Hiring Practices and Craftsmen at the University of Edinburgh,

1583 – 1750

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Abstract

This thesis examines hiring practices at the University of Edinburgh from its foundation in 1583 until 1750. A prosopography involving the regents and professors of the university examines whether local networks, such as craft guilds, could have provided individuals from unorthodox backgrounds, particularly craftsmen, to access academic posts at Edinburgh University, as occurred at Leiden University during this time. This study is undertaken in the context of the Zilsel thesis, which suggests that early modern science was formed by a coming together of the scholar and the craftsman. Craftsmen in Edinburgh appeared to be in a good position to move their relatives into academic positions, due to their relatively high representation on the Edinburgh town council; the council was largely responsible for many aspects of the university, including hiring. This could constitute a situation where members of craft families may have been able to come together with scholars on equal terms leading to the exchange of ideas.

This thesis concludes that craftsmen were responsible for very few of their relatives being accepted into university positions. This seems to have been partly due to the stifling influence of strong rival influences and the craftsmen’s subordinate status, compared to merchants, on Edinburgh’s Town Council. It is also argued that, while some craftsmen were able to have their offspring hired as academics within the university, this is still an insufficient situation for the type of interactions that Zilsel was suggesting. This is because craftsmen could only reach a sufficient status within the council to affect these types of decisions by becoming members of the merchant’s guild – a process which required first having permanently abandoned any manual labour. This seems to indicate that social limitations on physical work in Edinburgh remained firmly in place, a condition which the Zilsel thesis argues needed to be altered before the formation of early modern science could take place.
Declaration

This is to certify that:

i. the thesis comprises only my original work towards the masters except where indicated in the Preface,

ii. due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used,

iii. this thesis is 28,682 words in length as approved by the Research Higher Degrees Committee.

Signed: Aaron Mitchell
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Chapter 1: Networks, Craftsmen and the Early Modern University

It has been many years since it was first proposed that the origins of modern science were not confined to the European university and its scholars, but were as much a product of the forges and workshops of early modern craftsmen. Although less controversial than when it was first suggested, the idea that craftsmen may have been partly responsible for the formation of early modern science is still provoking discussion amongst historians of science.

One of the original pioneers of this thesis, Edgar Zilsel, argued that while the university scholars of the time were rational and well-trained they would have been unable to create the methods of early science alone. This was due to their belief that physical work was connected with a lower social status and was therefore beneath them, a view which was common throughout the upper classes of the era. As a result they avoided all manual work, which would have made employing an experimental approach impossible.

He maintained that it was actually the craftsmen who had first begun to utilise an experimental method. These groups, the scholars and the craftsmen, had each possessed important skills necessary for the development of science, but a convergence of ideas was not possible while those social limits were still in place. Zilsel contended that at some stage near the beginning of the seventeenth century this all changed when “the social barrier between the two components of the scientific method broke down, and the methods of the superior craftsmen were adopted by academically trained scholars: real science was born”. Originally criticised and then largely neglected, the Zilsel thesis was reinvigorated and has since undergone a number of revisions and refinements.

Several modern historians have added their own contributions, offering novel interpretations of the ways in which artisans may have been involved in the

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forming of science. Despite some variation, the numerous modern versions agree that it was the combined contributions of craftsmen and academics which led to the creation of early modern science and that a clear understanding of how this interaction took place is a goal worth pursuing.

In her recent book on the subject Pamela O. Long argues that the distinctions which are often used when discussing this area of history, such as ‘scholar’ and ‘craftsmen’, need to be treated carefully. This is because the roles and activities that these men undertook during this period often fall outside of those definitions which are generally used when discussing them. This occurred as a result of the blurring of these respective categories which was taking place at the time. The divisions between each group became confused as “some artisans took up pens and began to write books, while some learned men began to take up artisanal practices”. Long contends that it was this blending of the scholar and the craftsman, as members of each group took on some elements of the other, which was integral to science’s development. This situation does not seem to present a particular problem for historical terminology, as many European countries maintained their own divisions between scholars and craftsmen which can still be used. These standards remain useful even if by their actions these individuals do not easily remain inside current definitions. The central claim, however, that science was formed by those who embodied elements of both scholars and craftsmen remains an intriguing concept.

