

The Aberdeen Breviary Facsimile Between Liturgy and Antiquarianism in Victorian Scotland

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The 1854 facsimile edition of the *Breviarium Aberdonense* was one of the masterpieces of the Chiswick Press, a conspicuous monument in the history of Scottish club publications, and - to date - the only complete modern edition of one of Scotland's most important early printed books. The lengthy process of its conception and publication, which stretched from 1840 to 1854, was also the site of discussions - sometimes arguments - about what was essential in a text, the place of pre-Reformation devotion in Victorian society, and how Scots could - or should - respond to their past. This article is the first study of this edition of the *Breviarium* and its contexts and argues that these have much to tell us about a variety of topics, from the economic model of the publication society to the influence of Tractarianism and Anglo-Catholicism on Scottish culture. In doing so, it goes beyond a book historical reading of the *Breviarium* to see it and its publication within a much larger scholarly, religious, and cultural debate centred on the evergreen question of what value the past can have for the present. To begin to unpack this debate, however, it is necessary first to turn to the original text of which the 1854 *Breviarium* aspired to be a facsimile.

The Aberdeen Breviary, printed in two volumes in Edinburgh by Walter Chepman and Andro Myllar in 1509 and 1510, is the first substantial Scottish printed book.¹ It is also the high point of pre-Reformation Scottish Catholic Humanism and a foundational text for both antiquarian and liturgical studies in that country. Intended to be a revised, national version of the Use of Sarum, building on a long history of Sarum Use in Scotland, it was conceived of and largely executed by William Elphinstone, the Humanist bishop of Aberdeen and founder of King's College.² Whether it effected real liturgical change - whether, to be blunt, it was actually used - remains doubtful and even if it did, the sea-change of the Scottish Reformation, only half a century after its publication, ensured that its practical use as an instrument for daily worship did not long continue.

We do not know how many copies were originally printed and the occasional appearance of Breviary leaves in sixteenth-century binding waste has caused some to suggest that part of the run remained unsold and in sheets; in either case, it seems likely that few copies survived the Reformation.³ Those that can be traced were largely in the hands of the northeastern Catholic

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¹ *Breviarj Aberdonensis ad per celebris ecclesie Scotorum usum*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: I[m]p w. chepma[n], 1509-1510), ESTC S117099.

² For this understanding of the project, see Kelsey Jackson Williams, "Antiquarianism in Pre-Reformation Scotland", in *A Companion to Renaissance Antiquarianism*, ed. William Stenhouse (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming 2023).

³ Binding waste is discussed in Jane Stevenson, Iain Beavan, and Peter Davidson, "The Breviary of Aberdeen", *Journal of the Edinburgh Bibliographical Society* 6 (2011): 11-42 at 36-37. Other examples are known in private collections.

gentry by the seventeenth century: one (now lost) was evidently owned by the Catholic scholar Thomas Dempster of Muiresk, another was signed by the exile and soldier Francis Hay of Dalgety, still another by the presumably Catholic George Arbuthnot.⁴ It was not until the eighteenth century, as antiquarian learning began to flower in Scotland, that the Breviary began to achieve a new significance as "the most ancient printed book in *Scotland*".⁵ It was so described by the scholarly priest Thomas Innes, better known for his epochal study of early Scottish history, who discussed in detail a copy which was then housed in the library of the Scots College at Paris in an undated, but probably early eighteenth century, study of Sarum Use in Scotland.⁶ The first census of surviving copies was made in or shortly before 1732 by the Episcopalian antiquary and minister Alexander Keith and with it begins the modern scholarly study of the Breviary as a printed artefact.⁷

Keith identified three copies: a partial copy in the library of the parish kirk of Arbuthnot, another partial copy owned by "the late reverend Mr. Patrick Dunbreck", and a third, the same seen by Thomas Innes in Paris. Of these, we can only confidently trace one to the present day. The Arbuthnot copy was presented to King's College Library, Aberdeen, and it and another copy - perhaps Dunbreck's, though this is by no means clear - were made-up into one largely complete and one very incomplete copy, the former given to the Advocates Library by Professor John Ker of Aberdeen in 1742 and now in the NLS, the latter still at King's College.⁸ The Parisian copy has not been seen since the French Revolution and is presumed to have been destroyed or lost.⁹ However, Keith was unaware of two other copies still in Scotland in his own time: one had been donated to Edinburgh University Library in 1635 (it is still there) and the other, at some point between the later seventeenth and early nineteenth centuries, came into the possession of the Earls of Strathmore at Glamis Castle.¹⁰

By the dawn of the nineteenth century, then, a census of surviving copies would have looked much the same as it does today: one in the Advocates Library, one in Edinburgh University Library, one in King's College Library, Aberdeen, and one at Glamis Castle (not counting the various fragments of binding waste, whose existence did not become generally known until much more recently).¹¹ Although familiar to a handful of antiquaries, the Breviary was hardly a

⁴ Stevenson, et al., "Breviary of Aberdeen", 30-31, 35-36.

⁵ An early exception is the apparent use made by Thomas Dempster, mentioned above, in his *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Scotorum lib. XIX* (Bologna: Typis Nicolai Thebaldini, 1627), discussed in Stevenson, et al., "Breviary of Aberdeen", 35-36.

⁶ Thomas Innes, "Of the Salisbury Liturgy Used in Scotland", in *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, Vol. 2 (Aberdeen: Printed for the Club, 1842), ii. 364-367 at 366.

⁷ Alexander Keith, "A View of the Diocese of Aberdeen (M DCC XXXII)", in *Collections for a History of the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff*, ed. Joseph Robertson (Aberdeen: Printed for the Spalding Club, 1843), 67-656 at 653. For Keith see Kelsey Jackson Williams, *The First Scottish Enlightenment: Rebels, Priests, and History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 207-211.

⁸ This complex trajectory is reconstructed by Davidson in Stevenson, et al., "Breviary of Aberdeen", 34-35.

⁹ Stevenson, et al., "Breviary of Aberdeen", 35, though the comparatively good survival of books from the Scots College Library (see Maurice Caillet, "Scotland in the Antiquarian Collection of the Library of the Irish College in Paris", *Innes Review* 43 [1992]: 18-52 and the commentary in Alastair Cherry, "The Scots College Books in Paris", *Innes Review* 44 [1993]: 69-72) should encourage hope that this copy may yet be rediscovered.

¹⁰ Stevenson, et al., "Breviary of Aberdeen", 28-30, 32-33.

¹¹ See also the discussion of these copies in Alan Macquarrie with Rachel Butter, eds., *Legends of Scottish Saints: Readings, Hymns and Prayers for the Commemorations of Scottish Saints in the Aberdeen Breviary* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2012), xvi-xvii. In 1849 the Aberdonian antiquary Joseph Robertson was aware of all of these locations in the

household name when, on 24 April 1813, the Edinburgh University Library copy was studied and collated by the young bookseller David Laing (1793-1878).¹²

Laing, only four days past his twentieth birthday when he made this collation, was already an important figure in the bookselling world.¹³ The son of the Edinburgh bookseller and publisher William Laing, he had worked in his father's shop since 1806 and had already cut his teeth in the world of bibliomania, buying at the Roxburghe sale in London the previous year. The rich early printed collections of Edinburgh University Library had interested him from the beginning and not long after, in 1815, he would prepare his first publication: a facsimile edition of the catalogue of William Drummond's library, donated to Edinburgh University Library in 1627; even then facsimiles of older texts had excited his interest.¹⁴

Laing evidently had a fascination with the Breviary which went beyond his larger interest in the university collections. The following year, on 1 March 1814, Laing also collated the Advocates Library copy on a similar level of detail.¹⁵ But there the matter rested. Laing's career and publications developed apace, but the Aberdeen Breviary had, for the moment been forgotten. Instead, the following decades were dominated, for Laing and for the Scottish intellectual world at large, by the foundation of the first generation of publishing clubs. The Bannatyne in 1823, followed by the Maitland in 1829 and the Abbotsford in 1833 developed the model of exclusive publications of lavishly-produced antiquarian material which had been established by the English Roxburghe Club in 1812.¹⁶ Unlike the Roxburghe, however, their remits were more specifically directed towards the publication of Scottish texts, especially those of antiquarian or literary interest.

