

The Scottish Parliaments: the role of ritual and procession in the pre-1707 parliament and the new parliament of 1999

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Throughout history the opening ceremonies of state assemblies, those within and without their respective chambers, can be seen to exist for a variety of inter-related reasons. Tradition, national prestige, national unity, the authority of the crown, parliament, the role of servants of the state and the sovereignty of people and princes are all conveyed in ritual terms. Whether elected or appointed the members of all assemblies or parliaments are representatives: representatives of class, nation, ethnicity, community and much else besides. The pageantry of parliaments, interwoven with the symbols of power and responsibility, are and were intended always to convey the legitimisation of these representatives and of the leaders of people. This can be seen in the rituals surrounding the opening of Scotland's old medieval and early modern Parliament and equally in the opening ceremony of the new, 'modern' Scottish Parliament which first sat in 1999.

The reasons in 1707 for Scotland accepting the incorporation of its old Parliament within a new United Kingdom Parliament have been the subject of much and varied historiographical interpretation.¹ Current economic difficulties and future economic opportunities are often seen as paramount motives behind those in the Scottish Parliament who narrowly won the vote that extinguished the ancient Scottish constitution, although foreign policy disagreements with England, which destabilised an otherwise successful union of two crowns, were equally significant, especially in relation to the succession of an acceptable Protestant monarch. But in fact much of the constitution of Scotland remained after 1707. The retention of uniquely Scottish institutions - the law courts, education system and national presbyterian church - ensured that much of Scotland's national life and therefore national ritual was not dissolved within the British state. Scotland in 1999 was therefore emotionally and practically geared to accept the political and ritualistic responsibilities of a new parliament.

The campaign for a new parliament had continued for over a century. The movement for Home Rule, the devolving of some Scottish decision making from the UK Parliament in London to a Scottish parliament in Edinburgh, arose in the 1880s and coincided with parallel and more dramatic moves in

1. For an accessible introduction see C.A. Whatley, 1994, *'Bought and Sold for English Gold? Explaining the Union of 1707'*, Glasgow.

Ireland, as well as a rise in popular nationalism in Scotland. Liberal prime ministers, from William Gladstone in the 1880s to Herbert Asquith in the years leading up to the First World War, supported the idea of Scottish Home Rule, and much of the Labour Party, particularly Scottish MPs, were sympathetic in the inter-war years. Between 1906 and 1939 no less than fifteen Home Rule bills and motions were presented in the Westminster Parliament although all were thrown out or sidelined. The case for devolution floundered in a sea of division in the inter-war years. The pro-devolutionists split into two camps: the old federalists, mainly Liberals and Labour with a few Conservatives, on the one side, and the separatists on the other. The hardening of nationalism was underlined in 1934 when the Scottish Home Rule Association transformed itself into the Scottish National Party (SNP).²

During and after the Second World War the Scottish Secretary of State, chief minister in the British cabinet with responsibility for Scottish affairs, and the Scottish Office he presided over, developed enhanced responsibilities over economic and social affairs, although there was still no direct accountability to the Scottish electorate. The ‘democratic deficit’ remained. However, when both the Labour and Conservative governments ran into difficulties in the 1970s the SNP gained in support. Following the SNP’s electoral successes in the two 1974 general elections, the Labour government was forced to bring forward a devolution bill which passed in 1978, but would only become law subject to a referendum in which 40% of the entire electorate voted ‘yes’. The referendum held the following year showed only 33% in favour and therefore the devolution plans collapsed, as did the Labour government and SNP support in Scotland. The nationalists took much of blame for the debacle with their more extreme demands for full independence, and lost all but two of their seats at the subsequent election in 1979.

Nevertheless, the 1980s and 1990s saw a revival of interest in devolution and to some extent of the fortunes of the SNP. The Scottish electorate and public were reacting to the Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher which was seen as too right wing for Scottish collectivist traditions, too authoritarian and apparently too English. The use of Scotland as a test laboratory for the unpopular poll tax in 1989 merely confirmed suspicions that the UK Parliament failed to adequately represent the Scottish electorate

2. T.M. Devine, 1999, *The Scottish Nation, 1700-2000*, London, 273-327; I.G.C. Hutchison, 2001, *Scottish Politics in the Twentieth Century*, Basingstoke, *passim*.

and its views. The trail was set by the all party (minus the Conservatives and SNP) and interest group represented (including the churches) Constitutional Convention formed in 1988. This produced a statement of intent, *A Claim of Right for Scotland*, which demanded devolution. Thus when Tony Blair won his landslide victory in 1997 it was with the promise to hold referendums for a Scottish parliament and Welsh assembly, theorising that devolution would be the weapon to defeat nationalism. In the Scottish referendum that followed later that year 75% of those who voted approved of the creation of the new Parliament, and while this was still only 46% of the entire electorate, it was seen as overwhelming support and a sign that a political watershed had been reached.³ A year later in September 1998 an Opening Ceremony Working Group was formed to advise and assist the Scottish Office on the planning of the opening ceremony of the new Parliament. This group included Scottish Office staff and representatives of Buckingham Palace, The Lord Lyon King of Arms (Scotland's judge in matters of heraldry and precedence), Lothian and Borders Police, the armed services, the city of Edinburgh and representatives of Historic Scotland, a public agency responsible to Scottish Ministers for safeguarding the nation's built heritage, and promoting its understanding and enjoyment. Agreeing on the appropriate level and nature of ritual was seen as an essential and inclusive operation.⁴

On 1 July 1999 the state opening of the new Scottish Parliament was carried out in a ceremony before Queen Elizabeth, nearly 300 years after the adjournment and demise of the old Parliament and the 1707 parliamentary union of Scotland and England. The opening, on a day when even the sun shone, was one of the biggest news events in Scotland for many a year. A huge crowd gathered on Edinburgh's Royal Mile, or High Street, to watch the procession from the royal palace of Holyrood to the temporary home of the Parliament, the Assembly Hall of the Church of Scotland, located in the shadow of Edinburgh Castle. The Herald newspaper of the following day

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3. C. Harvie, 'Scotland after 1978: from Referendum to Millenium' in R. A. Houston and W.W.J. Knox (eds.) 2001, *The New Penguin History of Scotland*, London, 494-529.
 4. There was an element of public consultation and a view taken by the group on historical contexts, but surprisingly the body did not take up an offer of advice from the government funded Scottish Parliament Project at the University of St Andrews.

captures the atmosphere: ‘The anticipation among the six-deep crowd [held back by barriers and the police and soldiers] was almost tangible as the time drew near, making distinctly audible the single, poignant drum beat that signalled the imminent approach of the Queen’s carriage, flanked by the Household Cavalry and the Royal Company of Archers. ...And [when] the royal party arrived ...onlookers, wedged into every vantage point, let out a roar and raised high their flags as overhead, people watched from windows overlooking the proceedings’.⁵ The contrast between idealised pageantry and the difficulties of practical politics can be extraordinarily stark.