It is particularly interesting to consider in the context of a recent paper on hiring practices at the University of Leiden. This article, written by historian of science Gerhard Wiesenfeldt, suggests that there were certain stages during the early modern period in which the University of Leiden seemed to be far more open to

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4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.
employing academics from unorthodox social backgrounds, including craftsmen and their relatives, than at later stages during its history. It is noted within this study that there were 12 such appointments between 1575 and 1624, compared to only 7 in the following hundred years.\textsuperscript{6} Wiesenfeldt argues that these hiring decisions were the result of an overlap between different networks in the city, including academics, families and craftsmen.\textsuperscript{7} One illuminating example of how this situation could function is offered in the career of Frans van Schooten, a baker working in Leiden. Van Schooten was hired as a professor of Dutch mathematics in 1615, receiving his position over Samuel Marolois, a seemingly more qualified candidate with strong political backing. Van Schooten seems to have been hired on the strength of 2 letters of support, sent from a group of students and local men, including surveyors, stone masons, bricklayers and carpenters. Further investigation, however, revealed that several of these individuals were in fact close relatives of university staff members.

There are other examples of individuals from craft backgrounds being able to move into elevated positions within Leiden, such as Isaac Claesz. van Swanenburgh. Swanenburgh was an artist working in Leiden who became a member of the city council (Vroedschap), and was five times elected to be the town mayor (burgemeester).\textsuperscript{8} He also had connections to a university network as his brother, Cornelis van Swanenburgh, was employed at Leiden University as a law professor.\textsuperscript{9}

Relatives often played an important role in assisting the development of an individual’s career. The effect that family connections could have on hiring

\textsuperscript{7} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{8} Susan Broomhall & Jennifer Spinks, Early Modern Women in the Low Countries: Feminizing Sources and Interpretations of the Past, (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2011) 52-53.
\textsuperscript{9} Cornelis van Swanenburgh, De Iure Ad crescendi, Libellus posthumus, accedit Petri Cunæi Laudatio Funebris, (Leiden: Cloeqquius, 1631).
decisions at universities has been well established.\(^{10}\) What has not been acknowledged is the fact that individuals and families could be involved with several otherwise separate groups at once. Craft guilds often became closely linked with their members and their families, becoming involved in many aspects of life quite apart from their businesses\(^{11}\) and seeing their guilds as “artificial families”.\(^{12}\) The manner in which these apparently disparate groups, such as academic circles, families and craft guilds overlapped may have allowed individuals to shift between groups, providing opportunities for those whose career ambitions might otherwise be hampered by their social background. By having a number of family members in different groups connected to each other, a situation which will be referred to here as a family network, an individual may have been able to transition from one occupation to another; in this case from a craft background to a career in academia.

In Leiden, then, there may have been examples of men from craft families actually becoming scholars. This situation could provide insight into how craftsmen may have originally contributed to the rise of early modern science, by highlighting a way that men from craft backgrounds were able to become involved with academia and interact with intellectuals on an equal footing.

Family networks may at some stage provide useful possibilities for how the situation suggested within the Zilsel thesis could have occurred, but first they must be studied so that their frequency and effectiveness are properly understood. While the example of Leiden University is a useful one, further investigation is required to determine how widespread this type of occurrence was during the early modern period and just how influential it may have been.


\(^{12}\) Ibid.
This thesis aimed to form a clear understanding of the hiring practices of the University of Edinburgh, from its foundation until 1750, with a particular focus on the social backgrounds of its staff members. By determining the occupations of the craftsmen’s fathers it will become possible to understand how social background had been influencing hiring decisions and what implications this had for individuals arising from a craft background. This would help to determine whether a situation similar to that described above, with men from craft or unorthodox backgrounds being hired to teaching positions through family networks, could have taken place at other universities during this time and, if it was not, which factors could have been responsible for preventing it. By doing so, it is hoped that some insight could be gained into whether this situation was occurring outside of Leiden, as well as which conditions were limiting where it could occur.

It would have been ideal to study a whole range of different universities in different countries so that they could be compared and contrasted, but the amount of detail required to make sense of why specific men were chosen to teach in a single university was prohibitive enough. In deciding upon which university to study, it seemed most appropriate to choose an institution which was situated in a city which appeared to have a reasonable chance of craftsmen being accepted to teaching positions. For this purpose it was the University of Edinburgh which was selected. One of the key reasons why this seemed to be an appropriate choice was that in the city of Edinburgh the town council was largely responsible for all hiring decisions at the college. The town council at this time was also composed exclusively of craftsmen and merchants. It seemed that if men from a craft background were ever to be hired to a teaching position at an academic institution then a town where craftsmen were among the deciding panel would be a promising place to start.