In 1839 this model found new imitators in the northeast of Scotland. The young advocates Joseph Robertson and John Stuart planned, advertised, and founded the Spalding Club, a publication society specifically devoted to publishing "the Literary, Historical, Genealogical, and Topographical remains of the north-eastern counties of Scotland".¹⁷ It lacked the exclusive clubbishness of the older societies - its membership list was capped at three hundred, later extended to five hundred, members, as compared with the smaller numbers of its more fashionable brethren (the Bannatyne had started out with only twenty-five) - but had the virtue of lower subscription fees, only a guinea year compared to the Bannatyne's five guineas, and an active committee who rapidly saw to its success in a landscape where not a few Bannatyne- and Maitland-imitators failed after - or before - their first volume.¹⁸

census he prepared of surviving *Breviary* copies, though he also supposed, erroneously, that one could be found in the Gough collection in the Bodleian Library (AUL MS 973, item 22).

¹² EUL La.IV.14, box 1, folder 15, fols. 8-9. While described as a "collation", this and its sibling document are more readily identifiable in modern terms as detailed descriptions of the text. Laing breaks the complex volume down into parts, notes the number of folios in each, and gives a semi-facsimile transcription of the opening pages and colophon.

¹³ Gilbert Goudie, *David Laing, LL.D.: A Memoir of His Life and Literary Work* (Edinburgh: T. and A. Constable, 1918).

¹⁴ Goudie, *Laing*, 21-23, 152-153.

¹⁵ EUL La.IV.14, box 1, folder 15, fols. 1-2. In this "collation" Laing drew on his existing familiarity with the EUL copy to note, for example, that the Advocates copy "[w]ants in all title & 22 leaves and duplicate of Psalter".

¹⁶ Marinell Ash, *The Strange Death of Scottish History* (Edinburgh: The Ramsay Head Press, 1980), ch. 3.

¹⁷ *Notices of the Spalding Club With the Annual Reports, List of Members and Works Printed for the Club, 1839-71* (Edinburgh: Printed for the Club by Robert Clark, 1871), 2.

¹⁸ Ash, *Strange Death*, 80-82. Even Robert Pitcairn, one of the original founders of the Bannatyne, would write on 12 December 1839 to Stuart that "I am persuaded the plan of the [much less exclusive] Camden [Society] is superior -

From the outset Robertson and Stuart's Spalding Club had their eye on the Aberdeen Breviary. The report from the inaugural annual general meeting of December 1840 already identified it as a work to be considered for future publication and David Laing, writing to Stuart on 18 January 1841, mentioned almost as an afterthought that "The Legends of the Saints extracted from the Breviarium Aberdonense . . . would make a desirable publication for the Club. Bishop Kyle, I have been told, had these Legends copied several years ago & he might give the use of the MS. & perhaps edit the Vol."¹⁹ Laing also asked Stuart, "should you have a spare hour", to collate the King's College copy of the Breviary for him, which he had evidently not seen.²⁰ Had Bishop James Kyle, the Catholic Vicar Apostolic of Scotland's Northern District, been chosen as editor the project would have taken a drastically different - and almost certainly much more controversial - course, but, perhaps precisely for this reason, there is no indication in Bishop Kyle's surviving correspondence with Stuart that the latter ever broached the matter.²¹

Instead, it was the lawyer, antiquary, and career editor Cosmo Innes who took the initial lead. At a meeting of the Spalding Club Committee on 28 June 1843, "Several Letters" from Innes were read on the subject of printing the Breviary, a proposal which the committee warmly supported, provided it could be done "consistently with the State of their Funds", and a suggestion was rather vaguely made that assistance might be obtained from "the Maitland Club & other Societies likely to take an interest in the undertaking".²² Innes persisted, writing to Stuart on 16 September to ask if Stuart could convene a meeting of the Spalding Club's council so that he might "lay before them some intelligible scheme for printing the Breviary - an object of much & increasing interest with our Southern friends" and indicating which council members he thought likely to support the scheme.²³ In the end, a committee meeting was held on 16 October and Innes evidently made the case for the Breviary as a standard club publication, but his audience demurred:

as they have already made Engagement for the [Aberdeen] Chartulary and as they think it necessary to reserve Funds adequate for giving two volumes per annum to members of a popular nature, they cannot pledge themselves unreservedly to go on with the work.²⁴

Innes reiterated that the Matiland Club was prepared to join forces with the Spalding in this project and after the committee had satisfied themselves that the cost of the work was likely to be 7*s.* a volume, it was concluded that "they would be justified in going on with the work" if Innes, independent of the club, could raise "200 Subscribers at a Guinea and a half each" as well as attempting to enlist the Abbotsford Club as another ally in the undertaking.²⁵

In other words, what was being proposed was an essentially quite public project. If jointly produced by the Spalding, Maitland, and Abbotsford Clubs and buoyed up by a further 200

to open wide our Gates, & for a yearly payment of £1.1 to circulate books to the full extent of our funds" (AUL MS 606/1, item 5). Pitcairn's enthusiastic and overbearing letters to Stuart, advising him on how the Spalding should be constituted, would reward further study (AUL MS 606/1, items 5, 7, 48, 55, 147, and 315).

¹⁹ *Notices*, 18; AUL MS 606/1, item 286.

²⁰ AUL MS 606/1, item 286.

²¹ AUL MS 606/2, items 49, 176.

²² AUL MS 607/1, p. 72.

²³ AUL MS 606/3, items 222, 225.

²⁴ AUL MS 607/1, pp. 73-74.

²⁵ AUL MS 607/1, p. 74.

subscribers, such an edition would have come to almost 1,000 copies at a (comparatively) moderate price. The official reports of the club, however, deprecated this and seem to have intentionally downplayed the non-exclusive nature of the subscription process to the membership, alluding only to how a subscription campaign in England would make the work "accessible to a limited number of subscribers not resident in the immediate field of the Society's labours".²⁶ Even in a larger club like the Spalding, the exclusivity of club publications was an important inducement to membership and not to be treated lightly.

When the proposals for this publication of the Breviary, which can presumably be dated to early in 1844, were prepared, they emphasised its value as a historical document. "Nothing need be said", the proposals promise, "of the value of such a work to those who regard with interest the ancient forms and usages of the SCOTISH CHURCH [*sic*]. . . [b]ut it may be permitted very briefly to suggest that the work has claims to more general notice".²⁷ After all, it contained an important example of the early forms of the Use of Sarum as well as notices of English and Welsh, in addition to Scottish, saints. It would not, however, be a complete edition, as it would omit both the psalter and the common offices which were "present themselves with no great variations, in so many of the Liturgies of the Western Church".²⁸ In other words, it would single out the legends of saints as the most interesting part of the Breviary from an antiquarian perspective. "The edition, even with this curtailment, will extend to two quarto volumes, of more than four hundred pages each". This surprising statement - the legends alone would hardly occupy so much space - is explained by the additional promise that the "Epistolae de tempore et de sanctis" of St. Machar's Cathedral, Aberdeen, would be added to bulk out and complete this anthology of Scottish hagiography. The price had now increased to a stiff two guineas each, double the annual subscription rate of the society.²⁹

Robertson wrote from Glasgow to Stuart on 30 March 1844 that Innes had "great hopes" for the Breviary "from Oxford & Cambridge" - i.e., from Tractarian theologians and antiquaries - and "sends you the Prospectus, which he is to begin immediately".³⁰ They had also been corresponding about a projected Spalding Club publication of the genealogical collections of the Scottish Catholic Colonel Leslie - published much later as *Historical Records of the Family of Leslie From 1067 to 1868-9* - and on 18 May Robertson wrote again, asking Stuart to him send "a few dozen copies of the prospectus" as he hoped "by the help of Colonel Leslie we might pick up a few subscribers amongst the English Romanists with whom he has been or is sojourning".³¹ The breviary was also advertised at least once in the Anglo-Catholic newspaper *The English Churchman*, as confirmed by a letter from its editor to Stuart hoping that he might "have earned a copy" of the prospective book for his pains.³²

It was probably in response to this advertisement that Robertson wrote to Stuart on 6 June expressing confusion that the Breviary, previously in the hands of Innes, who "expected to do everything personally" was now being advertised. If it was to be advertised, however, Robertson

²⁶ *Notices*, 32.

²⁷ EUL La.IV.14, box 1, folder 14, fol. 35r-v.

²⁸ EUL La.IV.14, box 1, folder 14, fol. 36r.

²⁹ EUL La.IV.14, box 1, folder 14, fol. 36r.