The outdoor ceremony and processioning associated with the old Parliament was also a mass and ‘popular’ event.⁶ In 1669 the procession to the opening of Parliament, again departing from Holyrood but then arriving at the Parliament House, built in the 1630s and located near Edinburgh’s St. Giles Cathedral, saw ‘the whole [high] street .. lined with tounesmen’, held back by the town militia and the royal foot guards.⁷ Rugs and carpets were hung from the windows of the buildings, and women and children watched the cavalcade from the upper floors. Issues of crowd control were, nevertheless, still of great concern to the authorities. Just as in 1999, when four protestors opposed to student tuition fees jumped the crowd barriers, approached the royal coach and were promptly arrested, there was a constant danger of public disorder in the early modern period. The Scottish privy council, the executive body that managed crown affairs between parliamentary sessions and which had responsibility to plan Parliament’s opening ceremonies, passed numerous acts of council to control the Edinburgh mob during these events. Thus in November 1600 the council issued a proclamation ‘for keeping the peace’ such that all subjects ‘keep the hail time of this Parliament inviolat’ without violent disorder, under pain of the charge of treason, and in 1703 they ordered the arrest of those found throwing ‘any squibs or any other fireworks’ during the procession, and also outlawed ‘shooting, displaying of Ensignes, or beating of drummes’ causing disturbance and confusion.⁸ None of this, of course, could silence

5. *The Herald*, 2 July, 1999, 22.

6. The only detailed analysis of the ceremonies of the old parliament is found in T. Innes, ‘The Scottish parliament; its symbolism and its ceremonial’, *Juridical Review* 44 (1932), 87-124, though there are moments of fanciful description.

7. In coronations in Edinburgh the tradition was to ride from the Castle to Holyrood Abbey.

8. *Registers of the Privy Council* (Scotland) [RPC], 1st series, vi, 167; 168-9 and RPC, ix, 472-4 (2 proclamations); National Archives of Scotland [NAS], APC, 29 April 1703; NAS. APC, 5 May, 1703.

anonymous cries of protest from the multitude lining the streets, such as those over the religion of the Catholic James, Duke of York and Albany who presided over the parliamentary session of 1681, or indeed anti-English sentiments during the ceremony of 1703 which were in the context of Anglo-Scottish economic rivalry and political crisis. It was ever easy to lambaste and curse the proceedings and, if necessary, to disappear down one of the many narrow closes that still radiate outward from the High Street of Edinburgh.

The pre-1707 Scottish Parliament was a unicameral house which gathered as a meeting of the estates of the ancient kingdom summoned on forty days notice.⁹ The three or four estates: the appointed clergy (absent from 1639 to 1660 and finally removed after 1689); the nobles who attended by right; the commissioners of shires who were elected by the lesser landed, and the commissioners of burghs elected by the town councils of the royal burghs, came together to form an assembly which, by the end of the seventeenth century was over 200 strong. Therefore, any opening ceremony would have to cater for an expanding number of members, their respective status and position but also the estate they represented. While by the seventeenth century all members had a single vote, not all were of the same significance in the pantheon of Scottish parliamentary ritual. Also, ceremonial had to accommodate the greatest change in the practicalities of the Parliament in its last century: the absence of the king following James VI's accession to the

9. A new historiography is expanding with regard to the old Scottish parliament, See for example most recently R.J. Tanner, 2001, *The Late Medieval Scottish Parliament*, East Linton, which provides fresh insight into the period before 1488; A. R. MacDonald, 'Deliberative processes in the Scottish parliament before 1639: multi-cameralism and the Lords of the Articles', *Scottish Historical Review* [hereafter *SHR*], (2002); A.J. Mann, 'Inglorious revolution: administrative muddle and constitutional change in the Scottish Parliament of William and Mary' in *Parliamentary History*, 22, part 2 (2003), 121-44 and also J.R. Young, 1996, *The Scottish Parliament 1639-1661: a political and constitutional analysis*, Edinburgh; and J. Goodare, 'The Estates in the Scottish Parliament, 1286-1707' in C. Jones (ed.) 1996, *The Scots and Parliament: Parliamentary History*, Edinburgh, 11-32 as well as his 'The Scottish Parliament of 1621' in *The Historical Journal*, 38, 1 (1995), 29-51. R. S. Rait, 1924, *The Parliaments of Scotland*, Glasgow, still remains, for all its faults, the most informed and wide-ranging parliamentary history. See also forthcoming, out of the Scottish Parliament Project at St Andrews University, K.M. Brown and R.J. Tanner (eds.), 2004, *Parliament and Politics in Scotland, 1286-1567*, Edinburgh; K. M. Brown and A. J. Mann (eds.), 2004, *Parliament and Politics in Scotland, 1567-1707*, Edinburgh, and K. M. Brown and A. R. MacDonald (eds.), 2005, *The Scottish Parliament: a constitutional history*, Edinburgh.

English throne in 1603. Although James attended the Scottish Parliament in 1617 and Charles I did so in 1633 and 1641 and Charles II in 1651, for most sessions up to 1707 a royal Commissioner represented crown authority and sat on the throne exercising viceregal powers.

The opening ceremony of the Scottish Parliament, the cavalcade from royal palace to parliamentary chamber, was called the ‘riding of Parliament’ which, as the name suggests, involved a largely equestrian procession.¹⁰ The ‘riding’ was an ancient and specifically Scottish ceremony that dates back at least to the 1520s and probably long before. The medieval Parliament was peripatetic but mostly convening in Edinburgh from the 1460s and the reign of James III.¹¹ But wherever it met, in Edinburgh or at venues such as Stirling and Perth, a short journey was required from the royal palace or castle to the place of assembly, often within a tolbooth, in effect the home and meeting place of the local burgh council. This journey signified the movement from a royal and fortified environment to neutral territory where the estates could gather without fear of intimidation. The ‘riding’ was, therefore, the passage to a meeting place where estates and king could confer as representatives of the nation and not merely as monarch and servants of the crown. The estates could certainly be jealous of their freedoms. In 1578, when Parliament was convened in Stirling Castle by James Douglas, Earl of Morton, regent to the twelve year old King James VI, Patrick, Lord Lindsay and other nobles protested that it was ‘not a free Parliament being holden within a strength castil’ and the commissioners of the burghs met in the

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10. For the small historiography of the ‘riding’ see ‘The method and manner of Ryding the Scottish Parliament’ in *Maitland Club Miscellany*, iii, pt 1. (Edinburgh, 1842), 101-37, which summarizes Privy Council regulation; C. S. Terry, 1905, *The Scottish Parliament: its constitution and procedure, 1603-1707*, Glasgow, 94-102; Rait, *Parliaments of Scotland*, 529-34 and John Spottiswood, 1677, *The History of the Church and State of Scotland*, London, appendix. A brief mention is found in Francis Grant, ‘State Ceremonials in Edinburgh in the Olden Time’ in *The Book of the Old Edinburgh Club*, vol.18 (Edinburgh, 1932), 11-32. For other more general and non-parliamentary studies of Scottish ceremonial see Douglas Gray ‘The Royal Entry in Sixteenth-century Scotland’ in S. Mapstone and J. Wood (eds.), 1998, *The Rose and the Thistle: Essays on the Culture of Late Medieval and Renaissance Scotland*, East Linton, 10-37 and Michael Lynch, ‘Court ceremony and ritual during the personal reign of James VI’ in J. Goodare and M. Lynch (eds.), 2000, *The Reign of James VI*, East Linton, 71-92.
11. *A Diurnal of Remarkable Occurents that have passed within the Country of Scotland ...till the year 1575*, ed. T. Thomson (Bannatyne Club, Edinburgh, 1833), 13; Margaret Young (ed.), 1993, *The Parliaments of Scotland: burgh and shire commissioners*, Edinburgh, ii, 745-56 for a convenient list of parliaments and locations.