In order to determine whether individuals from craft families had been successfully appointed to teaching roles at the university, it was necessary to look at those regents and professors who had been hired and attempt to uncover their backgrounds. In trying to work out where these regents and professors had originated from, and particularly if they were connected to craft families, it was decided that this thesis would focus on ascertaining which occupations their fathers were engaged in. While this would not take into account all of the regents possible craft connections, it would give some indication as to those connected to their immediate family.

As this thesis involved trying to use the biographical information of the regents and professors of Edinburgh University to work out which occupations their families were involved with, forming a prosopography seemed to be the best approach. The prosopography used the collected biographical information of those academics and helped to identify what type of occupational backgrounds they originated from and specifically whether there were any links to merchants or craftsmen, which could have had an influence on their being hired.

In collecting this information, and to a lesser extent throughout the thesis, some of the older histories of the University have been used as a reference source. There has been a conscious effort to use these sparingly, but as their use in every recent history of the university suggests, their value is undeniable, as they had access to information sources relating to the university which are unfortunately no longer available. In places Thomas Craufurd’s history has been used,\textsuperscript{15} as it seemed fairly reliable on those points where it could be readily compared to other sources. This text has also been listed by D. B. Horn, one of the universities most recent historians, as being “invaluable”.\textsuperscript{16} I have also used Bower’s text, which Horn had listed as being particularly useful for biographical information.

\textsuperscript{15} Thomas Craufurd, \textit{History of the University of Edinburgh, from 1580 to 1646}, (Edinburgh: A. Neill & Co., 1808).
as it also seemed to be fairly consistent with the other available information. Grant’s history of the university has been used in some places as I’ve found that the details which he lists are usually trustworthy. Stevin Shapin and Arnold Thackray argue that this text’s biographical information relating to the professors of Edinburgh University is of “greater value than more modern accounts”. With one small exception, Dalzel’s text had been avoided, as it was found to be less consistently accurate than the other sources mentioned; Thomas Bender also suggested that this text was “not to be trusted”.

The information provided by these sources has been cross-checked wherever possible. Some more modern accounts have also been relied upon, including D. B. Horn’s ‘A Short History of the University of Edinburgh, 1556-1889’ and ‘The University of Edinburgh: An Illustrated History’ by Michael Lynch, Nicholas Phillipson and Robert Anderson.

As well as explaining the details of the prosopography itself, this thesis will also attempt to provide some context for this information. This will involve explaining some of those aspects of the city of Edinburgh and its university which are not obviously apparent, but which are necessary to make sense of this institution and its hiring decisions. After discussing some specifics of Edinburgh the city, there will then be an explanation of who was in charge of deciding which men would be chosen to teach at the university and how they ended up with this responsibility, as well as how the hiring process functioned at the university. Chapter four will explain some specifics of the prosopography. The results of the prosopography will then be discussed, listing the various occupations with which the regent’s fathers were involved. This will then be explained in relation to the varying influence of these occupations and the social structure of the city of Edinburgh.

The final chapters aim to examine some other considerations, including what levels of early education were offered to students within the city of Edinburgh.

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17 Ibid.
and whether this could be one influence on the results. The factors which effect why specific men were hired to an academic post were often complicated, with more than one explanation factoring in simultaneously. By studying the backgrounds of the regents and professors through a prosopography, then considering this information in the context of the structures of Edinburgh and its university, we can begin to understand how overlapping networks, particularly those of the merchant and craft guilds, were fitting into this complex web of intertwined and conflicting motivations.

Chapter 2: The University of Edinburgh and its City

The University of Edinburgh was not created as a University, but slowly came to be accepted as one over time. This has left a difficult situation for historians as it is not always clear which name should be used when discussing the university’s earlier years. As Robert Anderson, Michael Lynch and Nicholas Phillipson wrote in the University’s most recent history, “the most awkward of many difficulties in writing about the ‘tounis college’ in the first century of its existence is knowing what to call it”.20 As both names refer to the one continuous institution, I will be using the terms ‘university’ and ‘college’ to refer to the same institution throughout this work. The term used in any particular instance throughout this thesis should not be taken as an indicator of its status at any given time, but is simply an effort to avoid having to make a judgement as to when such a distinction should be made or which specific name would be more appropriate at a given time. This is also intended to avoid giving the impression that two distinct entities are being discussed.

