Murdoch and A. Mackillop (ed.), *Fighting For Identity: Scottish Military Experience c. 1500-1900*, Leiden, Brill, 2002, p. 120; A. Carswell, ‘Scottish Military Dress’, in E. M. Speirs, J. A. Crang and M. J. Strickland (ed.), *A Military History of Scotland*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2014, pp. 627-632.

²¹ T. M. Devine, *The Scottish Nation 1700-2000*, Great Britain, Penguin, 1999; M. Fry, *Power and Patronage: A Political History of Modern Scotland*, Aberdeen, Aberdeen University Press, 1987.

²² D. Finkelstein (ed.), *Print Culture and the Blackwood Tradition, 1805-1930*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2006; Finkelstein, *The House of Blackwood*; Schoenfield, *British Periodicals and Romantic Identity*; R. Morrison and D. S. Roberts (ed.), *Romanticism and Blackwood's Magazine: 'An Unprecedented Phenomenon'*, United Kingdom, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

But there has been little consideration of the magazine content regarding questions concerning Scottish national identity, which is what this project considers.

Chapter One: Religion and religious reform

Religion has long featured in Scottish national identity. Scotland holds a distinctive religious heritage, particularly through the Church of Scotland. The Act of Union in 1707 preserved Scotland's established Presbyterian Church, which was distinct from the Episcopalian Church of England.²³ However, the nineteenth century link between religion and national identity in Scotland is a controversial and disputed area of historiography. Callum Brown argues that there are two key aspects to this. Christianity, particularly Presbyterianism, played a role in maintaining a distinctive Scottish national identity and consciousness after 1707 within the Union. However, pressures of assimilation saw the loss of some of this distinctiveness in the mid to late-nineteenth century.

While an element of 'Scottishness' was preserved through the Church of Scotland, it saw the simultaneous emergence of a new religious-based British identity, based on shared Protestantism and hostility towards Roman Catholicism.²⁴ Linda Colley, a noted historian of this British Protestant identity, argues that common features of Protestantism shared amongst the English, Scottish and Welsh enabled them to forge and adopt a shared British identity, capable of overcoming historical quarrels and rivalries. Thus by the nineteenth century, Protestantism had become the dominant component of 'Britishness', colouring how Britons, including Scots, approached and viewed national politics.²⁵ Stewart Brown takes this further regarding Scotland and the creation of a shared identity for both Scotland and England, arguing that both valued their 'constitution of Church and State', and describing the British state they had forged as being a 'Protestant confessional state' in which the British public 'were expected to conform to the worship and discipline of the established Church of the historic kingdom in which they resided' because 'the established Churches were fundamental to the constitution of the state'.²⁶ Brown contends that the two most significant British religious reforms of the late 1820s – repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts in 1828, and Catholic Emancipation in 1829 – marked both a 'first

²³ C. G. Brown, *Religion and Society in Scotland since 1707*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1997, pp. 187-188.

²⁴ C. G. Brown, *Religion and Society in Scotland Since 1707*, pp. 177-178.

²⁵ L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation*, p. 18.

²⁶ S. J. Brown, *The National Churches of England, Ireland and Scotland 1801-46*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 1.

blow' against, and a 'fundamental transformation of the Protestant Constitution of the United Kingdom.'²⁷

Despite the development of a national Protestant identity that was manifestly British, Scotland retained a separate and distinctive identity with respect to its religion. Callum Brown cautions against overstating the relationship between Scottish identity and religion, noting that for most of the nineteenth century, Scots were more divided along religious lines, and that religion usually frustrated Scottish national aspirations, instead of fostering national unity.²⁸ Andrew Muirhead notes that by the mid-nineteenth century, although Scotland remained predominantly Presbyterian, schisms and splits meant no single Church could claim to 'speak for the country' in the same way as England.²⁹ The 'Great Disruption' of 1843, where the Church of Scotland split, with significant numbers of its adherents breaking to form the Free Church of Scotland,³⁰ and the sectarian divisions that accompanied increased Irish Catholic migration into West Scotland, are key examples of how these divisions formed limitations against any unifying religious identity.³¹ However, despite this, there was a relationship between Scottish national identity, distinct from British identity, and Scottish religious identity. Pentland argues that 'there was a pronounced Scottish aspect' within the wider British debates concerning religious reform and toleration in the early nineteenth century, noting the strong arguments of Scottish parliamentarians against the Test and Corporation Acts.³²

The late 1820s were a period of dramatic change concerning religious identity and policy within British and Scottish politics and society. Part of this change was related to economic and social shifts, with Tom Devine, among others, arguing that rapid industrialisation and urbanisation in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries placed stress on traditional religious structures.³³ But the more obvious shift was within political contexts, resulting from the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts in

²⁷ Brown, pp. 137, 146.

²⁸ C. G. Brown, 'Religion and National Identity in Scotland Since the Union of 1707', in I. Brohed (ed.), *Church and People in Britain and Scandinavia*, Lund, Lund University Press, 1996, p. 283.

²⁹ A. T. N. Muirhead, *Reformation, Dissent and Diversity: The Story of Scotland's Churches, 1560-1960*, London, Bloomsbury, 2015, p. 132.

³⁰ Muirhead, pp. 125-127.

³¹ G. Pentland, *Radicalism, Reform and National Identity in Scotland, 1820-1833*, Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 2008, p. 71.

³² Pentland, p. 63.

³³ T. M. Devine, *The Scottish Nation 1700-2000*, New York, Penguin, 1999, p. 364.

1828, and the passing of Catholic Emancipation in 1829. These twin reforms, Michael Tomko notes, ended officially sanctioned religious discrimination against Protestant dissenters and Roman Catholics by the British state.³⁴ The coverage of these by the *Review* and *Maga* provide insight into how these religious reforms were regarded within Scottish elite opinion, and how they interacted with wider developments regarding Scotland's national identity. Each reform, and each publication, held a distinctive link to wider questions relating to religion and Scottish national identity.

Religious reform was new in 1828. It had been an ongoing issue related to problems concerning Ireland. Prime Minister William Pitt had intended the Irish Act of Union in 1801, politically integrating Ireland within Britain, to be accompanied by the concession of rights for Catholics, who comprised the majority of the Irish population.³⁵ However, George III's refusal to assent to any emancipatory bill resulted in Ireland entering the Union, with the Irish-Catholic majority deprived of political rights.³⁶ The issue re-emerged in the 1820s with newfound intensity, driven partly by Whig agitation, but mainly by events in Ireland, particularly the campaigning of Daniel O'Connell and his Catholic Association challenging the government of Lord Wellington in London on reform.³⁷

The first of the two major religious reforms was the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. These statutes, the Corporation Act of 1661 and the Test Acts of 1673, required holders of various public and military offices in England to undertake an oath of allegiance to the Church of England recognising its supremacy, and to have received Church of England sacramental rites in the year prior. The Acts were rarely enforced by the nineteenth century; a point noted by editor of the *Review* from its inception in 1802 until 1829,³⁸ Francis Jeffrey:

³⁴ M. Tomko, *British Romanticism and the Catholic Question: Religion, History and National Identity, 1778-1829*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, p. 182.

³⁵ Pentland, *Radicalism, Reform and National Identity*, p. 65.

³⁶ E. J. Evans, *The Forging of the Modern State: Early Industrial Britain 1783-1870*, Harlow, Pearson Education, 2001, p. 125.

³⁷ F. O'Ferrall, *Daniel O'Connell*, Dublin, Gill & Macmillan, 1998, p. 64; B. Jenkins, *Era of Emancipation: British Government of Ireland, 1812-1830*, Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988, pp.261-262.