³⁰ AUL MS 606/4, item 51.

³¹ AUL MS 606/4, item 79. Charles Leslie of Balquhain, *Historical Records of the Family of Leslie From 1067 to 1868-9*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1869).

³² AUL MS 606/4, item 216.

advised that "you should not overlook the Tablet - the newspaper organ of the English Romanists. That together with the English Churchman, ought to suffice, at least in the first instance".³³ He also acquiesced happily to Stuart's suggestion that the Catholic Charles Dolman and Tractarian James Burns be added "to the list of booksellers", presumably those to be solicited for subscriptions.³⁴

Meanwhile, individual subscriptions trickled in. Bishop Kyle, once proposed as editor, received a prospectus on 27 May and replied to Stuart on the 31st, subscribing for a copy and offering his own opinions on editorial practice, suggesting that only the distinctively Scottish parts be printed "so much of it being common to all" other breviaries.³⁵ The Catholic convert Ambrose Lisle Phillipps wrote to Stuart on 15 October that "Lady Dorothy Leslie has been kind enough to send me a copy of your prospectus relating to the Aberdeen Breviary . . . I should wish to subscribe for one copy".³⁶ Lady Dorothy (née Eyre) was Colonel Leslie's wife, suggesting that Robertson's hopes from that direction had not been misplaced. Even as late as 12 October 1845 Innes wrote to Stuart that his friend Richard Butler, "writing from Ireland", noted that two Irish scholars desired to subscribe.³⁷

On 19 June 1844, after a period of travel in England, Innes reported further progress to Stuart:

I had made the first moves merely at the Universities anent the Breviary when I was summoned to attend the first meeting of a provisional council of the Anglia Christiana. I showed them our prospectus and they entered into our plan so warmly that I was induced to stay further proceedings in any other quarter.

I don't know how they have thriven since I left, but then there was a most promising appearance of general support from the whole Church. They have put our book into their programme, and will take it up either singly or in union with the Spalding as you choose - that is - if the society goes forward at all for the affairs of the Church are in so critical a state, it seems to me a little doubtful whether our Club which counted on the patronage of \3 of/ the E. & I. Archbishops & all the Bishops, will be effectually launched after all.³⁸

This had, apparently, been Robertson's idea in the first instance as, writing to Stuart on 24 June, he noted that "I put him on that scent before we decided as to a prospectus, but he did not seem sanguine about it".³⁹

In a lengthy fifteen-page letter concerning Spalding Club affairs dated 25 January 1845, Robertson wrote to Stuart reporting that he had had "a long and serious discussion" concerning

³³ AUL MS 606/4, item 87.

³⁴ AUL MS 606/4, item 87.

³⁵ AUL MS 606/4, item 82.

³⁶ AUL MS 606/3, item 163

³⁷ AUL MS 606/5, item 135.

³⁸ AUL MS 606/4, item 93. The short-lived Anglia Christiana Society failed after the production of only a handful of volumes. See Philippa Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional: Antiquarians, Historians and Archaeologists in Victorian England, 1838-1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 43-44.

³⁹ AUL MS 606/4, item 98.

the project with Innes. Innes, he reported "remains as confident as ever of our ability to get £500 from England whenever we require it", but his plan of the previous summer had misfired:

When he reached London with our prospectuses, he showed them to one or two members of a projected society (known popularly as The Anglia Christiana) who thereupon summoned a meeting of the committee, who decided on going on with our Breviary, and that of Bangor, as their two first works, and requested Innes not to issue his prospectus. Since then the Society has hung fire, and is now likely to break down without doing anything.⁴⁰

Their discussion as to the editorial methods which would be used in the project reached no conclusion beyond the resolution to delay a decision until the work "be about to be begun in earnest". The sticking point was evidently whether to print the entire breviary or only that portion unique to Scotland. In either case, Robertson wrote, "I urged the propriety of at once beginning the transcription of that part which we are all agreed should be printed, viz^t the *Proprium Sanctorum* (or Acts of the Saints); and Innes wished the charge entrusted to himself. Some of his young men [the clerks he employed for transcription work] will do it cheaply enough".⁴¹

This last decision must have been acted on at some point in 1845, for on 12 December of that year the Spalding Club cash book records the payment of £15 to John McPhail "for transcribing Breviary".⁴² Somewhat surprisingly, this transcript survives. It evidently passed from John Stuart's care to his son-in-law Dr. John Woodward (1836-1898), the rector of St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Montrose, and was purchased at his sale for the University of Aberdeen Library.⁴³ Bound in three volumes - two for the *pars aestivalis*, one for the *pars hyemalis* - it is written in a clear running hand with the red printing of the original represented with a striking purple ink. Notably, no facsimile attempts are made in terms of line or page division and all contractions have been expanded; this was very much the basis for a modernising edition, not a facsimile, typographic or otherwise.⁴⁴

By the autumn of 1845, it had become apparent that these initial bids to drum up interest (and financial backing) had not been successful. Writing on 10 September 1845, John McPhail, the breviary's transcriber, suggested that as "the Council has not been successful in obtaining some expected aid from without to warrant them in proceeding with the Breviary of Aberdeen, &c." they should instead double the subscription for a year so "as a means of obtaining aid from within".⁴⁵ In December, the committee placated an apparently impatient membership by reiterating the impossibility of publishing without the aid of other societies or "a numerous body of subscribers" and the next year, in December 1846, they were neither further advanced in their plans nor entirely enthusiastic at McPhail's proposal that subscriptions be doubled for a year to

⁴⁰ AUL MS 606/5, item 25.

⁴¹ AUL MS 606/5, item 25.

⁴² AUL MS 610, unpaginated. Puzzlingly, however, the Spalding accounts for Dec 1843 - Dec 1844 also record the substantial outlay of £28 7s. "for transcripts for the Breviary of Aberdeen" (AUL MS 607/1, p. 114). Why, then, did a new transcription need to be commissioned only a few months later?

⁴³ This can be deduced from the pencil note "Bought at Dr Woodward's sale" on the front pastedown of AUL MS 515, the first volume of the transcription.

⁴⁴ AUL MSS 515-517.

⁴⁵ AUL MS 606/5, item 111.

achieve the Breviary's publication.⁴⁶ This was unsurprising given that the Club was facing other more pressing financial difficulties in the mid-1840s, with their richly-illustrated edition of the *Registrum episcopatus Aberdonensis* costing them over £1,000 which they could ill-afford to spend.⁴⁷

Matters came to a head on 5 April 1847 when John Stuart called a meeting of the Spalding Club committee to discuss "the progress which had been made in the plans for printing the Breviary of Aberdeen". John Hay Forbes, Lord Medwyn, the Lord of Session and Episcopal philanthropist, had proposed that one way of resolving the seeming financial deadlock surrounding the breviary's publication was that "an attempt should be made to raise the deficiency [i.e., the deficit left over after a contribution from the club itself and subscriptions from non-club members] by Subscription among the Members", in other words to raise a voluntary subscription amongst those already part of the club to underwrite the additional costs required. Stuart reported that Innes and Robertson estimated a two-volume edition of the breviary "uniform with the Spalding Club Books" would cost about £860 and it was concluded that of this the club could afford £472 10s., "payable by instalments in two or three years", thus entitling each member to a copy of the breviary at "greatly less than cost price" and that in addition "more than a hundred copies would be subscribed for" (this may be an indication of the degree of success with which Innes had met in his initial attempt at drumming up subscriptions in England). The deficiency needing to be made good, then, would be £210 and it was agreed that a circular be presented to a likely portion of the membership - presumably those wealthy enough to be able to contribute to such a cause - encouraging the raising of this sum.⁴⁸ That such a complex and potentially risky process was considered at all was probably due to the membership - or at least a portion thereof - agitating for publication, what the club's annual report tactfully describes as "the earnest desire . . . that a vigorous effort should be made".⁴⁹

By December of 1847 the council, now estimating that the work would cost only £800 in total, "agreed to devote to the object one whole year's free revenue of the Club, payable, however, by instalments, on condition that they should thus secure a copy of the work to every Member" and, despite their previous disappointment, hoping to obtain English and Irish subscriptions for "a limited number of copies" at two guineas each. Some of the leading members of the club had begun a subscription for raising a reserve fund to underwrite the project of which £110 had already been secured and another £90 promised, and the close of 1847 seemed to place them closer than ever to achieving this long-desired publication.⁵⁰

Robertson and Innes now appear to have formally assumed roles as co-editors, at least nominally, and their plans according to Stuart were "pretty well matured" by April 1848.⁵¹ These plans, however, were rather different from what had been suggested at the general meeting in December. A memorandum from July of that year makes it clear that the project would now be at least partially underwritten by a joint undertaking with the Bannatyne Club and the London bookseller James Toovey. The Bannatyne club would take one hundred copies of the Breviary - still in two volumes quarto - for 25s. a volume, supplying their own club paper free of charge. In

⁴⁶ *Notices*, 37, 41.