Stirling tolbooth and complained they were denied ‘free’ entry to the meeting of estates within the castle stronghold. Regent and boy king were forced to publish a proclamation declaring that the Parliament was free to all who would, by convention, attend.¹² Such fears of crown coercion were not a major factor in post-Restoration Scotland, but the desire for a neutral venue was supported by tradition as well as the existence of a purpose built Parliament House from 1639.

Although the ‘riding’ is clearly of medieval origin, the first detailed mention in the parliamentary record arose in 1587 when an act was passed such that those who failed to attend the ‘riding’ would be fined as absentees. By 1600 the sanctions for non-attendance included fines and the loss of parliamentary voting rights, though later this was tempered to allow for absence for good reason and illness, partially for good practical reasons and also to make allowances after 1603 for those missing because of a summons to attend the king in London.¹³ The ‘riding’ actually occurred at both the beginning (down sitting) and the end (rising) of each parliament, but not for every parliamentary session. Thus a dissolution of Parliament was required, usually by royal proclamation, before a concluding ‘riding’, and conversely also before the next session required a state opening. There was one exception to this rule: the accession of a new monarch automatically led to a ‘riding’ at the next session and, of course, a fresh general election. The practicalities of politics in the period from 1690 to 1707 led to some suspension of usual practice. The revolutionary convention of estates which met in 1689 was transformed into a parliament with the agreement of King William and Queen Mary and no ‘riding’ occurred, and indeed the Parliament was continued without new elections until William’s death in 1702. Also, such was the heated atmosphere in 1707 that no concluding ‘riding’ was attempted, no doubt for fear of antagonising popular discontent at parliamentary union and the demise of the Scottish Parliament. There was already popular unrest and more extensive rioting on the streets of Edinburgh would have been a stronger possibility. Attendance at concluding ‘ridings’ was compulsory, but this would have proved very difficult to enforce in 1707. As it was, the 1703 opening of Parliament, at the beginning

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12. David Calderwood, 1842 (first published 1678), *A History of the Kirk of Scotland*, ed. T. Thomson (8 vols), (Wodrow Society, Edinburgh), iii, 413-14; David Moysie, 1830, *Memoirs of the Affairs of Scotland, 1577-1603*, ed. J. Dennistoun, (Bannatyne Club, Edinburgh), 8-9; 1814-75, *Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland*, eds. T. Thomson and C. Innes, Edinburgh [APS], iii, 94 and NAS. PA2/12, f.1r
13. APS, iii, 443; Rait, *Parliaments of Scotland*, 397; *Maitland Club Miscellany*, iii, 104-5; *RPC*, 1st series vi, 168-9.

of the reign of Queen Anne, was the only ‘riding’ after 1690 and the last in the Parliament’s history.¹⁴

Scotland’s alternative gathering of the estates, the convention of estates, had a more casual ceremonial element. It was not subject to a summons with forty days notice and was not a court of appeal or of first instance (as in treason cases) as was the full Parliament. Conventions were usually called to agree new and more urgent taxations. Also, no ‘riding’ took place at the opening and closing of conventions, and instead the members gathered as they could, with the Commissioner and senior officers of state and nobles arriving by carriage by the 1670s. It was, however, still necessary to deploy troops throughout Edinburgh in case of disturbances. Holyrood Palace, the official residence of the royal Commissioner as well as the monarch, also required protection. At the time of the 1678 convention of estates a contemporary reported that ‘the continuall guards about the commissioner’s persone consisted of three companies of the king’s guard of foot, two whereof were posted in the [Holyrood] abbey closs and the third in the tolbooth of the Canongate [near the foot of the royal mile]’.¹⁵

Accounts of and official instructions for the riding of Parliament survive for 1600 (with a view to the next parliament, which came in 1604), and for parliaments in the years 1612, 1633, 1669, 1681 and 1703, even though there were many more opening ceremonies than this selection.¹⁶ However, but for a few modifications, the ceremony retained the same elements throughout the seventeenth century. Preparations were extensive. As well as clearing the High Street of any litter, vagrants, carriages and obstructions, the Edinburgh magistrates had to place two ‘banks of timber’ for the participants to mount and dismount, one at Holyrood and other at the ‘Lady Steps’ at the east end of St. Giles Cathedral.¹⁷ On the day Parliament opened

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14. For a guide to politics in this period see K. M. Brown, 1992, *Kingdom or Province?: Scotland and the Regal Union, 1603-1715*, Basingstoke, 177-92. For concern for attendance at a concluding ‘riding’ see *APS*, vii, 474 (1663); NAS. PA2/28, f.104 or the electronic *Records of the Parliament of Scotland [RPS]*, eds. Keith Brown and others (Cape Town, forthcoming), *RPS*, 1663/6/52.
 15. Sir John Lauder of Fountainhall, 1837, *Historical Observations, 1680-1686*, i, (Bannatyne Club, Edinburgh), 266; NAS, Biel Muniments, GD 6/1108, f.10 for troop deployments for 1678 convention.
 16. See *Maitland Club Miscellany*, 102-36 for 1600, 1612, 1681 and 1703. For 1633 see NAS. Earl of Airlie Papers, GD 15/15/87 and for 1669 see NAS. Duke of Buccleuch, GD 224/605/1.
 17. For detailed instructions for the privy council to the Edinburgh town council see NAS. Clerk of Penicuik Papers, GD 18/6071, and *Maitland Club Miscellany*, 131 (1703 riding).

the streets were lined with troops: from the palace to the Netherbow Port (the gate to the old town) by the royal foot guards, from there to St. Giles by the burgh militia and from the 'Lady Steps' of St. Giles to the Parliament House by the guards of the High Constable and Earl Marischal, the former responsible for security outwith the Parliament and the later for security within.¹⁸