³⁸ P. F. Morgan, 'Introduction', in P. F. Morgan (ed.), *Jeffrey's Criticisms*, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1983, p. 1; Jeffrey, Francis', in Brake and Demoor (ed.), *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism in Great Britain and Ireland*, p. 316; 'Jeffrey, Francis', in *The Concise Dictionary of National Biography: Volume II, G-M*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994, pp. 1582-1583.

It is acknowledged by the Government itself, that these laws are unfit to be executed; and they are only retained to overawe the Dissenters. But of all the things in the world, men hate to be overawed; so that if these statutes have any effect at all, it is to render a vast portion of the country dissatisfied with both Church and State, which cannot contribute much to the peace or safety of either.³⁹

Jeffrey further attacked that the Acts specifically on the basis of their uneven enforcement, particularly against Catholics:

By the laws, the Irish Catholics are in a better situation than any of the Protestant Dissenters; for these last are legally excluded from all civil and military offices whereas the Irish Catholics are now legally eligible to all these offices, with the exception of about forty of the higher stations. But the practice is extremely different. In fact, all the offices of the state, civil and military, are open to Presbyterians, to [Protestant Dissenters], and even to the avowed disbelievers of Christianity. It is our Catholic countrymen alone who suffer from the intolerant statutes; the Catholics are the only subjects of this realm who are actually molested and degraded on account of their religion.⁴⁰

Jeffrey argued the Acts no longer held any purpose, and instead merely agitated Catholics and non-Anglican Protestants. He acknowledged that Presbyterians, among others, were exempt from the measures by the nineteenth century, but his uncompromising opposition to the 'intolerant statutes' reflects Brown's argument the statutes retained a symbolic importance: first, by marking the Church of England as 'integral to the Protestant constitution', and second, by marking other denominations and Churches with a 'badge of inferiority'.⁴¹ Additionally, many reformers welcomed repeal as the catalyst for the wider cause of Catholic Emancipation.

In Scotland repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts attained a greater significance than in England, as it was more than a mere civil matter. Repeal in Scotland included a patriotic aspect concerning the statutes application to Presbyterians and members of the Church of Scotland.⁴² On this basis, repeal gained widespread cross-party support in Scotland, where it converged with political insecurities regarding Scotland's supposedly equal status with England within the Union. Speaking in the House of

³⁹ F. Jeffrey, 'Toleration', *Edinburgh Review*, vol. 26, February 1816, p. 64

⁴⁰ Jeffrey, pp. 60-61.

⁴¹ S. J. Brown, *The National Churches of England, Ireland and Scotland* p. 137.

⁴² Pentland, *Radicalism, Reform, and National Identity in Scotland*, p. 65.

Lords, senior Scottish Tory Lord Melville attacked prohibitions on Presbyterians as an absurdity.⁴³ The Earl of Haddington went even further, arguing that the Church of Scotland should be constitutionally equal to the Church of England, and that any contrary constitutional arrangement would violate the Union's principles,⁴⁴ echoing Scottish Tory arguments that the Union was a partnership of equals, not Scottish subservience. Thus, the debate concerning repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts became infused with wider issues relating to Scottish national identity.

Despite strong support amongst the Scottish elite for repealing the Test and Corporation Acts, the *Review* published few articles dedicated to repeal, and the only *Maga* reference to the repeal is in an 1829 article more concerned with Emancipation.⁴⁵ In a leading *Review* article, editor Francis Jeffrey advocated repeal, and the language employed referring to Scotland within the Union is noteworthy, particularly his arguments based explicitly on Scottish history. Jeffrey noted that 'it cannot now be wise to retain the Corporation and Test Acts, which may put it into the power of a monarch, as bigoted as Charles the First, to exclude from the service of their country, all those who do not conform to the Church of England.'⁴⁶ The example of Charles I referenced Charles' failed attempts at imposing Anglican sacraments upon Scotland in 1637.⁴⁷ These historical events were invoked by Jeffrey as worthy of national pride, and formed part of his calls for repeal on the basis of religious toleration.⁴⁸ He cited Scotland's ecclesiastical independence, noting former Scottish fears regarding English intentions concerning Church matters, and the difference between the 'splendid' English and 'simple' Scottish established Churches:

Experience has demonstrated that pains and penalties and disabilities irritate and inflame; whilst lenient and liberal measures conciliate, and unite in the social charities and public duties of life, the members of every different religious communion. We have a striking illustration of this in the blessings

⁴³ Lord Melville, in T. C. Hansard (ed.), *The Parliamentary Debates Vol. XVIII*, London, Government Publications Library, 1828, pp. 1579-1780, cited in Pentland, *Radicalism, Reform, and National Identity in Scotland*, p. 64.

⁴⁴ Earl of Haddington, in Hansard (ed.), *The Parliamentary Debates Vol. XVIII*, p. 1586-1587, cited in Pentland, *Radicalism, Reform, and National Identity in Scotland*, p. 64.

⁴⁵ Robinson, D., 'The breaking in upon the Constitution of 1688', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, vol. 25, April 1829, p. 521; for further discussion, see below, n. 72.

⁴⁶ Jeffrey, 'Toleration', p. 64.

⁴⁷ D. Scott, *Politics and War in the Three Stuart Kingdoms, 1637-49*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, pp. 12-13.

⁴⁸ C. Kidd, *Subverting Scotland's Past*, p. 23.

which have resulted from the Union of Scotland and England. Before that happy event, it was dreaded, not only by the short-sighted, but by many of the wise among the Scotch, as destructive of their Church Establishment. An immense majority of Episcopalians, who they had every reason to believe were at that time implacably hostile to Presbytery, were to legislate for their country. It was therefore deemed reasonable to suspect, that although policy might lead them to avoid any open attempt, zeal would dispose them to adopt indirect means to substitute the splendid forms of the hierarchy for the simple rites of Presbyterian government.⁴⁹

Despite initial suspicions, Jeffrey argued that ‘the progress of knowledge has rendered them more tolerant of each other, and induced them to overlook those things in which they disagree, and value each other for those pleasing and useful qualifications.’⁵⁰ Henry Parnell, Whig MP and great-uncle of late-century Irish nationalist Charles Stewart Parnell,⁵¹ concurred, and cited Scottish history as providing an example:

So great in fact is the similitude between the Church of Rome and of England, that the Scotch and all other Reformed churches have made but little distinction between them. The Church of England has been called by them the eldest daughter of Antichrist - and many other choice epithets have been applied to her by our early reformers, which we do not now chose to repeat.⁵²

Early Scottish Calvinist reformers regarded the Church of England as overly Catholic, yet centuries later under the Union the two Churches co-existed peacefully. Both Jeffrey and Parnell were arguing religious toleration and respect between the national Churches of British nations had fostered greater understanding and harmony. The *Review* thus utilised Scottish history in a British patriotic fashion. Scotland, formerly an ignorant nation, had progressed toward greater enlightenment as part of the British state.

⁴⁹ Jeffrey, ‘Toleration’, p. 66.

⁵⁰ Jeffrey, p. 66.

⁵¹ R. Kee, *The Laurel and the Ivy: The story of Charles Stewart Parnell and Irish Nationalism*, London, Hamish Hamilton, 1993, pp. 59, 72.

⁵² H. Parnell, ‘Catholic Emancipation – power of the pope – divided allegiance of the Catholics’, vol. 43, November 1825, p. 129.