Another possible point of confusion lies in the terms regent and professor. Regents and professors were distinct types of teaching staff employed by the college during different time periods; the college adapted from a regent system to

a professorial system in 1708. Throughout this thesis occasionally the words ‘regent’ and ‘professor’ will be used as though they were generic terms for the individuals within our study. This may seem ambiguous but it is done with good reason. Although there were important differences in the two styles of teaching, during the period under consideration in this study the academic staff members were often referred to by either name, regardless of whether it was technically accurate. This is made more confusing by the fact that the College of Edinburgh “began to call regents ‘professors’ from the 1620s onwards (though the incumbents continued with the same hard slog of regenting with occasional public lectures now added to their workload)”. As such, I wish to avoid the difficulties of designating each individual as either a regent or a professor at Edinburgh University.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Edinburgh was a city which was both populous and prosperous. Scotland itself had only a fairly small population during this era, but by 1660 the city of Edinburgh was believed to be home to up to 30,000 inhabitants; it had grown into the second largest city in Britain. Also, despite the numerous misfortunes which had hit the town during this period, including bad harvests, religious turmoil and an outbreak of plague, Edinburgh also remained the wealthiest town in Scotland. It was most likely this prosperity which attracted individuals from across the country to Edinburgh.

This financial success was largely due to the city of Edinburgh’s status as a royal burgh. This meant that it possessed a royal charter granting, among other benefits, privileges regarding trade and exports, including a monopoly on foreign trade until 1672. The enviable position which the city of Edinburgh held

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25 Ibid.
26 Ibid, 3.
in regards to trade in Scotland allowed it to set up impressive trade routes with many European countries. As well as the monetary advantages which the city accrued through this system, there were also benefits in the form of a high level of intellectual interaction with a range of European universities.

As this thesis involves looking for evidence of a situation which has so far only been noticed in Leiden University, it is worth noting that one outcome of these trade links was that Edinburgh was able to develop a close connection with Holland and its universities during the modern period, particularly with Leiden. Houston and Whyte argued that most of the Scottish universities were influenced by ideas arising from these areas, as a result of those trade links. They stated that “Despite her position on the periphery of Europe, Scotland’s overseas trade links generated contacts with most parts of north western Europe” which led to “an increasingly special relationship with Dutch universities from the 1620s”.28 The close connection between these universities has been widely acknowledged for many years with earlier histories, such as Alexander Grant’s, argued that the university of Edinburgh had been moulded after "the most famous universities abroad, that is to say, after Utrecht and Leydon” and that the teaching their "had become distinctly Dutch".29

It has also been suggested more recently, by Rudy Willis, that the Dutch universities formed stronger bonds and connections with the universities of Scotland than the universities of any other country.30 There are numerous examples of Edinburgh University attempting to emulate the Dutch universities; shaping both their practices and curricula to fit institutions such as Leiden. There are several reasons for this. Many Scottish men had undertaken their own study in Holland and this had shaped their ideas as to what should be being taught, and how things should be structured, within their universities. Those who went on to work at Edinburgh University had the chance to then develop their own

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28 Houston, Whyte, Scottish Society 7.
29 Alexander Grant, the Story of the University of Edinburgh during its first three hundred years, Vol. 1,( London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1884) 263.
30 Willis, The Universities, 86.
teaching subjects to fit those of the Dutch universities. This was a fairly common practice; Anderson notes that in forming their subject many regents and professors were “taking their inspiration from Holland, where many of the Scottish elite had previously studied”\(^{31}\). The United Provinces was a common destination for many Scottish students to study during the early modern period, in part due to the region having an impressive academic reputation.\(^{32}\) This was a habit which may have been strengthened in part by Presbyterian students within Scotland being attracted to Holland’s successful Calvinist institutions.\(^{33}\) The number of these Scottish residents visiting Holland and taking classes there increased during certain stages in Scotland’s religious conflicts, as it could be seen as something of a religious safe haven for Presbyterians fleeing Episcopalianism.