The event began with two formalities, the gathering of members of Parliament and officials at the Abbey close or square before the palace and the transportation of the regalia or honours of Scotland from Edinburgh Castle to the palace. The order of procession from palace to Parliament House was dictated by one principle: 'the higher degree and most honourable of that degree is to ride always last'. This ensured that all were gathered to witness the arrival of the monarch or, in his or her absence, the honours of Scotland. Precedency was to follow that in the parliamentary roll used in confirming attendance and in voting. However, this was not an easy rule to apply and there were regular disputes over precedence. In 1612 the privy council set out a strict order and requested no appeals or controversies until after the opening ceremony when such matters could be raised before the entire house. In 1703 the privy council felt it necessary to form a subcommittee which attempted to resolve disputes before the riding set out. The order of the parliamentary roll was maintained by the Clerk Register (the senior clerk of Parliament) and so, although the Lord Lyon King of Arms was responsible for the management of the 'riding', proceedings began with the reading of precedence by the Clerk Register before the Lord Lyon called out the names. Sir John Lauder of Fountainhall, ever the cynical lawyer, even suggested of the 1685 ceremony that 'by wrong marshalling them the Clerk-Register [got] the more protestation gold', that is, by way of fees to resolve disputes.¹⁹

Precedency was a key matter of prestige for the members of the pre-1707 Parliament. Each parliamentary session began with protests from individual noble, shire and burgh members who felt that their due seniority, according to the age of their family title or the date of first entry into Parliament by a

18. There was endless dispute between the Constable and Marischal over areas of responsibility. See R.K. Hannay, 'Observations on the Officers of the Scottish Parliament' in *Juridical Review* 44 (1932), 125-38. Both were hereditary appointments in the gift of the Hay (earls of Errol) and Keith (earls Marischal) families respectively.

19. *RPC*, 3rd series, vii, 167; *RPC*, 1st series, 473-4 and *APC*, 29 April, 1703; Sir John Lauder of Fountainhall, 1848, *Historical Notices of Scottish Affairs* (2 vols.) (Bannatyne Club, Edinburgh), ii, 634.

royal burgh they represented, was not reflected in the order in the parliamentary roll. Noble minors, too young to attend Parliament themselves, often went through a simulated protest, carried out by a relative present in the house, declaring that were they present their relative seniority would be asserted. It was not merely that the processional order in the riding was affected but also the order in which votes were taken which, by open spoken vote, one by one, gave the chance for senior members to lead voting.

Once the order was confirmed, the members rode up the High Street two by two: trumpeters and pursuivants (officers of the Lyon Court) to usher the way; then the Lord Chancellor (president of the Parliament), the commissioners of burghs followed by commissioners of shires; then the officers of state who were not nobles; then the lords; the bishops; the viscounts; the earls; the archbishops; then more trumpeters, pursuivants, heralds and the Lord Lyon; then the honours of Scotland, the sword of state, the sceptre and the crown, each borne by three of the most senior nobles, ranked by macers for protection; then followed by the royal commissioner; the dukes and marquises and lastly by the captain of the guard with his troop. If the monarch was present in person then the marquises and dukes rode after the earls, with the king following last with his royal guard.²⁰ The numbers were swollen by servants and retainers on foot, and each noble was allowed a strictly controlled retinue of servants and by 1703 even burgh members were allowed a single servant. Also, the Constable and Marischal went ahead of the procession to open and inspect the Parliament House, and to place a guard around it. They then positioned themselves to welcome the estates as they arrived, the Constable seated at the 'Lady Steps' of St. Giles and the Marischal seated at the door to Parliament itself. The Chancellor and other noble officers of state also went ahead and waited in the chamber for the arrival of the other members, the Commissioner and the symbols of the nation.²¹

After 1690 the clergy were, of course, absent but that did not diminish the splendour of the occasion. Nonetheless, a level of chaos must have been associated with the departure of over 200 horses that gathered before the palace, the same number having to dismount at St. Giles. There could be an amusing side to this of course, beyond the grim task of cleaning the High Street after the equestrian whirlwind. In 1669 John Gordon, Viscount

20. There are various versions of this order, but that of 1681 is typical. See *RPC*, 3rd series, vii, 169-70 and *Maitland Club Miscellany*, 119-23. Rait, *Parliaments of Scotland*, 532.

21. *Maitland Club Miscellany*, 131-35 and NAS. Clerk of Penicuik Papers, GD 18/6071.

Kenmuir failed to arrive at St. Giles on account of the fact that his horse bolted. In 1999 one of horse-guards in the royal party fell from his horse when his ride was startled by a gun salute from Edinburgh Castle.²² These events could stretch horsemanship to the limit.

As ever there were some parliamentary veterans who complained that the riding and the Parliament failed to live up to the spectacle of old. Conservatism over tradition was an ever-present mind-set. Opinion was divided between those who saw high ceremonial as a bastion of prestige and those who saw such grandeur as having moderate relevance, especially at times of economic and political difficulty. George Leslie of Birdsbank, burgh commissioner for Cullen in the 1660s and 1670s complained that 1685 parliament and riding ‘had not that splendour ... I [have] see’. Perhaps this was in comparison with 1681, which even the cynical Fountainhall reported was ‘riden with great pomp and magnificence’.²³ Nevertheless, the intention, of crown and crown officials, was certainly to demonstrate the magnificence of the occasion.

Dress was seen as a vital part of this strategy of magnificence, with all members and participants dressing in finery but always according to station or status. The hierarchical nature of society had to be reflected in sartorial code. Such visual symbolism was especially important as, in a pre-broadcast age, it was the only point of contact with the Parliament for the majority of the audience watching the procession. Royal proclamation, statutes and at times the pulpit were the only imperfect means of mass communication where language instead of visual spectacle could bring Parliament to the people.

Rules as to parliamentary dress date back to 1455, with different attire set for earls, lords, burghs members and clergy. This was re-emphasised with an act of Parliament of 1587 which sought to restore to Parliament, apparently somewhat scruffy in recent years, to its ‘ancient order, dignity and integrity’. Eighteen months before shire members were added to Parliament and now also to the fashion code.²⁴ Yet after James VI became King of England in 1603, the privy council busied itself responding to a king who became fascinated by the grandeur of English ceremonial and wished for Scotland to follow suit. In 1605 the privy council passed an act such that dukes,

22. NAS, Duke of Buccleuch Papers, GD 224/605/1. *The Herald*, 2 July 1999, 21.

23. *Seafield Correspondence from 1685 to 1708*, 1912, ed. James Grant (Scottish History Society, Edinburgh), 3-4 (Letter Leslie to earl of Findlater, 28 April, 1685); Young, *Parliaments of Scotland*, ii, 421; Fountainhall, *Historical Observations*, i, 45.