Despite aligning over the Test and Corporation Acts repeal, Scottish Whigs and Tories diverged over the wider implications of further reform. For the *Review*, Scotland and the Union provided an example religious toleration and pluralism in practice, and exemplified the benefits of Britain for Scotland. According to Jeffrey, formerly:

The Presbyterians in Scotland were persecuted most unmercifully, and to death, not by the Papists, but by their Protestant brethren of the Episcopal Church... What was the consequence? Not the conversion of the Presbyterians; not the security of the Establishment; but the reverse. The schism became incurable; the former animosities were embittered and perpetuated.⁵³

For Jeffrey, toleration had fixed these defects in the Scottish nation, which persecution had merely inflamed. In 1807, he argued that that it was the Union that facilitated religious tolerance in Britain, and again cited Scottish history as the example of this in practice:

The original stiffness of their original Calvinism has been softened down... The army and the navy are now filled with staunch Presbyterians; and the sons of those very men, who rose in arms against a government which made their religion a ground of persecution and contempt, are, now... the most devoted of its subjects.⁵⁴

Religious toleration within the Union had ‘improved’ Scotland by ‘softening’ its ‘Calvinist stiffness’, part of the wider Whig view of the British improvement of Scotland. The persecution and animosity between England and Scotland had been ended through the Union, and the increased tolerance it afforded the Scottish Church. William Empson, a lawyer and *Review* contributor of thirty years who served as editor from 1832 to 1847,⁵⁵ echoed Jeffrey. Recalling the religious disputes of Anglo-Scottish history, Empson noted:

The Act of Union provided that Presbytery should continue the Scotch, as Episcopacy in the English Establishment; and that this separate and mutually

⁵³ Jeffrey, ‘Toleration’, p. 56.

⁵⁴ F. Jeffrey, ‘Pamphlets on the Catholic question’, *Edinburgh Review*, vol. 11, October 1807, p. 131.

⁵⁵ ‘Empson, William’, in Brake and Demoor (ed.), *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism*, p. 316

independent church government was to be considered as part of the Union, without aiming a putting the regulation within each Church out of its own power, without putting both Churches out of the power of the state. It could not mean to forbid us to set any things ecclesiastical in order, but at the expense of tearing up all foundations, and forfeiting the inestimable benefits (for inestimable they are) which we derive from the happy union of the two kingdoms.⁵⁶

Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, for Jeffrey and Empson, formed the next stage of Scottish progress through Britain. England and Scotland, with their theologically separate state Churches, now co-existed relatively harmoniously, representing British progress and enlightenment. Implicit in such terms was a threat: failure to extend this progress to Ireland, particularly given the increasing political agitation there, could represent a threat to the British project.

This view is replicated in *Review* articles advocating the cause of Catholic Emancipation. Scotland was cited as underlining why religious tolerance was desirable: the accommodation of Episcopal England and Presbyterian Scotland within the Union was one of Britain's strengths. *Review* contributors further argued Scotland showed toleration as the solution for Ireland. Sydney Smith, an English Whig and Anglican clergyman who moved to Edinburgh in 1798 and had helped establish the *Review*,⁵⁷ asked 'why cannot England be just as happy with Ireland being Catholic, as it is with Scotland being Presbyterian? Has not the Church of England lived side by side with the Kirk, without crossing or jostling, for these last hundred years?'⁵⁸ For Whigs, Scotland's religious freedom within the Union, and Scotland's subsequent development, vindicated their interpretation of Scotland's relationship to Britain.⁵⁹ The solution to the problems of Ireland lay in extending to her those same Union privileges granted to Scotland in 1707. Empson explicitly made this argument:

And thus has Ireland been, for upwards of a century, what Scotland would have been, had our statesmen also legislated, at the creation of the kingdom of Great Britain, upon the more plausible supposition that Presbyterians are

⁵⁶ W. Empson, 'The last of the Catholic question: its principle, history and effects', *Edinburgh Review*, vol. 49, March 1829, 'pp. 247-248.

⁵⁷ 'Smith, Sydney', in Brake and Demoor (ed.), *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism*, p. 580; P. Virgin, *Sydney Smith*, London, HarperCollins, 1994, pp. 2-3.

⁵⁸ S. Smith, 'The Catholic question', *Edinburgh Review*, vol. 43, November 1827, p. 444.

⁵⁹ A. Jackson, *The Two Unions*, pp. 239-241.

ill-disposed towards monarchy, and therefore ineligible to office under a monarchical constitution.⁶⁰

More explicitly, he stated: ‘if in Ireland, it appears occasionally to have contracted a coarseness and almost republican acrimony of spirit, the source is in its civil degradation. Received within the British constitution, it will immediately become itself constitutional.’⁶¹ Jeffrey, repeating older arguments,⁶² argued for Emancipation based on this same Irish context, citing Scotland as the ideal:

... if the establishment of Episcopacy had been upheld in [Scotland] by the same means that Protestantism has been upheld in Ireland; and if Presbyterians had been subjected to all the disqualifications, and exposed to all the insults and injuries which are now the lot of Catholics in the neighbouring island... is there anyone who does not see, that, instead of a pattern of loyalty, and a nursery for our soldiers and sailors, it would have been a centre for sedition and discontent, and required the control of more forces than it now supplies; that instead of adding to the strength of the empire, it would have been a source of weakness and apprehension; and would have been, in one word, like Ireland, the seat of rebellion, and the point of attack for every power with which we were at enmity.⁶³

The Scottish Whigs thus embraced a distinctive Scottish identity during debates concerning religious reform in the late 1820s, but were driven by Whig goals of strengthening the British state. John Wolfe notes this paradox, whereby the Whigs embraced and celebrated Scotland’s distinctive religious identity and history, but instead of using this to encourage Scottish nationalism they encouraged further assimilation into Britain.⁶⁴

As the *Review* and the Scottish Whigs embraced Scottish religious identity in their advocacy of religious reform, Maga staunchly opposed Emancipation efforts, but not from a distinctively Scottish perspective. In contrast to its arguments opposing parliamentary reform, Maga’s opposition to Emancipation was characterised by

⁶⁰ Empson, ‘The last of the Catholic question’, p. 225.

⁶¹ Empson, pp. 237-238.

⁶² See Jeffrey, ‘Toleration’, and Jeffrey, ‘Pamphlets on the Catholic question’.

⁶³ Jeffrey, ‘Pamphlets on the Catholic Question’, p. 131.

⁶⁴ J. Wolfe, *The Protestant Crusade in Great Britain 1829-1860*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1991, pp. 310-311.

British patriotism, usually in relation to Ireland, with little separate mention of Scotland. Many of the contributors on the subject were brazen in their anti-Catholic rhetoric, such as John Wilson, an academic and writer who briefly wrote for the *Review* before moving to *Maga* to become one of its most prolific contributors.⁶⁵ While analysing two speeches by English Tory MP Sir Robert Inglis opposing Emancipation, Wilson claimed:

The Roman Catholic superstition hangs, at its clearest, like a day of dense fogs – at its darkest, like a night of black clouds – over the reason and the conscience. He who denies or doubts that, must regard the Reformation as a mockery and a dream. Such doubt, or such denial, is incompatible with any attachment to Protestantism; and if you are a papist – pardon us – but on this question you must not open your lips. We are Protestants; and you must become one of us before you can enjoy the blessings brought by Protestant blood.⁶⁶

Wilson further argued ‘Popery... is a fatal superstition; and a Protestant state must not trust its vital interests – its existence – to Papists.’⁶⁷ Whereas Whigs saw Emancipation as beneficial for Ireland and therefore Scotland and Britain, Wilson and *Maga* viewed Emancipation as a threat to the British ‘Protestant constitution’. Not only was Ireland alienated from this Protestant Union on account of the Irish nation’s Catholicism. Wilson went further, portraying Ireland as a malevolent threat to Protestant Britain.