⁴⁷ *Notices*, 42.

⁴⁸ AUL MS 607/1, pp. 128-130.

⁴⁹ *Notices*, 45.

⁵⁰ *Notices*, 45-46.

⁵¹ EUL MS La.IV.17, fol. 9130r. Robertson, however, was still writing to Stuart on 26 April that he had failed to meet with Innes in Edinburgh "to complete the arrangements as to the Breviary" (AUL MS 973, item 4).

addition, Toovey, "or any other Bookseller who may be selected", would take 100 to 150 copies of the same, also at 25s. a volume, but the Spalding Club supplying the paper.⁵²

This made good economic sense. The agreement with the Bannatyne Club would secure a clear £250 towards publication costs while that with Toovey, despite the cost of paper, would go a considerable way further towards covering the otherwise challenging sum required for publication (the Spalding volumes, four hundred of which were required, would also cost 25s. a volume, amounting to an eye-watering £1,000 for the club's copies in this latest iteration).⁵³ The memorandum seems to have been concluded between John Stuart, as secretary of the Spalding and David Laing, as secretary of the Bannatyne, probably also with the input of Innes, at whose house Stuart was staying in July of 1848 while in Edinburgh to secure Laing's agreement.⁵⁴

At last, seven years on from its inception, the project seemed almost complete. But Stuart and his fellows in the Spalding had not counted on the third partner in the agreement: James Toovey. Toovey, a recent convert to Catholicism and sometime publisher of Tractarian literature, had, as subsequent correspondence makes clear, planned not only to purchase a significant number of copies for sale but to oversee the printing of the entire edition, and he had his own agenda. In a firm letter to Cosmo Innes of 3 August he set aside the Spalding's plan for a selection from the legends of the saints in favour of "a simple reprint". "I believe", he continued, "I am only expressing that of the majority of persons who would feel interested in its publication either in an antiquarian, historical, or liturgical point of view; - my proposal would be to reprint it red and black in the old english character", though the type could be larger while still "read[ing] page for page".⁵⁵ He would, of course, oversee the whole production, though proof sheets would be sent to each club while it was in progress. A day later he wrote to Laing as well, saying that he "was very sorry to learn from [Innes] that it was not contemplated to reprint the whole of the Aberdeen Breviary" and adding somewhat ominously that "I do think any omissions will be very fatal to the interest that would otherwise be felt towards it".⁵⁶

The Spalding held firm and by 12 August Toovey had definitely "declined our proposal", leading Stuart to reassure Laing that he would secure the Spalding's local Aberdeen-based printer William Bennett instead. Stuart's tone was irritable and he noted, rather pointedly, that "[a] good many disadvantages are incident to the plan of putting the whole affair into the hands of a Bookseller, which are not counterbalanced by his proposal to reprint it verbatim, & in facsimile. I would rather apprehend that we should render the proposed reprint less useful by agreeing to Mr Toovey's notions even if they should be found practicable - which I doubt."⁵⁷ Robertson, however, in a letter to Stuart of 25 September, counselled a principal compromise:

I would propose that the Spalding Club should agree to the entire reprinting of the Aberdeen Breviary, without abridgement or omission of any kind, but in modern types, and without contractions, and that, taking our stand on this concession, we should hold the Bannatyne Club to its engagement.

⁵² EUL MS La.IV.17, fol. 9131r.

⁵³ EUL MS La.IV.17, fols. 9004r-9005r.

⁵⁴ EUL MS La.IV.17, fol. 9131r.

⁵⁵ EUL MS La.IV.17, fols. 9004r-9005r.

⁵⁶ EUL MS La.IV.17, fol. 9132r-v.

⁵⁷ EUL MS La.IV.17, fol. 9133r-v.

On the one hand, such a reprint should and would satisfy every really useful or intelligent purpose; and meet the desires of all except those pedants or fops who are incurably smitten with the black-letter insanity. You know that Innes carries his notions of printing in facsimile [*sic*], or with contractions, as far as most people; but even he at once saw the impropriety of attempting a fac-simile reprint of the Aberdeen Breviary.

Mr Laing seems to misunderstand the objection to such a reprint, which is not the impossibility or difficulty of achieving it with our modern appliances, but the folly, or worse, of reproducing all the blunders of one of the most inaccurately printed books in the world, together with all those contractions and ellipses which make it much more difficult to read, even by practised scholars, than the great majority of bad MSS.⁵⁸

He went on to complain that the specimen sheet shown him by Laing downplayed the number of contractions which would be present in the full text.⁵⁹ Parsing the example of the specimen sheet in more detail, he showed the implications of a facsimile reproduction, but added on a more positive note that the cost of printing the full breviary, rather than simply the *Proprium*, would be less than it might seem as the psalter - present in both volumes - could be printed twice with only minimal changes rather than set fresh each time. "I shall be glad", he concluded, "if this compromise meet your views, and that of the Bannatyne Club, for I would lament that anything should ever occur to delay the progress of an undertaking which is so desirable in every way".⁶⁰

On 27 September 1848 Stuart wrote to Laing that "our Printer in Aberdeen agreed to take the burden of the subscribed copies on himself" and so the plan was salvaged after all. He was conscious, however, that some Bannatynians agreed with Toovey and wanted the edition to be unabridged in its content and was willing "to arrange for the proposed reprint of the Breviary being without abridgement or omission of any sort". "Such a reprint", he went on,

will certainly satisfy every really useful or intelligent purpose and meet the desires of all except those who are incurably smitten with the black letter mania. Such a purpose would unquestionably be defeated if the reprint should be a fac-simile of the original. The specimens of this sort which Mr Innes has sent me may take the eye, but even as they stand, they are more difficult to read than the great majority of Bad MSS. - and they do not give a tithe of the contractions in the original. If these were represented, the page, bristling, with all manner of signs and symbols, would wear a very different appearance, and frighten the common reader, if not the antiquary himself.⁶¹

He noted also that it was likely to "be read as much as most of our Club Books" because of the details on early Scottish Christianity. "I fear lest we should detract from our credit if we should insist on not only reproducing the work - but also all the blunders arising from its most inaccurate

⁵⁸ AUL MS 973, item 7.

⁵⁹ The quotation of the offending specimen sheet given by Robertson suggests that it is distinct from the more fully-realised specimen pamphlet preserved at EUL MS.La.IV.14, fols. 37-41.

⁶⁰ AUL MS 973, item 7.

⁶¹ EUL MS La.IV.17, fol. 9135r-v.

printing".⁶² Patrick Chambers of Auldbar, another Spalding mover and shaker with whom he was staying, had said, he added, that if the facsimile plan had been proceeded with "nobody would read it". He planned to press ahead and requested Laing to send on club paper to Aberdeen by steamer and an instalment of the payment soon after.

Laing was less sanguine and requested a specimen of Bennett's edition, a request Stuart deflected in a letter of 12 October. "I would be quite willing to get up a specimen of the Breviary for you, as you suggest", he wrote, "but as the plan is wholly left to the Editors Messrs Innes & Robertson I could not venture to forestal their decision".⁶³ More concerningly he noted that additional expenses, above and beyond the 25s. per volume originally agreed to, "could not exceed" a further 2s. 6d. per volume, "so that in any event you will have the Book at about one half the cost which you would have been put to undertaking the matter for your own Club alone".⁶⁴ Laing was unconvinced, whether by what he saw of Bennett's printing or at the ballooning cost of the edition, and withdrew the Bannatyne Club's support from the project at the last possible moment.⁶⁵

The Spalding Club's annual report for December 1848 lamented that their "expectations . . . were frustrated at the very point when all difficulty seemed to have been overcome".⁶⁶ They still planned to "at least . . . reprint that portion which is of most historical interest, the 'Proprium Sanctorum,' or Lessons appointed for the Feasts of the Saints" which, they added, "might easily be so printed as to bind up in its proper place with the rest of the Breviary, should the Club, as is so much to be wished, be able at a future time to overtake the remaining portions of the work".⁶⁷ Although the loss of the Bannatyne Club's support had forced them to reduce the scope of their ambitions, they still had hopes that something would ultimately be produced for the club's members.