24. *APS*, ii, 43; *APS*, iii, 443 and 422.

marquises and earls provide themselves with ‘red crimson velvet robes lined with white ermine’ and lords ‘red scarlet robes lined after the same fashion’ However, the council had gone too far, and James was horrified to hear that his nobles intended to dress for the riding in clothes as grand as those for a coronation. Parliaments and coronations were not on the same level as far as the crown was concerned, and the privy council issued revised instructions excluding velvet robes and providing a colour key of hoods for each estate.²⁵ Over the next few years dress codes were confirmed for shire, burgh and clerical members. Some of the poorer burghs resented the cost of wearing scarlet gowns as suggested by King James and must have continued to wear their traditional black civic robes. And yet horse livery was also part of the ceremonial cocktail expected of members. In 1661 shire members were relieved of the expense of velvet horse foot-mantles which had to be paid for by the shire electorate, although they were returned to the sheriff of the shire after the rising of Parliament.²⁶ Burgh members also provided foot-mantles, though this was not compulsory even in 1703. The burgh records of Linlithgow reveal what must have been a typical regard for maintaining the burgh parliamentary horse livery. In 1633 the council of Linlithgow noted the return of the livery used by their burgh commissioner Andrew Bell and placed it in the care of the town treasurer. The gear consisted of velvet foot-mantle, brass stirrup irons, French brass bridle bit with velvet reins, curpell [crupper] and stirrup ladders, and this finery was clearly secured and made available to future burgh representatives.²⁷ By the turn of the century the dress code was at its most magnificent: nobles in scarlet robes, their horses with foot-mantles with an extra servant to carry the train of their robes; officers of state not ennobled in the gowns of their office and with foot-mantles; foot-mantles also for all pursuivants, heralds and macers; servants of nobles with velvet coats and livery; symbols of authority and office to be carried before, such as the Great Seal in a velvet pouch before the Chancellor and silver mace before the Treasurer; and lastly, all to have heads covered other than those carrying and protecting the honours of Scotland.²⁸ By 1703 magnificence and mayhem must have issued forth in equal measure

25. *RPC*, 1st series vii, 57-8; 488-9 and 208-9; *RPC*, 1st series viii, 233-4. For a summary see Terry, *Scottish Parliament*, 97-100.

26. *RPC*, 1st series, viii, 614; *APS*, vii, 235, NAS. PA2/27, f.7v-8 or *RPS*, 1661/1/316.

27. NAS, Linlithgow Town Council Minute Book, 1620-1640, B48/9/1, 270 (29 September 1633). See also B48/9/1, 282 (7 February, 1634) and B48/9/1, 414 (11 January, 1639).

28. *Maitland Club Miscellany*, 131-35.

as crowds watched a procession of over 1000 strong make its way up the High Street of Edinburgh. This was a ceremonial highpoint, marking as it did the beginning of the reign of Queen Anne. Indeed all ceremonial ridings at the beginning of a reign or when the king or queen were present in person tended to be more extravagant.

In spite of this sartorial splendour, the key elements of the ceremony are not robes but the symbols of the state, the honours or regalia of Scotland. In early modern Scotland these consisted of the crown, the sword of state and the sceptre. There was no parliamentary mace in medieval and early modern Scotland. Each of the three, as used in the seventeenth century at coronations and 'ridings' of Parliament, had a late mediaeval origin, and all survive today. The crown, the symbol of coronation investiture, of unity and of empire of a king above kings, was made of ancient stones re-modelled about 1540 in the reign of James V, though some of the gems are believed to go back to a crown worn by Alexander III in the thirteenth century. The sword of state, the symbol of warrior strength, kingly power and the protection of liberty, territory and of faith, was presented to James IV by Pope Julius II in 1507, in part to encourage James to defend the Catholic church, when James's ambition was to be Christ's admiral, and to reward him for diplomatic successes, including acting as peacemaker between Denmark and Sweden. The third honour was the sceptre, the symbol of justice, right rule or, in the words of the Scottish coronation ceremony: 'the sign of royal power, the rod of the kingdom, the rod of virtue, [to] govern ... a right ... punishing the wicked and protecting the just'. This was the oldest of the honours and was presented by Pope Alexander VI to James IV in 1494.²⁹ The three, as we know them today, came together for the first time for the coronation of the baby Mary, Queen of Scots in 1543.

The honours were of particular importance to Scotland. John Balliol was forced submit his 'white wand' of office when Edward I of England stripped him of the royal regalia in 1296.³⁰ Subsequently, the honours developed almost mythical significance as physical embodiments of the independent nation of Scotland during the Wars of Independence and beyond. They

29. For quote (taken from 1633 coronation) see Grant, *State Ceremonials*, 21. A precise description of the honours of Scotland can be found in Brain Barker, 1979, *The Symbols of Sovereignty*, Newton Abbot, 216-31. For suggestions on the symbolism involved see J. Chevalier and A. Gheerbrant, 1994, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, (trans. John Buchanan-Brown), Oxford, 834 and 959-60 and A. de Vries, 1974, *A Dictionary of Symbols and Imagery*, Amsterdam/London, 308; 403-4; 452-4.

30. Ronald Nicholson, 1974, *Scotland: The Later Middle Ages*, Edinburgh, 50.

became symbols not just of monarchy but of nationhood. This was unchanged by the revolutions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Although the sword and its scabbard are adorned with the emblems and signs of the papacy, and the sceptre has at its head the three figures of St. James, St. Andrew and the Virgin Mary, the significance of the honours was not affected by the Protestant Reformation of Scotland in 1560. John Knox argued out of convenience that the absence of the regalia at the 1560 Reformation Parliament was insignificant, the carriage of the regalia being more ‘a pompe and glourouse vane ceremonye than a substantial point of necessitie, requyred to a lauchfull Parliament’, but before and after the presence of the regalia was universally accepted as of great importance.³¹ In general terms a parliament was illegitimate without the presence of the regalia. Also, while the armies and supporters of Cromwell destroyed the crowns and jewels of English monarchy, Scottish covenanting revolutionaries seized the honours and proudly marched them back to Edinburgh Castle. The covenanters were always careful to declare their loyalty to the ancient line of Scottish kings and also to underscore the legitimacy of meetings of the estates, after hostilities commenced in 1639, by having the honours displayed in usual form. Thus whenever ‘ridings’ of Parliament occurred the honours had pride of place and were carried by senior nobles, the crown being carried, by tradition, by the head of the Angus/Douglasses, James, 2nd Marquis of Douglas in 1681, and the sword and sceptre by the two eldest nobles of the time, in same year by the earls of Mar and Argyll respectively.³² The honours were even more essential after 1603 than before. Although the king was usually absent thereafter, the regalia was there to signify a trinity of legitimacy: crown authority, crown acceptance of the power of Parliament, and Parliament as the ancient assembly of the estates of the nation. The delivery of the honours to the Parliament House was an act that brought crown and the estates together in mutual recognition. As the members approached the entrance to the Parliament House they were greeted by two statues above the door that provided a metaphorical imperative: on the right Mercy, holding a crown wreathed with laurel leaves, and on the left Justice, with a balance on one

31. Barker, *Symbols of Sovereignty*, 227; John Knox, 1846-8 (completed 1586) *History of the Reformation in Scotland*, ed. David Laing, (2 vols.), Edinburgh, ii, 126-7.