William Johnston, a political theorist and leading political contributor to *Maga* during the reform period,⁶⁸ made one of *Maga*’s few explicit references to Scotland on Emancipation, where he compared the ‘national characteristics’ of England, Scotland and Ireland:

The manners, customs, and language of nations may alter and improve; but there are certain great national characteristics which, however modified, remain in their leading features the same. England, as long as we know her,

⁶⁵ Wilson, John’, in Brake and Demoor (ed.), *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism*, p. 679.

⁶⁶ J. Wilson, ‘Substance of Sir Robert Inglis’s two speeches on the Catholic question’, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, vol. 24, December 1828, Part II, p. 812.

⁶⁷ Wilson, p. 812.

⁶⁸ M. Milne, ‘A Neglected Paternalist: William Johnston of “Blackwood’s Magazine”’, *Victorian Periodical Review*, vol. 28, no. 1, 1995, p. 11.

has been sturdy, inflexible England. She would never be bullied or driven into anything, nor will she yet. Scotland would never abide the stranger to dwell within her quarters; but whether he came with bow and spear, or with surplice and prayer book, she drove him forth; and still stands maintaining her own laws and religion. Ireland – wild Ireland, the land of quick feeling and unsettled principles, never was constant or unanimous in any purpose, nor is she now. Leave her to herself, and treachery and disunion would continue to tear her into pieces. “Unite as one man!” changed indeed must she be, before that can be truly said of her.⁶⁹

While the *Review* saw Scotland as a British ideal that Ireland could become, Johnston and Maga portrayed her as battle-ready and strong-willed, the romanticised *Blackwood* Tory ideal of Scotland. By contrast, Ireland was ‘unprincipled’ and ‘treacherous’, incapable of British remedy because of her Catholicism. Scotland was also referred to by David Robinson, a journalist and Maga’s political editor in the late 1820s,⁷⁰ in the form of a warning. Without naming specific individuals, Robinson attacked newly elected MPs of the 1826 general election, who had opposed Emancipation before their election, only to subsequently endorse it. He questioned the suitability of Catholics for public office, asking ‘ye men of England and Scotland, who love your constitution and liberties, are [Catholics] proper persons to be admitted into Parliament and the Ministry?’⁷¹. Robinson later warned of the ‘breaking’ of Britain’s constitution, referring to the campaign for Emancipation, as ‘never before was England polluted with such monstrous proceedings.’⁷² This was reiteration of the Tory theme that Britain and Scotland were ‘threatened’ by reform, and an embrace by Robinson of the position of the ultra-Tories, who opposed any form of religious reform.⁷³ The exclusion of a distinctive Scottish perspective in Maga’s arguments against Emancipation, in contrast to other subjects, raises questions as to why. The answer comes from the contradiction Scottish Tories faced over this issue. To embrace a distinctive Scottish position regarding religious toleration, as was done by

⁶⁹ W. Johnston, ‘Brief remarks on a long debate in the House of Commons [on the Catholic question]’, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, vol. 24, July 1828, p. 91.

⁷⁰ ‘Robinson, David’ in Brake and Demoor (ed.), *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism*, pp. 543-544.

⁷¹ D. Robinson, ‘The Romish priesthood, and the election in Ireland’, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, vol. 20, September 1826, p. 513.

⁷² D. Robinson, ‘The breaking in upon the Constitution of 1688’, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, vol. 25, April 1829, p. 505.

⁷³ Pentland, *Radicalism, Reform and National Identity in Scotland*, p. 63.

Whigs and the *Review*, was to concede religious pluralism within Britain was both achievable and desirable. Scotland had prospered within a Union that expressly preserved her religious heritage and identity. The *Review* made the logical argument that the solution to the Irish problem was Scottish, by extending the same Union rights and freedoms to Ireland as extended to Scotland.

The passing of Emancipation in 1829 heralded a transformation of the British Protestant constitution, breaking assumptions the Union was based upon shared Protestantism.⁷⁴ It split the Tories and, according to William Ferguson, marked the beginning of the end for Scottish Toryism.⁷⁵ For a reform portrayed as a transformative moment for Britain and Scotland, the relative silence of each magazine on the subject in the immediate aftermath of the passing of the Roman Catholic Relief Act is striking. However, arguably, neither the *Review* nor *Maga* considered this stage the end of the debate. Reformists hoped, and anti-reformists feared, that Emancipation would constitute a step toward further reforms, especially of parliament and the electoral system. Given the clear opinion of *Maga* and Scottish Tories on that issue, the writers of *Maga* arguably regarded this coming debate as more fundamental to questions of Scottish identity.

⁷⁴ S. J. Brown, *The National Churches of England, Scotland and Ireland*, p. 146.

⁷⁵ W. Ferguson, *Scotland 1689 to the Present*, Edinburgh, Oliver and Boyd, 1968, p. 286.

Chapter Two: Political reform and civic identity

In the early decades of the nineteenth century, British politics experienced a transformative period. Reforms promoting increased religious toleration had played a role, but it was parliamentary reform in 1832 that made this arguably one of the most febrile periods in British political history.⁷⁶ Cunningham argues that ‘the Reform Act... was perhaps the most important piece of legislation of the period’,⁷⁷ and it certainly was vis-à-vis Scotland. The political drama concerning the Scottish Reform Act of 1832 significantly impacted Scotland’s unique civic identity, with a particularly dramatic impact on Scottish Whig identity. William Gladstone would later argue that ‘for Scotland [the Reform Act] was a political birth, the beginning of a duty and a power, neither of which had attached to the Scottish nation in the preceding period.’⁷⁸

Gladstone was recognising a significant aspect of Scottish identity: a civic identity, formed and expressed through Scotland’s historic institutions preserved under the Act of Union in 1707. The role of such institutions – particularly the Scots law jurisdiction, education system and civic society – was immense. According to Fry, ‘institutions were important for Scotland. Her nationhood after 1707 had been sustained, largely through distinctive institutions.’⁷⁹ By the nineteenth century, these institutions were integral to Scottish national identity. James Mackenzie and Tom Devine describe Scotland as having the ‘anomalous status’ of being a nation governed by distinctive national institutions, while lacking statehood.⁸⁰ Graeme Morton contends that the development of this connection between Scottish nationhood and civic institutions resulted from the continued existence and acceptance of distinctively Scottish institutions, which empowered Scotland, notwithstanding her ‘statelessness’.⁸¹ Occasionally there were struggles concerning attempts to centralise

⁷⁶ F. O’Gorman, *The Emergence of the British Two-Party System*, London, Edward Arnold, 1982, pp. 109-110.

⁷⁷ H. Cunningham, *The Challenge of Democracy, Britain 1832-1918*, Great Britain, Pearson Education, 2001, p. 29.

⁷⁸ W. Gladstone, ‘Letter to Sir John Cowen’, 17 March 1894, cited in C. Harvie, *Scotland and Nationalism: Scottish society and politics, 1707-1994*, London, Routledge, 1994, p. 14.

⁷⁹ M. Fry, *Power and Patronage: A Political History of Modern Scotland*, Aberdeen, Aberdeen University Press, 1987, p. 29.

⁸⁰ J. M. Mackenzie and T. M. Devine, ‘Introduction’, in J. M. Mackenzie and T. M. Devine (ed.), *Scotland and the British Empire*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2011, p. 2.