What happened next is unclear. It appears that while Stuart and the Spalding had not given up the idea of an edition, nor had Laing and Toovey, and they now had a further collaborator in the form of the Glasgow-based Maitland Club. On 28 March 1849 Robertson wrote to Stuart that W.B.D.D. Turnbull, as interim secretary of the Maitland, had written asking that the Spalding "subscribe for 100 copies of the Aberdeen Breviary - set at 25/. each" and adding that "Toovey . . . will undertake to reprint it without the slightest curtailments". Unsurprisingly, Robertson was skeptical and explained to Turnbull "how the negotiations with the Bannatyne broke down" in the previous year. He added in his letter to Stuart that, "I have no great faith in the success of Mr Toovey's project, but think it well to apprise you of its being entertained".⁶⁸

We lack further details of what negotiations passed between the various parties in the first half of 1849, but by 10 June Thomas Maitland, soon to be raised to the bench as Lord Dundrennan and a member of both the Bannatyne and Maitland Clubs, was writing to Laing in Edinburgh that

⁶² EUL MS La.IV.17, fols. 9135v-9136r. The repeated charges of inaccurate printing on the part of Chepman and Myllar can be easily substantiated with reference to the original breviary.

⁶³ EUL MS La.IV.17, fol. 9137r.

⁶⁴ EUL MS La.IV.17, fols. 9137v-9138r.

⁶⁵ The crucial meeting must have taken place in person at some point in or about early December 1848. An entry in the Spalding Club cash book for 12 December records "charges to & from Edinburgh to meet Bannatyne Committee about Breviary" £3 9s. 6d. and "further expenses anent same, portorage of boxes from Edinburgh &c", £1 14s. 2d. (AUL MS 611, unpaginated).

⁶⁶ *Notices*, 50.

⁶⁷ *Notices*, 50-51.

⁶⁸ AUL MS 973, item 21.

he had seen Toovey concerning the Breviary "& I shall feel greatly disappointed if the Bannatyne & Maitland do not subscribe on the terms on which he proposes to supply copies".⁶⁹ In other words, something similar to the plan mooted between the Spalding, Bannatyne, and Toovey of the previous year was now being proposed with the Maitland taking the place of the recalcitrant Spalding (it was also less economically risky as the Maitland had only a hundred members compared to the Spalding's four hundred).

After a further month of negotiation, proposals were drawn up on 26 July 1849, agreed by Toovey the following day, certified by Maitland, and sent on to Laing on 30 July. The memorandum of agreement was as follows:

1. That the Aberdeen Breviary shall be reprinted in two volumes quarto, conform to the specimen sheet sent by Mr. Toovey for inspection.
2. That Mr. Toovey shall undertake to have the Book edited in a scholarlike manner - and, farther, without putting him to any additional expense, shall allow the last proof's [*sic*] of the Legends to be revised by Mr. Thomas Thomson of Edinburgh, in order to secure accuracy in printing the names of persons and places in Scotland.
3. That the Bannatyne Club shall take 100 copies, and the Maitland Club 110 copies of the Breviary; and that the Clubs shall respectively supply Mr. Toovey, free of expense, in London, with the paper on which these copies are to be printed.
4. That Mr. Toovey shall furnish the copies to the Clubs at a price not exceeding 25/- a volume, or 50/ a copy.
5. That the volumes of the Breviary shall be issued in succession as they are finished, and that each volume shall be payable on delivery; but upon the understanding, that one year shall elapse between the payment of the first and second volumes.⁷⁰

What had crucially changed was Toovey's role in the project. From being, in effect, the factor for the Spalding Club in the 1848 agreement, Toovey became the publisher in the 1849 agreement, simply supplying the other two clubs with copies of his work. The only oversight the Scottish societies now had was that of the proofs - and these only of the legends of the saints, not of the work as a whole - which were to be revised by the Bannatyne's president, Thomas Thomson. This would have far-reaching ramifications as the project progressed.

In the immediate moment it resulted in Toovey's complete victory as to presentation and appearance. The entire breviary was to be printed, not simply the *Proprium*, and it was to appear in black and red printing with a fine textura type at the Chiswick Press of Charles Whittingham, best known for its long collaboration with the publisher William Pickering.⁷¹ Toovey's choice of the Chiswick Press probably had much to do with the fact that Whittingham had, a few years earlier in 1844, been the printer for the typographically outstanding six-volume series of Books of Common Prayer issued by William Pickering.⁷²

⁶⁹ EUL MS La.IV.17, fol. 6188r-v.

⁷⁰ EUL MS La.IV.17, fol. 6191r-v.

⁷¹ See Arthur Warren, *The Charles Whittinghams, Printers* (New York: The Grolier Club of New York, 1896).

⁷² Warren, *Charles Whittinghams*, 164-166; Sir Geoffrey Keynes, *William Pickering, Publisher: A Memoir and a Check-List of His Publications*, rev. ed. (London: The Galahad Press, s.a.), 31-32, 85-86.

Even at this late stage, the Spalding Club had not entirely abandoned hope that they might be involved, in some way, in the breviary project. Writing to Stuart on 29 August 1849, Robertson reported the details of the contract between the Bannatyne and Maitland Clubs and Toovey, noting Thomas Thomson's role in looking over "the sheets of the Proprium SS. with the view of correcting mistakes in Scotch names and places". "I doubt much", he added,

if as a Club the Spalding could afford to meddle with the undertaking. But some plan might be desired by which such of our members as wished the book might be supplied with it on the same terms as the Bannatyne & Maitland or cheaper if the subscribers of the guarantee fund choose to apply their subscriptions towards reducing the cost to the members under the altered circumstances of the affair.⁷³

Stuart must have approved for on 1 September Robertson wrote enthusiastically that "If Chalmers agree to your proposal about the guarantee fund" all would be quite manageable. "The book should be got for the members of the Club", he wrote adamantly, and "Toovey ought to sell as large a number of copies as you want very cheap - perhaps 30/. a copy paper included".⁷⁴ Whether Chalmers disagreed, Toovey demanded a higher price per copy or some other obstacle presented itself, this is the last we hear of Spalding Club involvement in the project; from here on, what had begun in that north-eastern Scottish context had decisively moved to an Edinburgh-London axis with all of the religious and political tensions this implied.

And religious tensions there were, both in Scotland and in England, which materially affected the publication of the Breviary. As a pre-Reformation Catholic liturgical text, it was open to many of the same objections in a Scottish context as would be brought to bear against Thomas Innes's *Civil and Ecclesiastical History* a few years later when the Aberdeen advocate James Edmond, at a general meeting of the Spalding Club, fulminated that Innes's work "contained tenets and sentiments to which no conscientious Protestant could agree . . . [and] that he could not, as a consistent Protestant, take any part in the promulgation of these opinions".⁷⁵ While Edmond's objection was overruled, "the dread of Advocate Edmond & the Aberdonian rabble of ultra-Evangelicals" persisted, at least among Catholic antiquaries, later in the 1850s.⁷⁶

Edmond was an elder of the West Church in Aberdeen and it would be too easy to put his outburst down to a knee-jerk Presbyterian suspicion of Catholicism, but larger forces were at work in the religious sphere of 1850s Britain. The Oxford Movement had transformed the English religious landscape in the 1830s and 1840s, first within the Church of England, and subsequently - especially after John Henry Newman's reception into the Catholic church in 1845 - outwith it as many Tractarians, Toovey amongst them, left the national church for the at least notionally more congenial shelter of Roman Catholicism.⁷⁷ Tensions increased when Pius IX restored diocesan episcopacy to the Catholic church in England and Wales in 1850, the so-called "papal aggression",

⁷³ AUL MS 973, item 27.

⁷⁴ AUL MS 973, item 28.

⁷⁵ From an account of the 21 December 1853 annual general meeting printed in the *Aberdeen Journal*, 28 December 1853, and qtd. in Timothy Duffy, "George A. Griffin: A Priest among Antiquaries", *Innes Review* 27 (1976): 99-163 at 143.

⁷⁶ Duffy, "Griffin", 144.