32. *RPC*, 3rd series, vii, 170.

hand and a palm in the other. Underneath was the Latin motto: *stant his felicia regna*, kingdoms stand happy by these virtues.³³

The procession that brought the members of Parliament and Queen Elizabeth to the opening session of the new Scottish Parliament in 1999 had some striking similarities with that witnessed in 1703. Nonetheless, some 300 years of Westminster ceremony and unionist political sensitivities in the 1990s created contrasts with 1703 and with the current state openings of the United Kingdom Parliament in London.³⁴ The ceremonial ‘journey’ to the Parliament, to the temporary home at the Assembly Hall (the new parliament building by Holyrood House should open in late 2004) was a three stage process. The regalia was the first element to begin its journey which was from Edinburgh Castle to the chamber. Only the crown featured, even though, as we shall see, the sceptre was the most important of the honours to the mechanics of the old legislature. In echoes of 1703 and before, however, the senior peer in Scotland, the 15th Duke of Hamilton, who as Earl of Angus and head of the Douglasses is hereditary bearer of the crown, was entrusted with the task of escorting the crown to the Parliament and did so in a glass covered limousine under the guard of a detachment of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. Meanwhile, the members of the new Parliament, and other political and civil dignitaries from the UK and Scotland, gathered in the old Parliament Hall near St. Giles, now a museum-like lobby to the Court of Session, the highest court of Scotland. There various speeches were made which recalled the adjournment of the old Parliament in March 1707. After a short while, the elected members and dignitaries, flanked by children representing the eight regions of Scotland, set out in a brief parade to the chamber, a mere five minute walk. Although given the formality of a leading pipe band, the parade was extremely informal.

The third stage in the gathering process before the ceremonial opening of the new Parliament, was the ‘traditional’ journey of monarch from palace to parliament: of Queen Elizabeth from Holyrood to the chamber. But in the manner of the Westminster model the Queen travelled in an open state coach guarded by a squadron of lifeguards from the household cavalry. The royal

33. For details of Parliament Hall see 1951, *Royal Commission for the Ancient Monuments of Scotland: the City of Edinburgh* (HMSO, Edinburgh), 90-92 and R.K. Hannay’s description in *The Book of the Old Edinburgh Club*, vol.13 (Edinburgh), 1-78. Building started in 1632 and was completed in 1641 at a cost of £127,000 Scots, a third paid by subscription and two thirds by municipal loans.

34. Details are taken from *The Herald*, 2 July, 1999, 19-22; *The Scotsman*, 2 July, 1999, special section i-viii and BBC (Scotland) live television broadcast of the ceremony, 1 July, 1999, editor Atholl Duncan.

journey began with trumpets and the British national anthem, interestingly the only time in the ceremony that this eighteenth century anthem would be played. The small procession, of 30 horses and a single coach, quickly broke into a trot to build up sufficient speed to handle the steep incline of the royal mile, and the street itself had been lined with earth and sand to prevent slipping on the old cobbled surface. This made the journey last but ten minutes, and it is easy to see that the old 'riding' ceremony would have provided an opportunity for a more dignified speed than this new 'coaching' version. In addition, during the procession a twenty-one gun salute was fired from the Castle which, with true modernity, was fired by male and female gunners. Edinburgh Castle canons were employed in the old ceremony, no doubt controlled by a system of flags and signals, both to confirm the arrival of the royal regalia, and sometimes the monarch of course, and to signify the moment of return to Holyrood at the end of the 'riding' ceremony on the closing day of parliament.³⁵ The twenty-first gun shot in 1999 was measured to coincide with the arrival of the Queen outside the chamber, a reminder, as in 1703, of the powers vested in the crown in spite of parliaments.

The balance struck between formality and informality for the outdoor events of 1999 was not merely out of royal or UK government desire to project an image of modernity. Difficulties experienced by the British royal family since the death of Diana, Princess of Wales in 1997 encouraged the Queen and her advisors to push for more informality in official business, and this attitude influenced the planning of the opening ceremony for the new Scottish Parliament. Press commentary since Diana's death saw the royal family criticised as too aloof and distant from the people and especially youthful society. The procession of children with the elected members before the Queen's arrival at the Parliament, and the character of the march before the Queen after the Parliament was officially opened, where 1600 children from all parliamentary constituencies in Scotland carried brightly coloured banners, testifies to attempts to counter this criticism and to reach out to the young. Also a fine line had to be drawn between too much 'British'/or English symbolism and too many strong Scottish references that could be interpreted with nationalist overtones. Interestingly, journalist reports indicate that the palace suggested the crown of Scotland should be carried into the chamber by a child and not a Scottish peer, but this appears to have been rejected by members of the Opening Ceremony Working Group as being a modernisation too far, and perhaps too out of step with

35. *Maitland Club Miscellany*, 118, ex. 'Order and Progres of the Parlement October 1612'.

important Scottish parliamentary traditions.³⁶ Significantly, the British national anthem, so often regarded by Scots and English as simply the English anthem, was played only once in the ceremony and not in the chamber. Even the dress worn by Queen Elizabeth was an inevitably sensitive issue. She adopted a fashion compromise, a Scottish made blue and thistle-coloured dress and coat, and not the formal state attire. This middle way was applauded in the press in 1999, although there was an earlier occasion when the print media was less forgiving. After her coronation in London in 1953 a ceremony of dedication took place in St. Giles, when the honours of Scotland were last on official duty, and where she was much criticised for casual dress that dishonoured the ancient crown of Scotland.³⁷ Protocol is a fraught business, and never more so than when national imagery is concerned. This is not merely a question of how a queen of the United Kingdom should engage with the symbols of Scotland without triggering claims of English imperialism or inflaming Scottish nationalism. Scotland's symbolic pantheon is particularly complicated by the unionist (Protestant) and republican (Catholic) sectarianism of Glasgow and the west of Scotland, where the likes of the Union Flag registers meanings alien to most of England but not to Northern Ireland.

If the honours of Scotland were essential to the 'riding' of Parliament before 1707, they were even more significant when they entered the Parliament House itself. The pre-1707 Parliament was a chamber of estates, and members sat in their various estates in a horse-shoe style facing the throne on which the king or his Commissioner sat. The Commissioner and the Chancellor, who presided, and some senior officers of state sat on a series of elevated steps at the front of the chamber. The Parliament House built in the 1630s was a large chamber, much bigger than the British House of Commons, and it is difficult to be precise about the scale of seating areas in relation to space. We do know, however, the general layout. In the middle, within the horse-shoe, were three tables: at one sat the Clerk Register and his deputies, who recorded the business; at another sat the lords of session, the judiciary, who had a special dispensation to attend even though they could not vote, and lastly and nearest the throne was a table on which the honours were placed, emphasising yet again that whether or not the monarch was present in person, crown authority was given and represented. Meanwhile, debate was managed through the chair, that is via

36. This suggestion was reported by the journalist Ruth Wishart in *The Herald* (2 July) and hinted at during the BBC live broadcast. The decision does not, however, appear in the minutes of the Opening Ceremony Working Group.