⁸¹ G. Morton, *Image and Identity*, Edinburgh, Bell & Bain, 1998, pp. 160-161.

those institutions, often driven by Whig pursuing assimilation within Britain. However, Westminster typically showed little interest in Scottish institutions, provided they did not threaten British interests, described by Jackson as ‘benign neglect’.⁸² The continued existence of such institutions fostered the development of dual Scottish and British identities, with the Scottish aspect especially set upon this institutional foundation. Both the *Review* and *Maga* assumed positions on parliamentary reform within this institutional framework of Scottish civic identity, but the identity each expressed differed greatly.

Consideration of Scottish national identity in relation to the Reform Act must be considered within the context of the Act itself, with specific focus on the nature and key actors of that debate in Scotland. The Scottish Reform Act was one of several political reforms in Britain at the time, and the debates in Scotland reached their zenith in the early 1830s,⁸³ particularly after the government of Earl Grey assumed office in November 1830. For Grey, parliamentary reform was of critical importance in preventing further agitation, and defusing the threat of revolution.⁸⁴ While the debate over parliamentary reform was a British debate, Scotland’s distinctive civic institutions and identity meant the reform debate in Scotland was distinguished in certain ways.

It is difficult to conclusively speak to the view of all Scottish Tories or Whigs during the reform debate. Considerably weaker party structures and looser partisan affiliations made it not unusual to see pro-reform Tories or anti-reform Whigs.⁸⁵ Generally, however, most Tories opposed reform, with Scottish Tories among the most strident opponents.⁸⁶ Labels concerning partisan positions on reform are difficult. Eric Evans notes that ‘it is more accurate to talk of groups than parties.’⁸⁷ Terms like ‘reformist’ and ‘anti-reformist’, or ‘Whig’ and ‘Tory’ are often used interchangeably to describe such groups. Pentland argues that ‘it is difficult to identify

⁸² A. Jackson, *The Two Unions: Ireland, Scotland, and the Survival of the United Kingdom, 1707-2007*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2012, p. 240.

⁸³ G. Pentland, *Radicalism, Reform and National Identity in Scotland, 1820-1833*, Woodbridge, Boydell, 2008, pp. 49-50.

⁸⁴ J. Black and D. M. Macrauld, *Nineteenth Century Britain*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, pp. 134-135.

⁸⁵ O’Gorman, *Emergence of the British Two-Party System*, p. 116.

⁸⁶ G. Pentland, *Radicalism, Reform and National Identity in Scotland*, p. 98.

⁸⁷ E. J. Evans, *The Forging of the Modern State: Earlier Industrial Britain 1783-1870*, Harlow, Pearson Education, 2001, p. 484

coherent Whig and Tory positions on the reform bills’, as ‘what was often debated was not whether there ought to be reform, but rather to what extent and along what lines it ought to occur.’⁸⁸ The reform debate was multifaceted and complex, but the magazines only hint at this, largely confining their coverage to the presumed ideological opinions of their readerships. This arguably speaks more to the febrile and competitive nature of early-nineteenth-century publishing than to political polarisation,⁸⁹ but it should be noted the magazine positions did not necessarily correspond with wider opinion.

For Scottish Whigs, reform represented an opportunity to transform Scotland’s ancient institutions, particularly the restrictive and corrupt Scottish electoral system. Henry Cockburn, a lawyer who had struggled to advance his career within Scotland’s Tory-dominated bench,⁹⁰ Solicitor-General of Scotland, co-drafter of the Scottish Reform Bill, and regular *Review* contributor, articulated this Whig position.⁹¹ Cockburn critiqued the closed, corrupt nature of Scottish politics, alleging that ‘in Scotland there is no popularity at all in any one place... It is therefore unnecessary to explain that the people of Scotland scarcely feel any interest in the election of their representatives. They are not taken into calculation by the parties engaged; and, having no right to interfere, the expression of their opinion is considered intrusive and dangerous.’⁹² He expressed embarrassment at Scotland’s politicians, arguing that ‘the greater part of the talent of the country is turned away from Parliament. Usefulness or glory in the House of Commons forms no object with the youth of Scotland, and indeed is rarely ever thought of.’⁹³ For him, reform would yield an ‘improved quality’ – presumably more Whigs– of representatives from Scotland as ‘a reformed system of election would breathe a better spirit into the representatives; and it is the only thing that will ever enable the country to redeem itself from the hereditary shame of

⁸⁸ G. Pentland, ‘Debate on Scottish Parliamentary Reform, 1830-1832’, *Scottish Historical Review*, vol. 85, no. 219, 2006, p. 103.

⁸⁹ M. Schoenfield, *British Periodicals and Romantic Identity: The “Literary Lower Empire”*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p. 4.

⁹⁰ J. Fergusson, ‘A great citizen of nineteenth-century Edinburgh’, in A. Bell (ed.), *Lord Cockburn: A Bicentenary Commemoration 1779-1979*, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1979, p. 2.

⁹¹ W. Ferguson, ‘The Reform Act (Scotland) of 1832: intention and effect’, *Scottish Historical Review*, Vol. 45, No. 139, 1966, p. 105; K. F. C. Miller, ‘Introduction’, in K. F. C. Miller (ed.) *Henry Cockburn: Memorials of his Time*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1974, pp. xiii-xiv.

⁹² H. Cockburn, ‘Parliamentary representation of Scotland’, *Edinburgh Review*, vol. 52, October 1830, p. 213.

⁹³ Cockburn, p. 217.

producing everything that is great, except statesmen.’⁹⁴ Cockburn placed parliamentary reform within the wider project of Scottish advancement through British constitutionalism.

Where Whigs saw opportunity, Tories saw threats. For them, the reform proposals constituted a dangerous experiment in democracy, which instead of diminishing the threat of revolution would more likely encourage further agitation. Sir Archibald Alison – a Glasgow lawyer, senior Scottish Tory, and regular *Maga* contributor who became political editor in 1831⁹⁵ - argued:

Nothing has so completely demonstrated the appalling danger of Reform, as the effect that has resulted from the prospect even of obtaining it... If the measure be at all successful, no prudence or moderation on the part of the Government will be able to prevent its consequences. They will speedily fall under the tempest they have excited, the moment they attempt to moderate its fury... No argument is more frequently used by the Reformers, and none is more utterly unfounded, than that the concession of Reform is the only way to prevent a revolution. In truth, there is no danger whatever of such a catastrophe but from its adoption.⁹⁶

Alison was ‘the political mainstay of [*Maga*]’ during the 1820s and 30s, and the individual from whom *Maga* ‘took its political character from... more than any other single contributor.’⁹⁷ His arguments reflected traditional Tory anti-Reform attitudes, based on British constitutional principles – specifically that the proposed reforms represented a dangerous corruption of the constitution – and echoed Edmund Burke’s famous criticisms on the French Revolution.⁹⁸ For Alison, Catholic Emancipation and Ireland offered warnings that the reformists were misguided:

From this has proceeded the violent adoption and authoritative imposition of Catholic emancipation – a measure which, however just when abstractly

⁹⁴ Cockburn, p. 218.

⁹⁵ ‘Blackwood, William’, in L. Brake and M. Demoor (ed.), *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism in Great Britain and Ireland*, London, The British Library, 2009, p. 59; Alison, Sir Archibald’, in *The Concise Dictionary of National Biography: Volume I, A-F*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 37.

⁹⁶ A. Alison, ‘On the French Revolution No. III’, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, vol. 29, March 1831, p. 432.