⁷⁷ For an introduction to the Oxford movement see *The Oxford Handbook of the Oxford Movement*, ed. Stewart J. Brown, Peter B. Nockles, and James Pereiro (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

which was in turn met with the punitive Ecclesiastical Titles Act 1851.⁷⁸ In Scotland, Tractarianism had been welcomed by the Scottish Episcopal Church in the 1830s, but by the following decade the partnership had soured for many, with the Tractarians seeming both too anglicising and too Catholicising for many Scottish Episcopalians. Despite this, a minority of Scottish Episcopalians maintained Tractarian allegiances, most notably Alexander Penrose Forbes, Bishop of Brechin and son of the breviary's supporter Lord Medwyn, who will be discussed in more detail below.⁷⁹ It is into this febrile context of theological controversy and rising anti-Catholicism that the publication of the Breviary facsimile must be situated.

* * *

Unsurprisingly, given Thomas Thomson's notorious dilatoriness in publication and Laing's prior interest in the Breviary, it was Laing who eventually took up the role of proof corrector in Edinburgh.⁸⁰ By February 1850 Toovey was nagging him for the return of proof sheets and asking for help with Scottish place names, but work proceeded slowly and a letter of 2 February 1852 reported that only gathering SS of *pars estivalis*, the first of the two volumes to be published, was in the press.⁸¹ The Bannatyne did not settle its accounts with Toovey for its 110 copies of the *pars estivalis* - at 25s. a copy, £137 10s. in all - until 4 May 1852 and the physical books only arrived in Edinburgh from London in December of that year.⁸²

But all was not yet plain sailing. Toovey's letters of 1850-1852 make no mention of an editor - the individual responsible for ensuring the Breviary's editing in a "scholarlike manner" as specified in the terms of agreement - but an editor there was: William John Blew (1808-1894).⁸³ Blew was an Anglican clergyman and enthusiastic Tractarian who had in 1842 purchased the proprietary chapel of St. John in Gravesend where he officiated and gave his Anglo-Catholic sensibilities full reign in what a sympathetic contemporary, George Wakeling, described as "one

⁷⁸ The classic summary is Walter Ralls, "The Papal Aggression of 1850: A Study in Victorian Anti-Catholicism", *Church History* 43 (1974): 242-256, but for specifically Scottish responses see Ryan Mallon, "The Scottish Presbyterian Defence of British Protestantism: The Scottish Reformation Society and the 'Papal Aggression', 1850-52", *Journal of Religious History* 46 (2022): 97-121.

⁷⁹ For the reception of Tractarianism in Scotland see Peter Nockles, "'Our Brethren of the North': The Scottish Episcopal Church and the Oxford Movement", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 47 (1996): 655-682, Stewart J. Brown, "Scotland and the Oxford Movement", in *The Oxford Movement: Europe and the Wider World, 1830-1930*, ed. Stewart J. Brown and Peter B. Nockles (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), ch. 2, and Eleanor M. Harris, "A Gothic Reformation: Tractarianism in the Scottish Episcopal Church", *Scottish Church History* 48 (2019): 148-168. For Forbes see Rowan Strong, *Alexander Forbes of Brechin: The First Tractarian Bishop* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

⁸⁰ Thomson's slowness, particularly in editing the long-running and government-funded *Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland*, was legendary. Robert Pitcairn, writing to John Stuart on 2 January 1840, was only stating facts when he observed that "His first Vol. of the Acta Parl. has only been about 34 years in the press & the honest man, if he lived for 340, would not be nearer putting on its coat, boots spurs & hat than at this moment" (AUL MS 606/1, item 48). See Richard A. Marsden, *Cosmo Innes and the Defence of Scotland's Past, c.1825-1875* (2014; London: Routledge, 2017), ch. 2.

⁸¹ EUL La.IV.14, Box 1, Folder 15, fols. 10, 14.

⁸² *Bannatyne Club. No. XXIII. Abstract of the Treasurer's Accounts. M.DCCC.LII.* (s.l.: Printed by Order of the Management, [1852]), *sub dat.*

⁸³ For an estimate, on the whole favourable, of Blew's editorial practice see Macquarrie, *Legends of Scottish Saints*, xviii-xix.

of the most reverent and careful services that had been seen up to that date; in music and ritual all that loving care could give".⁸⁴ Blew, however, was either politically tone-deaf or sufficiently convinced of the righteousness of his own principles to further aggravate his anti-Tractarian bishop, George Murray, at the time of the papal aggression crisis with a highly sympathetic address to the embattled Catholic cardinal Nicholas Wiseman in which he "express[ed] the unfeigned respect for the Cardinal's person and Episcopal office as Archbishop of Westminster".⁸⁵ Murray accordingly suspended Blew, after the judicious application of pressure by the Evangelical Lord Ashley (the future 7th Earl of Shaftesbury), and that was the end of the wouldbe controversialist's clerical career.⁸⁶ Though he did not submit to Rome himself, Blew may have felt he had enjoyed the last laugh when he sold his chapel at Gravesend to Cardinal Wiseman (it was rededicated and reopened as a Catholic house of worship only months later).⁸⁷

Accordingly, 1851 saw Blew suddenly without a source of income, an outspoken Anglo-Catholic alienated from the superiors of his own church but not, like Newman or Manning, safe within the confines of Roman Catholicism. His only publications had been a translation of book one of the *Iliad* (1831) and an Anglo-Catholic polemical poem - *Ecclesiae Dei: A Vision of the Church* (1848) - but he was nonetheless both an obvious choice, as a knowledgeable liturgist, and also most likely in need of the money which editorship of the *Breviarium Aberdonense* brought with it.

Blew's editorship marked a notable shift in Laing's position. Toovey's previous deference to Laing's readings and opinions now increasingly changed to polite but firm communications of Blew's decisions. On 3 December 1853 he wrote optimistically that "[w]e are now so moving on with the Breviary, that I have no doubt it will be completed by the end of the year", but added,

I have spoken to Mr. Blew the Editor about the additional office found in one copy, - his only reason for wishing to print it, is with a view of preserving \it/, but when I mentioned your proposal he thought it would be more fitting to have it in your Miscellany for being by a different printer is found no part of the original Breviary and is only one of many supplemental offices that were probably issued.⁸⁸

This was the *Compassio beatae Mariae*, a separate liturgical tract whose history remains unclear, but which was certainly neither part of the Breviary nor even printed by Chepman and Myllar. Toovey referred here to the present position of the unique surviving copy, bound up - at some point after the seventeenth century - with the Glamis copy of the Breviary. There had evidently been discussion as to whether to print it in the name of completeness, but Laing seems to have proposed

⁸⁴ G[eorge] Wakeling, *The Oxford Church Movement: Sketches and Recollections* (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1895), 170. Unaccountably, while this volume is regularly cited in modern scholarship on the Tractarian movement, Wakeling's identity - his name is given simply as "the late G. Wakeling" on the title page - has never been established. He was a Brighton bookseller who jointly issued his friend Blew's *On the New Latin Prayer-Books* in 1865 and died at Sumburgh, Lodge, Balham, on 8 April 1895 ("Deaths", *The Times*, 10 April 1895). He was evidently obscure in his own time as well for the *Times* reviewer of *The Oxford Church Movement* mistakenly describes him as "the late Rev. G. Wakeling" (*The Times*, 27 Sep 1895).

⁸⁵ *The Tablet*, 19 April 1851, p. 243.

⁸⁶ *The Examiner*, 19 April 1851, pp. 247-248.

⁸⁷ R. H. Hiscock, "The Proprietary Chapel of St. John, Gravesend", *Archaeologia Cantiana* 93 (1977): 21-22.

⁸⁸ EUL La.IV.14, box 1, folder 15, fol. 16r-v.

- to Blew's satisfaction - that it might instead appear in the forthcoming volume of the *Bannatyne Miscellany*.⁸⁹

No letters between Toovey and Laing survive from the next eight months, but it is clear that the former's December estimate of progress had been excessively sanguine. Writing on 7 August 1854 Toovey was finally in a position to write that "The Breviary is now all worked off and Whittingham says will be dry enough to be done up this day week", defensively adding that this "would have been ready before but I waited to hear if the Maitland Club would not wish a list of Subscribers".⁹⁰ This was not the main purpose of the letter, however, for Toovey added that,

I was unwilling to give up the idea of meeting your wishes as to the Preface, but it will appear without it as Mr. Blew feels very strongly it would be out of place and some others that I have named it to, think in the vol of Miscellanies it would be much more fitting.⁹¹

Laing had been contemplating what would have been a substantial historical preface to the Breviary and this must have come as something of a blow, particularly when Toovey and his unnamed "others" happily relegated it to a volume - the *Bannatyne Miscellany* - in which they had neither control nor interest. What was Blew's objection to such a seemingly bland and ordinary piece of apparatus as a preface?