37. Barker, *Symbols of Sovereignty*, 214-5.

the president, and the less confrontational chamber layout, compared to the House of Commons, and non-party and estate structure to seating arrangements, both helped reduce some though not all inflammatory moments. The house could hardly stay becalmed during the heated debates over parliamentary union with England in the winter of 1706-7.

The sceptre, in particular, had a crucial role to play in the procedure of the old Parliament. Royal assent was conveyed by the monarch touching the sceptre to the parchment or full copy of the act concerned, a procedure carried out by the royal Commissioner after 1603. In the new Parliament the signature of the monarch indicates assent mirroring the Westminster model. In fact, there were logistical difficulties associated with arrangements for the Commissioner from 1603 to 1707. Commissioners had to be fully briefed and instructed as to what was allowable before the session opened, and sometimes members opposed to court policy used the hesitancy of royal assent to criticise the integrity and efficiency of government ministers, as seen in the Anglo-Scottish political crisis from 1703 to 1706.³⁸ The sceptre itself was part of the early modern debate in Scotland over where sovereignty lay, with the king or with the people.³⁹ In James VI's opinion, no law could pass 'without his scepter put to it for giving force of law', either by the king or after 1603 by the Royal Commissioner, who sat on the throne as king's representative. To James that practicality made it clear where sovereignty lay.⁴⁰ Royalists, like the Lord Advocate, Sir George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh (1636-91), agreed but went further, and saw the king as a protector of the people against arbitrary parliaments.⁴¹ On the other side was a tradition of accountability and limited monarchy championed by George Buchanan (1506-82), the greatest Scottish historian and author of the early modern period. In his revolutionary *De Jure Regni Apud Scotos* (1579), Buchanan uses the public ceremony of the coronation, where the

38. For a flavour of the 1703 to 1706 crisis see NAS. Hamilton Muniments, GD 406/1/5153 (Letter by James Douglas, 6th duke of Hamilton, dated 10 September, 1703) and for the complexities of commissioner's instructions see Mann, 'Inglorious revolution: administrative muddle and constitutional change in the Scottish Parliament of William and Mary'.

39. For an discussion of the debate over sovereignty see Alastair J. Mann, 'Parliaments, Princes and Presses: Voices of tradition and protest in early modern Scotland', in U. Böker and J.A. Hibbard (eds.), 2002, *Sites of Discourse: Public and Private Spheres – Legal Culture*, Amsterdam, 79-91.

40. King James, 1598, *The True Law of Free Monarchies*, Edinburgh, ex. Scottish Text Society 1982 edition, ed. James Craigie, Edinburgh, 70-1.

41. Sir George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh, 1684, *Jus Regium, Or the Just and Solid Foundation of the Monarchy of Scotland*, Edinburgh, 4, 8-9 and 41-2.

honours are passed to the new monarch, to advance his two central tenets: Scottish kings were elected and also subject to the authority of the law. Thus sovereignty rests with the people not the crown, though by ‘people’ Buchanan meant the elite representatives, the estates in Parliament. Furthermore, the coronation oath was a contract between king and people, such that loyalty of the subject is given up in exchange for the just rule of the monarch. Arbitrary rulers and tyrants could be removed and even killed. In fact Buchanan had extrapolated a resistance theory justifying the removal of Mary, Queen of Scots in favour of the infant James VI and providing inspiration for the subsequent revolutions against Charles I and James VII and II.⁴² But sovereignty was a practical more than a theoretical question for a legislative assembly, ritual being required to indicate an act was passed, but also to show a communication of consent given by the people’s representatives that would ensure the widest possible public acquiescence to statutory measures. The opening preamble used for laws passed in the old Parliament: ‘our sovereign lord, with advice and consent of the estates of parliament, statutes and enacts ...’ signifies these interconnected sovereignties of crown and estates.

The other ceremonials within the parliament chamber on the day of a ‘riding’ were sedate and formalised. After the Commissioner read his commission, and the king’s letter to Parliament was read, speeches were given out by the Commissioner and then the president of Parliament. The rolls were called in due order, prayers were said and a psalm sung by the whole assembled house, including those non-members allowed to sit in the rear benches and stand beyond who were not allowed to vote but were given dispensation to attend, from ushers and clerks to the sons of nobility. Compared to this the ceremonials within the chamber in 1999 were extremely lively. While male members were, in the words of one fashion editor, dressed like ‘guests at any smart summertime wedding’ and not in the finery of the assembly of 1703, the tunics of pursuivants and ushers and the kilted dress of the Duke of Hamilton, as he brought the crown into the chamber, added colour. The crown was placed in the middle of the chamber, on a table before the monarch exactly as with the old Parliament. Not too unlike the pre-1707 chamber, a precise horse-shoe chamber has been constructed in the Assembly Hall, a layout to be taken to even greater

42. Roger A. Mason, ‘*Rex Stoicus*: George Buchanan, James VI and the Scottish Polity’ in Dwyer, Mason and Murdoch (eds.), 1982, *New Perspectives on the Politics and Culture of Early Modern Scotland*, Edinburgh, 9-33 and Mason, 1998, *Kingship and Commonweal: Political Thought in Renaissance and Reformation Scotland*, East Linton, 236-7.

extremes in the new parliament building at Holyrood with its controversial ‘banana’ shaped debating chamber. Behind the crown entered the Queen to a fanfare written by the Scottish composer James Macmillan. She then sat in the middle of the chamber amongst the members, and this also captures the attitude and involvement of the monarch in the old Parliament. The king or queen joined the debate and some, such as James I in the fifteenth century and James VI when he attended, could hardly be silenced. While it is true that the throne was on a raised, stepped platform in the old Parliament House, the familiarity between members and monarch was linked to a tradition of ready access to the person of the king. This attitude is also conveyed by the more familiar ‘my lord’ greeting often used when addressing the king in Scotland, rather than the Anglo-French ‘your majesty’. The king may have been God’s chosen one but to Scots he was, or should have been, ‘one of us’. And so, appropriately, the Queen sat amongst the members as she was greeted by the presiding officer, the speaker of the house, or president to use the correct pre-1707 term.