⁹⁷ M. Milne, ‘Archibald Alison: Conservative Controversialist’, *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, vol. 27, no. 3, 1995, p. 420.

⁹⁸ T. P. Schofield, ‘Conservative Political Thought in Britain in Response to the French Revolution’, *The Historical Journal*, vol. 29, no. 3, 1986, p. 603.

considered, is now admitted to have done violence to the feelings of the majority of the nation; the benefits of which, though loudly promised have never yet been experienced; for which has distracted a peaceful, without tranquilising an agitated community; which has thrown the torch of civil discord into England, without taking it out of Ireland.⁹⁹

Despite Whig assurances that reform would pacify Ireland, Alison argued that it merely encouraged further agitation. Parliamentary reform would have the same effect.

Beyond general arguments, Scotland featured heavily in Alison's anti-Reform arguments. While Cockburn insisted reform would 'improve' Scotland, Alison considered it a dangerous political scheme by the Scottish Whigs:

No one in Scotland was thinking of reform, except the Whigs, who clung to it as a lever, whereby, in periods of excitement, to rouse the spirit on which they hoped to rise into power... The Whig leaders in Parliament... have indeed, for party purposes, asserted the reverse, and the popular orators have re-echoed the cry; but there is no man who will support the proposition on this side of the Tweed.'¹⁰⁰

He further attacked Whigs for encouraging agitation, arguing that 'such is the state to which, in the space of six months, the prospect even of Reform has reduced this once happy and united country.'¹⁰¹ Support for minor reforms to parliamentary representation were not universally opposed among Scottish Tories. Alison expressed support for increasing the number of Scottish MPs – an issue where he claimed the Reform Bill was inadequate: 'the only objection we have [to the clause giving Scotland five additional representatives] is that it does not go nearly far enough. It is clear that, both with references to its population and wealth, Scotland is extremely under-represented... If innovations are to be practised on the Constitution, here is a change founded in justice, injurious to no interest, threatening to no class of society.'¹⁰² Alison and Maga supported minor reforms, particularly reforms

⁹⁹ A. Alison, 'Remote causes of the reform passion', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, Vol. 31, January 1832, p. 13.

¹⁰⁰ A. Alison, 'On parliamentary reform and the French Revolution No. VI', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Review*, vol. 29, June 1831, p. 919.

¹⁰¹ Alison, 'No. VI', p. 921.

¹⁰² Alison, 'No. VI', p. 931.

advantageous to Scotland, but only where it would strengthen, or not threaten, the existing system.

These debates were within a pan-British context, but both the *Review* and *Maga* show how the debate in Scotland included a distinctive Scottish context, separate from the wider British debate. They provide clear examples of how Scottish reformers and opponents sought to utilise Scottish identity in their arguments. Pentland notes that both sides recognised the reform proposals proposed a fundamental reshaping of the British political and constitutional framework, with significant potential consequences for Scotland's place within that framework. Both formed arguments that employed 'the language of patriotism', specifically a Scottish-unionist patriotism which articulated different views on the connection between Scotland's history, and its future within the union. While both sides employed such patriotic language, neither achieved a monopoly on it.¹⁰³ The *Review* argued reform was patriotic as it represented the advancement of Scotland, and as 'indicating the progress of liberal opinions, and the downfall of the narrow-minded bigotry under which the country suffered so long.'¹⁰⁴ By contrast, *Maga* employed patriotism by representing reform as an assault on the institutions that had ensured Scotland prospered within the Union by protecting Scotland from undue interference by Westminster. As Alison noted, 'Scotland has prospered in connexion with British legislation because its own institutions are calculated to make a nation happy, and they have nursed a spirit which prevented it being oppressed by its powerful neighbour.'¹⁰⁵

The use of patriotic Scottish language was arguably unavoidable given the context of Scotland's civic institutions. By the time of the reform debate, Scotland still retained separate electoral and legal systems, and a separate civil service, thus Scottish political culture had developed separate from England within the Union. The electoral system reflected this. The number of Scottish voters, pre-reform, was considerably smaller than England, resulting in an electoral system so restrictive it was limited to approximately just 4,579 voters within a population of approximately two million.

¹⁰³ G. Pentland, 'Debate on Scottish Parliamentary Reform', p. 103.

¹⁰⁴ H. Brougham, 'The reformed Parliament – the ballot', *Edinburgh Review*, vol. 57, April 1833, p. 562.

¹⁰⁵ A. Alison, 'On Parliamentary Reform and the French Revolution No. XI: The Rejection of the Bill - The Scotch Reform', vol. 30, November 1831, p. 775.

Electoral practices in Scotland were notoriously corrupt,¹⁰⁶ and Fry notes that even after the Reform Act was passed the enlarged Scottish electorate remained far narrower than England.¹⁰⁷ Given this divergence, and the role of Scotland's autonomous civic and legal institutions toward its national identity, the Reform Act would affect the development of Scottish national identity.

Maga was unequivocally hostile to reform, expressed principally through Alison's 'Parliamentary Reform' series. Alison conceded that many Whig reformists were sincere in their benevolence, but argued that their 'principles inevitably made them political bedfellows with radicals and Chartists.'¹⁰⁸ Sharing government with the professional class, however well intentioned, made the Whigs allies of 'rabble':

... the chief supporters of the Reform Bill in Scotland are the Whig aristocrats, with their professional dependents... The demonstrations of public opinion which have recently been made or are now in progress, in Scotland, completely demonstrate the justice of these observations. While the respectable, influential, and intelligent middling ranks, of every profession and class, are combining to express their alarm and detestation of the Bill, some of the great feudal Whig proprietors are coalescing with the manufacturing rabble to testify their support of its principles.¹⁰⁹

By 'public opinion', Alison was evidently not considering broader Scottish society. He was speaking for and as a member of the restricted Scottish voting class. He employed strong Scottish patriotic rhetoric in his attacks against Whig reformists, accusing them of ignorance regarding Scottish institutions. By contrast, he cast Tories as defenders of Scotland's institutions. The most notable such article was 'Number IX' in his Reform series, where Alison, in great detail, cited Scotland's history as influencing its distinctive role in the Union, and warned against Whig and reformist efforts to undermine that identity. Alison particularly objected to claims that Scotland's progress resulted entirely from English 'beneficence':

¹⁰⁶ F. O'Gorman, *Emergence of the British Two-Party System*, p. 118; Evans, *The Forging of the Modern State*, p. 483.

¹⁰⁷ M. Fry, 'Politics', in A. Cooke, I. Donnachie, A. MacSween and C. A. Walley (ed.), *Modern Scottish History: 1707 to the Present*, East Lothian, Tuckwell, 1998, pp. 58-59; Evans, *The Forging of the Modern State*, p. 483.

¹⁰⁸ M. Michie, *An Enlightenment Tory in Victorian Scotland: The Career of Sir Archibald Alison*, Montreal, McGill-Queens University Press, 1997, p. 164.

¹⁰⁹ A. Alison, 'State of public feeling in Scotland', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, Vol. 31, January 1832, p. 65.

But when our reforming legislators, and even some who might have known better, had declared that Scotland owed nothing to its own institutions, and that its prosperity was entirely to be ascribed to the beneficent legislation of the neighbouring kingdom, that no spirit of freedom ever animated its people, and that gloomy fanaticism alone brought them into the field; these gentlemen either spoke on a subject of which they knew nothing, or they concealed a knowledge of facts destructive of their assertion.¹¹⁰

Instead, Scottish prosperity was the result of both her historic ‘Scottishness’, and her modern ‘Britishness’:

We are not ungrateful to England; we acknowledge... the improvement, which has accrued to us from a closer intercourse with her rich and civilised districts. But justice to our ancestors compels us to say, that it is their enactments – not English legislation – that the old and deep foundations of Scotland’s prosperity are to be found.¹¹¹

This is what Jackson describes as the ‘paradox’ of Scottish Tory unionism: unionism defined by loyalty to both the Union and Scotland’s history and institutions.