Laing evidently demanded an explanation for this and for Blew's editorial practice as a whole, as Blew wrote a lengthy and defensive letter to Toovey on 18 December, clarifying his approach as editor. "The plan accepted", he wrote, "has been, as you are aware, to keep as close to the original Edition as possible" aside from the overall enlargement in size and the "amending flagrant & patent errors such as deformed the original impression".⁹² The "peculiarities" of the "old Printers" were generally retained and variations in contraction retained. Obvious omissions have been restored from "the earliest Editions, or at least from those, whether Bibles Breviaries or Editions of the Fathers, which were most likely to have reached the hands of the old Aberdeen (or Edinburgh) Editor". He concluded by emphasising that,

[i]f it were to be neither a facsimile reprint with all its errors on its head - nor yet a newly revised & modernized Edition (to specimens of both of which modes of treatment one could point - but not with entire satisfaction) it does seem that no better plan could have been devised or rules followed, than those appointed for observance in the Aberdeen republication. How far the not having a distinct irrefragable & median Law of action to appeal to & be guided by - may have been a draw back . . . is rather for others than myself to decide.⁹³

But this explanation, detailed as it is, does not explain the fundamental basis of Blew's approach to editorial practice nor how it differed from Laing's. That came *inter alia* in a letter of 22 September 1855 in which Blew sent back marked up proofs of Laing's preface - now no longer

⁸⁹ See the letter from Toovey to Laing of 3 December 1853 at EUL La.IV.14, box 1, folder 15, fol. 16.

⁹⁰ EUL La.IV.14, box 1, folder 15, fol. 17r.

⁹¹ EUL La.IV.14, box 1, folder 15, fol. 17v.

⁹² EUL La.IV.14, box 1, folder 15, fol. 20r.

⁹³ EUL La.IV.14, box 1, folder 15, fol. 21r-v.

part of the Breviary, but a separate work - apologising for "venturing to under take the Editing of the Book at all. But indeed none of those who should have done it properly would bear the trouble - which would have been scarce any trouble to them" and hitting at the heart of the matter when he explained that,

My objection (at which you glance) to all prefaces in the abstract before ecclesiastical Books of authority (I should of course except from my objections such Books as the Breviarius Laicam & Laicorum. the Br: Collectionum. Brev. Ecclesiasticorum & suchlike which were simply Testimonia . . .) is - that the prefaces take off from their look of versimilitude & reality as *Books of Devotion*. [emphasis added]⁹⁴

And there Blew and Laing found themselves fundamentally opposed. For the Presbyterian Laing, the Breviary was a vitally important historical source, a rich repository of ancient Scottish ecclesiastical history and an important artefact of early Scottish printing, but a text which had no place in the religion of nineteenth-century Scotland.⁹⁵ For the Anglo-Catholic Blew, the Breviary remained a living text, a model for worship which could, with little adaptation, be put into practice in the present day, much as Percy Dearmer later attempted to revive the Breviary's model, the Use of Sarum, at the end of the century.⁹⁶ For Blew, a historicising preface betrayed the liturgical truth of the book itself; for Laing it was both necessary from a scholarly point of view and carefully shielded readers from (mis)apprehending the book as a living religious text.

Meanwhile, the second volume of the Breviary had finally made its way north. Three boxes were sent up by steamer, according to a letter from Toovey of 28 October 1854, including free copies for the Advocates Library and Lord Strathmore, these last evidently thanks for providing access to their copies of the original Breviary. Toovey was paid and the volumes boarded by 1 February 1855 after which point they must have been distributed amongst the membership. Five and a half years after Thomas Maitland had signed the Bannatyne-Maitland agreement with Toovey and well over a decade since the publication had first been proposed by the Spalding Club, the *Breviarium Aberdonense* was in print.

But Laing was not done. Ironically, the exclusion of the preface from the main body of the work made its existence all the more necessary and the summer of 1855 saw him busy with a first draft, a messy initial essay written on proof sheets of the Bannatyne Club re-edition of Clerk of Eldin's *Etchings*.⁹⁷ A printed proof, dated September 1855, followed and it was evidently this

⁹⁴ EUL La.IV.14, box 1, folder 15, fol. 26r.

⁹⁵ Laing's religious stance was clear to his contemporaries. The book collector David Murray described him as "warmly attached to the Church of Scotland, and, though a Liberal in politics, remain[ing] faithful to her in the great secession of 1843", also noting a testimonial by the General Assembly of "appreciation of the services he had rendered in connection" with the history of the church and observing that it was Laing who was responsible for the tablet marking the tomb of John Knox in Parliament Square (David Murray, "David Laing, Antiquary and Bibliography", *Scottish Historical Review* 11 [1914]: 345-369 at 349). Goudie, *Laing*, xxxvii, quotes David Hay Fleming regarding Laing's "profound admiration" of the Protestant martyr Patrick Hamilton, and Laing's lengthy and loving editing of the works of John Knox (David Laing, ed., *The Works of John Knox*, 6 vols. in 7 [Edinburgh: Printed for the Bannatyne Club, 1846-1864] speaks for itself; he was evidently a committed Presbyterian and hardly like to be sympathetic to Tractarian or Anglo-Catholic views.

⁹⁶ See Nan Dearmer, *The Life of Percy Dearmer* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1940).

⁹⁷ EUL La.IV.14, box 1, folder 14, fols. 46-49.

which Blew commented on in his letter of 22 September.⁹⁸ Somewhat equivocally describing it as "just that which a body of literary Scottish gentlemen would wish prefixed to a Scottish Book of the character of the Aberdeen Breviary", Blew nonetheless offered extensive advice and suggested revisions which demonstrated an understanding of liturgical practice and the European context of medieval Catholicism lacking in Laing's drafts.⁹⁹ To this Toovey added his own minor comments and suggestions on 8 October, notably pointing out that William Maskell, the great liturgical scholar, "was never a Dr and has now left the English Church [for Rome], since which he has married & is a layman simply so that Mr. will probably be the prefix to his name".¹⁰⁰ Minor point though it was, it is suggestive of the extent to which Laing was treading in less familiar territory, a Tractarian and Catholic landscape of liturgical study with which he lacked the intimate familiarity he brought to Scottish history.

A second printed draft, still dated September but evidently written in October, was duly produced, but its form of publication remained uncertain.¹⁰¹ Writing to John Gardiner Kinnear, secretary of the Maitland Club on 18 February 1856, Laing apologised for the delay, noting that "[t]he Preface to the Aberdeen Breviary was finished a good while ago, but was kept back for another \Bannatyne/ Club volume not yet ready for delivery".¹⁰² In other words, Laing had, at least initially, planned to follow Toovey's advice and to print it in the 1855 volume of the *Bannatyne Miscellany*. For whatever reason, however, this never came to pass and the spring of 1856 saw Laing distributing prefaces to the parties involved, Toovey and Blew amongst others.¹⁰³ Toovey's attitude towards the preface seems to have been cool, if not actively disingenuous, for Thomas Boone, writing on 27 January (the year is not given, but it must have been 1856), told Laing that,

I have to return you my best thanks for having so obligingly sent me the Preface Sheets to Breviarium Aberdonense, the existence of which being so emphatically denied by Toovey, the Publisher of the Book, I thought I was asking only a Letter from you, the better authority, to corroborate [*sic*] the fact.¹⁰⁴

Toovey's response may have been conditioned by the printed label which accompanied Laing's preface and which suggested that "[i]n binding this Work, the Sheets might be arranged in the following order",

Vol. I. Title, Pars Estivalis. Londini, 1854, 1 leaf.

List of Members, April 1852, and Extract from the Minutes of the Club, 3 leaves.

The Preface, xxviii. pages.

Original Title-page in red and black, followed by the Kalendar and the rest of the Volume.

Vol. II. Title, Pars Hyemalis. Londini, 1854.

⁹⁸ EUL La.IV.14, box 1, folder 14, fols. 50-62.