The purpose of the Queen’s visit to the Scottish Parliament in 1999 was twofold: firstly, as Queen of Scots to declare the parliament open or, in her words, indicate ‘the lawful authority vested in parliament from today’, and secondly, to present a new symbol of the power, legitimacy and relationship between parliament and crown, the Mace. While some of the officials in the old Parliament had a mace as a badge and symbol of office, the Parliament did not, even though it is a long established symbol of authority for many assemblies throughout Europe. The new mace, blatantly following the style of the House of Commons, is now present at all sittings of the new Parliament, and it embodies perhaps the tensions of a desire to depart from the more negative aspects of the Westminster model.⁴³ It is, nonetheless, a fine piece of Scottish craftsmanship made by the silversmith Michael Lloyd and using Scottish silver and Scottish gold. The words ‘Wisdom, Justice, Compassion and Integrity’ are woven into thistles at the head of the Mace. These represent the aspirations of the Scottish people for the Parliament in 1999 but no more so than did the statues of Mercy and Justice that used to adorn the door to the old Parliament House. Meanwhile, the head of the Mace is surrounded by the words ‘There shall be a Scottish Parliament’ the

43. Indeed, at the start of each meeting, the Mace is now carried in to the chamber ahead of the Presiding Officer, before being placed on a table in front of he or she and the clerks. Members stand at their places until the Mace has been placed and the Presiding Officer has taken his or her seat. The procedure is followed in reverse at the end of each meeting, but not during any adjournment.

first words of the Westminster Scotland Act (1998) which established the Parliament in law.

As the Queen completed her speech, the Mace was uncovered and authority symbolically rendered. In effect the presence of the Mace replaced the old ceremony of fencing the Parliament, whereby the Clerk Register and Lord Lyon declared the Parliament constituted, concluding with the words: ‘command all and sundry to reverence, acknowledge and obey the same, and to defend and forbid all manner of persons to make any trouble or molestation thereto’.⁴⁴ Thereafter, the involvement of non-members in the ceremonials is a considerable departure from pre-1707. From the gallery a poem by Ian Crichton Smith was read; a song by Robert Burns, ‘A Man’s a Man For a’ That’, sung and with the participation, in the final rousing verse, of the entire gathering, including the royal party; and, following on from the first minister’s speech to thank the Queen, a poem was read out to the assembly, words of humorous optimism and quirky nationhood penned by an eleven year old school girl. Lastly, as in the old Parliament, a psalm was sung before queen and honours departed the stage. And so another difference between 1999 and 1703 can be clearly seen: while the Mace could represent ‘devolved’ authority in 1999, the honours had to be on display at all times when the old Parliament was in session.

While the use of ceremonial elements such as banners, trumpets, gun salutes, horse processions, various symbols of authority and sovereignty were common to the pre-1707 ‘riding’ of Parliament and the opening ceremony of 1999, the contribution of music appears to have been on a different scale in 1999. We know that trumpeters blew fanfares as the king or his Commissioner arrived and departed in the ‘ridings’ that took place at the opening and closing of the old Parliament. However, as we know, there was nothing to compare with the 1999 cocktail: fanfares and national anthem as the Queen left the palace; pipe bands as the elected members gathered outside; a trumpet fanfare as they entered the chamber; a second fanfare to greet the Queen and the crown; songs being sung by the all those present, and a departing pageant with mass pipe bands and even a steel band. The age of the national anthem had not arrived by 1707. Also, new levels of internationalism and of multi-faithism characterised 1999. Scotland has, not always convincingly, seen itself as an internationalist and outward looking country. The rituals performed by the opening of Parliament of 1703 show the influence of ceremonial employed in the parliaments and coronations of the English and French. However, the banners carried by the children in

44. See *APS*, vii, 6, *NAS*. PA2/26, 4 or *RPS*, 1661/1/4.

1999, both with the elected members walking to the chamber and in the parade that marched before the Queen at the end of the ceremony, were especially ‘untraditional’. They were fashioned as Himalayan prayer flags designed by a Buddhist monastery in Dumfries and represented eight facets of Scottish life. Also, while the ‘kirking of Parliament’ took place in a service in St. Giles the day before, the state opening ceremony was markedly bereft of religious moments, other than the singing of a single psalm. The emphasis on Scotland’s place in the secular and multi-faith world contrasts with the early modern Christian conscience that repeatedly gave parliament’s thanks to ‘Almighty God’.

The opening ceremony of 1999 was one characterised by compromise reflecting the nature and authority of Scotland’s new Parliament. It is a sovereign parliament with tax raising powers, unlike the assembly of Wales which can introduce only secondary legislation and has no powers to vary tax. The Queen and Charles, Prince of Wales attended the opening ceremony of the Welsh assembly in May 1999, and the Queen symbolically signed a document on which was written the opening words of the Government of Wales Act. This occurred as , in the words of Prince Charles’s speech, the Welsh members ‘met beneath the watchful eye of the Red Dragon’, yet the ritualistic and symbolic possibilities in relation to sovereignty are much less marked for the Welsh assembly. The role of the sovereign is clearly limited in the Welsh model. For example, the Queen does not appoint the Welsh Assembly First Secretary as she does the Scottish First Minister, and she does not provide assent for the subordinate legislation of Wales as she does for the primary legislation of the Scottish and UK parliaments. However, a range of key legislative areas remain reserved to Westminster in relation to Scotland. With the new Parliament the Scottish state has been partially restored, but the British state is still the master of foreign affairs, defence, macro-economics, pensions, social welfare and much else.

With the devolution of sovereignty came a degree of devolution of British ritual, as royal assent is signed for and a mace provided to confirm the link between the Scottish Parliament and British crown. Meanwhile the essence of the ‘riding’ of Parliament lives on in the procession from palace to parliament, the use of the honours of Scotland and the relative informality of the relationship between chamber and monarch. What has changed, in particular, is the appearance of women in a parliamentary membership. At nearly 40% the number of women MSPs is closer to typical Scandinavian than to British levels of female participation. Women occasionally featured in the pre-1707 Parliament. Female regents, such as Mary of Guise, widow of James V and mother of the child Mary, Queen of Scots, attended

parliaments in the sixteenth century. When in 1672 John Maitland, 1st Duke of Lauderdale, Commissioner to Charles II, arranged chairs for his wife and daughter within the Parliament House, it caused something of a stir in polite political circles.⁴⁵ But the role of women in 1999, within the chamber, in procession, in the police and army escorts and even in the provision of the gun salute from Edinburgh Castle, provides one of the most significant contrasts with the characteristics of the rituals of 1703, and helped encourage that greater informality we like to associate with ‘modernity’. Within the Parliament itself the replacement of estates by political party altered the architecture of the chamber as well as that of processional. All MSPs, other than the presiding officer, first minister and party leaders, had equal status in parliamentary ritual within and without of the chamber. The involvement of children from local communities in processions is a metaphor for the wider dispersal and universality of democracy that exists today, and which was less relevant to the elite representational political structures before 1707. Nevertheless, the denoting of parliamentary sovereignty was as essential in 1999 as in 1540 and 1703 as rendered before monarch, honours and representatives. As the late first minister Donald Dewar put it on the day itself, the opening of the new Parliament was ‘a modern ceremony but with roots in a great tradition’.⁴⁶

45. Sir George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh, 1821, *Memiors of the Affairs of Scotland from the Restoration of King Charles II*, Edinburgh, 219-220.

46. BBC (Scotland) live broadcast of the ceremony, I July, 1999.