The *Review*, by contrast, supported reform efforts. Cockburn – the magazine’s lead contributor on reform – was supported by Henry Brougham, an Edinburgh-born London-based contributor involved in the Whig ministry,¹¹² and Francis Jeffrey, Lord Advocate of Scotland who served with Cockburn as co-drafter and parliamentary co-sponsor of the Scottish Reform Bill.¹¹³ A critical article regarding the *Review*’s position on Scottish national identity and the Reform Act was Cockburn’s ‘The law of Scotland and England’. Cockburn began by criticising ‘defects’ within Scottish institutions, arguing that such ‘defects in the constitution, and in the procedure, of the Civil Scottish Courts were so obvious, that it almost appears as if any body might have pointed out the nature, and the succession, of the remedies that were

¹¹⁰ A. Alison, ‘On parliamentary reform and the French Revolution No. IX: Consequences of reform’, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* vol. 30, September 1831, p. 775.

¹¹¹ Alison, p. 778.

¹¹² ‘Brougham, Henry’, in Brake and Demoor (ed.), *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism in Great Britain and Ireland*, pp. 82-83; R. Stewart, *Henry Brougham: His Public Career 1778-1868*, Bristol, Bodley Head, 1985; T. H. Ford, *Henry Brougham and his world: a biography*, Chichester, Barry Rose, 1995.

¹¹³ ‘Jeffrey, Francis’, in Brake and Demoor (ed.), *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism in Great Britain and Ireland*, p. 316; ‘Jeffrey, Francis’, in *The Concise Dictionary of National Biography: Volume II, G-M*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994, pp. 1582-1583.

required.’¹¹⁴ Cockburn’s proposed remedies were parliamentary, consisting of incorporating specific elements of English common law into Scots Law. He attacked reform critics, stating: ‘each of these innovations was vehemently opposed in its day; and always by those who profess to be haters of innovation. Each of them was maintained by government, and there is now scarcely one of the haters who does not acknowledge that the change has been an improvement.’¹¹⁵ Cockburn later made a direct charge at these Tory ‘haters’:¹¹⁶

There are doubtless some, perhaps many, who, in contemplating those melancholy improvements, inwardly groan for the loss of the good places, in the hope of which they were born. The honest way of expressing this is to say that they feel an interest in the patronage. The circumlocutory way is, to profess perfect personal disinterestedness, but to lament for the dignity of Scotland, which has been amerced, by degrees, of all the symbols of its ancient independence, till at last it can scarcely boast of one place of which the respectability is attested by its well paid, and utterly useless.

While Cockburn here specifically discussed Scottish judicial reforms, the arguments align with broader Whig views on parliamentary reform, and Scottish identity. Cockburn’s attack mocked the Scottish Tory identity, which to him revered a backward and ignorant culture and nation, instead of celebrating the modern and enlightened Scotland. The Union was a necessary part of Scottish enlightenment and history, by which Scotland abandoned her ‘backwardness’, in favour of British constitutional traditions and laws. Historic traditions, and institutions that still adhered to them, had outlived any usefulness for Union Scotland.¹¹⁷ Reform was not merely about ending the endemic corruption and innate conservatism within Scottish politics; it was part of the wider Whig narrative regarding Scotland’s progress.

Despite this Whig view of Scottish institutions that derided what Tories venerated, the *Review*, and especially Cockburn, at a key moment during the reform debates defended Scotland’s separate institutions. In the same article mocking Scots who mourned the loss of ‘independence symbols’, Cockburn attacked Whigs who derided

¹¹⁴ H. Cockburn, ‘The law of Scotland and England’, *Edinburgh Review*, vol. 30, April 1930, p. 114.

¹¹⁵ Cockburn, p. 115.

¹¹⁶ Cockburn, p. 117.

¹¹⁷ Jackson, *The Two Unions*, p. 239.

Scots Law, arguing ‘there has been a foolish disposition in certain quarters to undervalue everything connected with it.’¹¹⁸ He further noted:¹¹⁹

A matter of Scotch Law is necessarily a matter of mere mirth to an English lawyer, who does not understand it, and would probably think himself degraded, if it were suspected that he cared for it... Notwithstanding all of this, we doubt there be a single community in Europe where law has made greater progress than in Scotland.

While acknowledging Scots Law had incorporated elements of English law, Cockburn rejected arguments that the latter was ‘superior’:¹²⁰

The improvements which have of late been made in our forms of administering civil justice, show that it was not perfect... but, though we admit the necessity of these improvements, and even concur in the propriety of still further changes, it is a great error to suppose that the general system of our courts, or of our forms, is, or ever was, intrinsically wrong.

A staunch pro-reform Scottish Whig defending a separate and historic Scottish civic institution seems contradictory, raising questions regarding Cockburn’s sincerity. But this was characteristic of Cockburn. Ferguson notes that Cockburn retained his native dialect, describing the decline of Scottish dialects as a ‘national calamity’. More notably, he regularly ‘castigated attempts from London to override the laws of Scotland.’¹²¹ Cockburn was not alone among Scottish Whigs who now objected to the disparaging of Scottish institutions. Pentland notes that while Jeffrey and Brougham ‘portrayed [Scotland] as a gloomy backwater’ in parliament, newer Scottish MPs, echoing Alison and the Tories, defended Scottish institutions as having contributed, along with the Union, to Scotland’s prosperity.¹²² This shift amongst Scottish Whigs is an example of the shifting nature of identity during this febrile period in Britain.

Fry describes the Reform Act’s effect as ‘sweeping through old institutions, politics, and customs that the Union had preserved.’¹²³ It ended the Tory hold over many

¹¹⁸ H. Cockburn, ‘The law of Scotland and England’, p. 122.

¹¹⁹ Cockburn, p. 123.

¹²⁰ Cockburn, pp. 134-135.

¹²¹ J. Ferguson, ‘Citizen of nineteenth-century Edinburgh’, in Bell (ed.), *Lord Cockburn*, pp. 2, 5-6.

¹²² Pentland, *Radicalism, Reform and National Identity in Scotland*, pp. 96-97.

¹²³ Fry, *Modern Scottish History*, pp. 43-44.

Scottish constituencies, confirming Alison's prediction that reform would 'demolish' the Scottish Tory 'fortress'.¹²⁴ Compared with the Act covering England, the Scottish Reform Act was more limited. The Scottish franchise remained more restrictive than England's, and the constituencies continued over-representing the Tory-voting shires at the expense of Whig-voting urban centres; both qualifications forced by Scottish Tory resistance.¹²⁵ But these limitations failed to prevent a Scottish Whig landslide in 1832, with 43 Whigs elected to just 10 Tories; heralding new century of Whig – later Liberal – dominance of Scottish politics.¹²⁶ This political transformation was unprecedented. In 1831, as Whigs gained considerably in England, Scotland had remained resolutely Tory. Arguably, this indicates that the Scottish electorate, despite remaining restrictions, was more open to reform than Alison and Maga, within their elite milieu, anticipated or understood.