⁹⁹ EUL La.IV.14, box 1, folder 15, fols. 26-29.

¹⁰⁰ EUL La.IV.14, box 1, folder 15, fol. 30v.

¹⁰¹ EUL La.IV.14, box 1, folder 14, fols. 64-72.

¹⁰² EUL La.IV.14, box 1, folder 15, fol. 32r.

¹⁰³ EUL La.IV.14, box 1, folder 15, fol. 34r.

¹⁰⁴ EUL La.IV.17, fol. 996r.

List of Members, February 1854, and Extract, 4 leaves.

Original Title, Kalendar, &c.

At the end of the Volume might be inserted the two extra sheets now reprinted, *Compassio Beate Marie*, &c.¹⁰⁵

Despite the cautious "might", Laing clearly intended for Bannatyne and Maitland copies of the Breviary, which, after all, amounted to the vast majority, to be rebound and effectively reshaped to his own plan with both the excised preface and the separate *Compassio* returned to his preferred locations within the work. It was little wonder that Toovey should deny the existence of a supplement which actively worked against his and Blew's vision for the Breviary.

Laing was still distributing prefaces long after the event. W.D. Macray of the Bodleian Library wrote to him on 8 September 1863 with his thanks, noting that "[t]he preface was wanting in our library copy of the Aberdeen Breviary and therefore, altho' I would gladly have kept it for myself, I have handed it over to Mr Coxe".¹⁰⁶ As late as 23 January 1875, J. T. Fowler could request and receive a copy of the preface from Laing.¹⁰⁷

In the event, the immediate reception of the Breviary was modest outside of specialist circles. The only review in the press came - Laing was probably displeased to note - in the liberal Catholic *Rambler*, which praised the quality of printing, noted the "very striking" similarity between it and the Roman Breviary, and concluded that it was "one of the most remarkable productions of modern antiquarian industry: it is as good in its way as the photograph copies of the etchings of the old masters".¹⁰⁸ Scholarly responses also tended to originate in Anglo- or Roman Catholic circles. The Catholic priest and antiquary George Griffin wrote to Laing theorising as to the Breviary's use in a letter of 9 November 1855 (perhaps encouraged by a draft preface sent to him by Laing), while in the 1860s the Tractarian Bishop of Brechin, Alexander Penrose Forbes, corresponded with Laing concerning the information which the Breviary could offer his larger project on Scottish saints.¹⁰⁹

If the Bannatyne and Maitland Clubs received their 110 copies each - although only 100 copies for the Bannatyne were specified in the contract of 1849, subsequent club accounts make it clear that 110 were provided - what of Toovey's share, the copies printed on plain rather than club paper and sold commercially? A contemporary sale catalogue from Toovey's shop advertises the Breviary in "half-morocco, uncut", boosted by an extensive puff taken directly from earlier promotional material, at the stiff price of £5 5s., almost double the club price.¹¹⁰ How many copies of this variant were printed is not known, but it seems unlikely that Toovey was willing to risk a substantial run. Arthur Warren, the biographer of the Whittinghams, described Toovey's share as "a few extra copies", and Laing's decision to print 240 copies of the *Compassio beatae Mariae* may suggest that he intended a one-on-one correspondence with copies of the Breviary itself, implying

¹⁰⁵ This slip was present in a number of copies of the preface consulted, e.g., NLS SCS.BC.96.

¹⁰⁶ EUL La.IV.17, fol. 5965r-v.

¹⁰⁷ EUL La.IV.17, fols. 3280r-3281r.

¹⁰⁸ "Short Notices", *The Rambler: A Catholic Journal and Review*, NS 3 (1855): 163.

¹⁰⁹ EUL La.IV.17, fols. 3210-3225. Forbes's work was later published as *Kalendars of Scottish Saints* (Edinburgh: Edmonstone and Douglas, 1872).

¹¹⁰ *A Catalogue of Books on Sale by James Toovey, 177, Piccadilly* (London: Chiswick Press, n.d.), 1, 307.

that Toovey could have had only twenty copies for public sale (a not unreasonable number given the book's high price and comparatively esoteric nature).¹¹¹

The long-term fate of the Breviary, however, was better than might have been expected from this cool start. Its price remained steady, with Bernard Quaritch advertising a copy in half morocco complete with the main Breviary in two volumes and the "rare" preface and *Compassio* in a separate third volume for £6 in 1884.¹¹² Its reputation amongst liturgical scholars went from height to height, with the well-known physician-turned-ecclesiologist John Wickham Legg describing it as "what the ideal of a liturgical reprint should be". Blew's example, Legg, wrote "has been followed in the reprint of the liturgical books of Sarum, York, and Hereford" and his own edition of the Quiñones Breviary followed in the same tradition.¹¹³ Even the new *Proprium* of the Catholic province of St Andrews in 1903 included material drawn from the breviary. More recently, and despite complaints as to the change in format and appearance, it has retained the respect of modern scholars, including the recent editor and translator of the Breviary's *legenda*, Alan Macquarrie.

What, then, can this involved narrative tell us beyond the comparatively obvious fact that producing beautifully-printed but esoteric texts is - and always has been - both laborious and financially difficult? I would suggest that it can shed light on three issues, whose implications spread far wider than the breviary itself. First, it can tell us something both of the ambitions and the financial precarity of the early publication societies. £1,000 was an immense sum in 1848.¹¹⁴ To even consider pouring so much into the breviary project - especially when another project of equivalent size was already underway - is revealing of the ambition of the early Spalding Club. The difficulties which beset that goal, however, vividly display the extent to which the Spalding and its contemporaries often nurtured ambitions which they were unable to meet financially; even the smaller and wealthier Bannatyne and Maitland Clubs were strained by the heavy demands of the breviary's production.

Second, the saga of the breviary's publication makes explicit many of the implicit assumptions surrounding editorial practice in this period. The "black-letter insanity" so disapproved of by Robertson had occupied an important place in the world of early nineteenth-century bibliomania but by the 1840s had already, to a great extent, given way to a desire for clear and easy to use scholarly editions, the sort of thing that the Spalding Club evidently hoped their breviary would be. In the end, the breviary as conceived by Toovey and executed by the Chiswick Press was closer in its sympathies to the romantic, medievalising Catholicism of many of the church's Victorian converts than to the more pedestrian - but more practical - goals of Scotland's antiquaries and historians.

Thirdly, and relatedly, the breviary project is another thread in the still comparatively understudied tapestry of Scottish culture's relationship to English Tractarianism and (Anglo-) Catholicism. Rowan Strong, Peter Nockles, and Eleanor Harris, among others, have done much

¹¹¹ Arthur Warren, *The Charles Whittinghams, Printers* (New York: The Grolier Club, 1896), 218-219.

¹¹² *A Catalogue of Religions and Superstitions . . . by Bernard Quaritch*. London: 15 Piccadilly, August, 1884, no. 17395.

¹¹³ John Wickham Legg, ed., *Breviarium Romanum a Francisco Cardinali Quignonio editum et recognitum* (Cambridge: typis atque impensis academiae, 1888), xii-xiii.

¹¹⁴ Estimating the "real value" of historic sums is fraught with difficulty, but one could conservatively place the cost of the breviary project, £1,000 in 1848, as equivalent to *at least* £106,800 in the 2020s (calculations derived from <https://www.measuringworth.com/>) and it may have been substantially more.

to recover Scotland's reception of Tractarianism, but much more remains to be done.¹¹⁵ The case of the breviary is intriguing in its implication that even where Scots, such as Laing, explicitly opposed the theological motivations of Tractarian thinkers, such as Blew, the effects of the Tractarian attitude towards British Christian tradition could make themselves vividly felt in Scotland, in this case by the production and distribution of what are, in effect, pre-Reformation breviaries designed for use amongst a group of substantially Presbyterian and universally Protestant elite Scottish men.

And lastly, on a methodological note, I hope that this study - as well as illuminating these multiple currents of Victorian culture - has also given an indication of the ways in which the history of the book, by concentrating in depth on the processes by which a single text came to be printed, has the potential to tell us surprising new stories about far larger shifts and flows in the culture which produced it. The breviary, perhaps more than many books, was both representative and symptomatic of the vibrant, contested scholarly and religious landscapes of mid-Victorian Britain.

¹¹⁵ As well as the sources cited above, see also Rowan Strong, *Episcopalianism in Nineteenth-Century Scotland: Religious Responses to a Modernizing Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).