Ironically, for a statute of such significance for Scottish politics and identity, drafting errors by Cockburn and Jeffrey meant that the Scottish Reform Act 'introduced as many evils as it cured.'¹²⁷ Fry argues it was 'botched', blaming Cockburn and Jeffrey and their respective 'arrogance' and 'ignorance'.¹²⁸ Fry further argues that this resulted in a Reform Act that failed to cure ills, while closing down institutional channels originally preserved under the Union, which could have helped cure them.¹²⁹ William Ferguson likewise argues that the respective ignorance and arrogance of Jeffrey and Cockburn were to blame. He specifically criticises their basing of many of the Scottish Act's provisions on the reforms drafted for England, without considering the distinctive legal and political systems, arguing it reveals a 'contemptuous' view of Scotland.¹³⁰ But despite these issues, Cockburn considered the Scottish Reform Act a success, praising already apparent effects by October 1832:¹³¹

Substantially, the enfranchisement answers; all the important towns have large bodies of constituents; Scotland is now a country full of voters, instead

¹²⁴ Alison, 'On the French Revolution No. III', p. 440.

¹²⁵ J. F. McCaffrey, *Scotland in the Nineteenth Century*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1998, pp. 26-27.

¹²⁶ F. W. S. Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Results 1832-1885*, London, Macmillan, 1977, p. 622.

¹²⁷ W. Ferguson, 'The Reform Act (Scotland) of 1832; intention and effect', p. 106.

¹²⁸ Fry, *Modern Scottish History*, p. 59.

¹²⁹ M. Fry, *The Dundas Despotism*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1992, p. 380.

¹³⁰ Ferguson, 'The Reform Act (Scotland) of 1832: intention and effect', pp. 108, 113.

¹³¹ H. Cockburn, 'Working and Prospects of the Reform', *Edinburgh Review*, vol. 56, October 1832, p. 247.

of presenting a waste, a blank, to the eye of the political observer; the rotten boroughs are utterly rooted out; there are hardly half a dozen places where any powerful family can boast of having influence enough to return a single member.

Implicit in this is Whig views relating to Scottish identity and reform, which regarded the Union as the natural advancement of the Scottish nation. The reform was simply the latest step on this path away from ‘backwardness’ – which the old, corrupt voting system and traditional civic institutions embodied – towards an enlightened British Scotland.¹³²

The political battle between the Whig reformers of the *Edinburgh Review*, and the Tory reform opponents of Maga, was a battle between competing views of Scottish national identity in the early nineteenth century. Gladstone was not overstating matters by describing the Reform Act as the ‘political rebirth’ of Scotland. Fry alleges that the Scottish Whigs ‘destroyed without care’ the distinct Scottish civic institutions that had defined Scotland’s place and identity within the Union since 1707.¹³³ Thus that rebirth was of a form that would be unwelcome to Maga and the Tory romanticised Scottish identity. It was certainly the case that the Reform Act marked an end to ‘benign neglect’ of Scotland and its separate civic identity. But in the process of the Reform Act’s passage, a transformation occurred as to how Scottish Whigs articulated and considered their Scottish identity. Pentland notes how some Scottish Whigs came close to articulating the same view of Scottish institutions as Alison, among other anti-reformers, in celebrating and defending Scotland’s pre-1707 history and institutions.¹³⁴ Furthermore, Cockburn agreed that English law could offer solutions and improvements to ‘flaws’ in Scots Law, but he departed from orthodox Scottish Whig views by articulating a defence of Scots Law, contrary to the traditional Whig view of Scottish civic institutions as ‘backward’ and ‘uncouth’. While the Whigs won the battle over parliamentary reform in Scotland, it resulted in younger generations of Scottish Whigs adopting the Scottish Tory identity that embraced Scottish exceptionalism and distinctiveness.

¹³² Jackson, *The Two Unions*, pp. 239-240.

¹³³ Fry, *Power and Patronage*, p. 29.

¹³⁴ Pentland, *Radicalism, Reform and National Identity in Scotland*, pp. 96-97.

Conclusion

In Scotland during the British age of reform in the early nineteenth century, the complex issue of competing dual identities between Scotland and Britain made the reform debate an altogether unique experience and period from elsewhere in Britain. Among Scotland's elite, two key distinguishable Scottish factions battled over reform and identity. For the Scottish Whigs of the *Edinburgh Review*, their Scottishness focused on the future, and saw Scotland's development within the Union as a journey from ignorant backwater to enlightened prosperity. Religious and political reform in the 1820s and 1830s for them marked the next stage and they particularly welcomed the chance to reform the historic institutions Scotland had retained under the Union. For the Scottish Tories of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, Scottishness was based not upon the Union, but on Scotland's past, particularly its romanticised history, as well as the institutions that maintained and defended Scottish nationhood within the Union. Where Whigs like Francis Jeffrey, Henry Brougham and – though to a lesser extent – Henry Cockburn saw Scotland as needing British 'enlightenment', Tories like Archibald Alison, John Wilson and David Robinson considered Scotland an equal partner of England. For these Tories, reform threatened the institutions that distinguished and sustained the Scottish nation. While these were definitively 'Scottish' forms of identity, each also considered itself to be 'British'; the distinction lay in how they regarded Scotland's history, and Scotland's status within the Union. Neither questioned the continuation of that Union.

During this British age of reform, Scottish identity influenced both the course of the debates, and was itself changed by the successful passage of reforms. Maga took a harsh line against all such reforms, fearful that it would lead to the destruction of the institutions forming the base upon which their Scottish identity sat. The Reform Act, in particular, was depicted as threatening Scottish nationhood and distinctiveness within Britain. But on the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, which symbolically treated the Church of Scotland as inferior to the Church of England, Maga was largely silent. On Catholic Emancipation, despite the existence of a Scottish religious identity distinct from Britishness, Maga framed its denunciations of Emancipation as threatening both Scotland and Britain. The *Review* supported all three reforms, but the language employed in the debates differed. On repeal of the

Test and Corporation Acts and Catholic Emancipation, Scotland was presented as exemplifying toleration, which it argued as the solution for the Irish ‘problem’. On political reform, it argued that the reforms constituted the latest stage in British progress, and the ‘improvement’ of Scotland, sweeping away anachronistic and backward Scottish institutions. But over political reform, a split emerged among Scottish Whigs. Some continued to condemn ‘backward’ Scottish institutions, but others objected to this cynical view of Scotland, and instead praised Scotland’s distinctive institutions. These shifts, of Scottish Tories framing certain reform arguments through British lenses, and vice versa with Scottish Whigs framing other reform debates through Scottish lenses, allow for two clear conclusions to be reached. First, Scottish identity, like wider Scottish and British society and politics, experienced a period of profound change and transformation during the age of British reform. Second, such identities became increasingly flexible and recast through the effects of reform.

In spite of Maga’s efforts, the Scottish Whigs succeeded. Thus by April 1832 the Test and Corporation Acts had been repealed, Catholic Emancipation enacted, and a Reform Act passed with transformative effects on Scotland. Reform success translated into electoral success for the Scottish Whigs, winning the 1832 general election in Scotland by a landslide. 1832 marked the end of Scottish Tory hegemony, and marked the dawn of a new Scottish Whig-Liberal ascendancy. Despite Maga predictions that such an outcome would mark the end of Scotland’s distinctive identity and institutions, they were sustained even after reform was passed. Not only did they continue, but arguably the romantic Scottish Tory identity was co-opted by certain Scottish Whigs during the upheaval of the reform period. Scottish Tory identity, based on romantic celebrations of Scottish history and distinctiveness within Britain, did not electorally survive the reform age; but its influence in fashioning Scottish patriotic national identity remained long after it ceased to be a political force.

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