There may also have been direct attempts to base the college on Dutch foundations. Anderson, Lynch and Phillipson wrote in their history of the university that the college of Edinburgh “seemed to aspire to become another University of Leiden”.\(^{34}\) Nicholas Phillipson argued that the choice to remake the college along Dutch lines was the result of those many Scottish students who were going to Holland to pursue their studies; it was thought that having a similar institution in Scotland might encourage them to seek a local education. Phillipson argued that shaping Edinburgh’s college to resemble those of Holland was an intentional move to encourage wealthy students from successful families to enrol; this could lead to the success of the institution by appealing to those individuals who would otherwise seek their education abroad.\(^{35}\) The University of Edinburgh had some similarities with Dutch universities, and became in some ways quite similar, because it made good financial sense to do so.

There are other parallels between these two universities, but they did have differences. The similarities which existed between them do not necessarily imply that the same types of networks were operating in both. What illustrating a close connection and similarities between the universities does do is to suggest that Edinburgh will be a revealing place to start such an investigation.

The patronage organisation of Edinburgh University involved the town council being in charge of most hiring decisions to the college. It will be one aim of this study to determine whether this structure had any effect on whether individuals from craft backgrounds were able to access the university. It was common in European universities for each academic position to be supported by an individual patron, whose funding would pay the salary of whoever held that appointment. In return for their generosity these patrons would have the legal right to choose who would be hired to that chair. Each patron could select an applicant based on any number of reasons; these may have been national, local, religious or political. While the men who filled these roles were chosen as a result of those factors which the patron deemed to be important, these were not necessarily things which were considered of wider importance. As Roger Emerson stated they “included many things about which Parliament and its leaders never cared a toss”; many of these involved considerations which were only of particular importance to the patron and their family. At the University of St Andrews, for instance, the Kennedy family acted as patrons for some of the

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36 Andrew Cunningham provides some further examples, mentioning “the parallels between Leyden and Edinburgh, which facilitated this adoption of Dutch practices: the Town Council was in charge of the university: the university was run deliberately to attract students and hence make money for the town; both Scotland and the United Provinces were Calvinist Protestant….” Andrew Cunningham, Roger French, ed., The Medical Enlightenment of the Eighteenth Century, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 58.

37 Anderson, European Universities, 34.


39 Ibid, 8.

40 Ibid, 8.
academic positions, so these chairs were filled by the family's old tutors, when the services of these men were no longer required.41

Due to the unusual way that the University of Edinburgh was founded the town council of Edinburgh was a patron for almost all positions at the college.42 As a result of this, they voted on all of the new applicants which would be hired to the college. At some stages they voted on these decisions alone, although they often shared the responsibility with others. In either case, they almost always had a large say in who was to be appointed. Emerson points out that in some ways this makes the situation in Edinburgh particularly complex.43 When an individual patron is making a decision of who will be appointed to a particular role it is challenging enough to comprehend their reasons for making each decision. This was a situation where the decisions were made collectively. The town council was generally able to make the final decision on who was to be hired, but they were of course conscious of not offending any influential group in Edinburgh, particularly those on who their own positions and patronage rested. Powerful forces were acting on council members to persuade them to hire certain individuals. This included royalty, aristocracy and any politicians who had been supportive of individual council members. This was a more complicated situation than a single patron making a decision.

Nonetheless, these decisions were being made by a group and, as such, each position was not filled purely on the basis of the individual patron’s decision. Motivations which were important to each individual member, such as ensuring that your family's former tutor had an academic position to move on to, were not the only thing which needed to be considered; these decisions needed to be mediated, with the rest of the council having their own opinion on which matters were the most important. Those motivations which were shared across the group

41 Ibid.
42 Anderson, European Universities, 34. For some appointments the Crown was patron or co-patron, although this was more common after 1750. J. B. Morrell, “The University of Edinburgh in the Late Eighteenth Century: Its Scientific Eminence and Academic Structure,” Isis, 62, 2 (1971) 160.
43 Emerson, Patronage, 13.
become the most relevant. Edinburgh’s system of patronage would seem to provide greater opportunities for well organised networks, with connections to the town council, to move men from within their circle into academic places. There was some variation in deciding how an applicant was to be selected and other groups, like the church and the town’s law professionals, also acted as patrons to the university or to particular professorships. This allowed them to have an input into hiring decisions at various stages, together with the town council. The King also had the power to nominate professors, although this very rarely occurred. The town council still held the most consistent control over hiring decisions at the university and this opened up an opportunity for any groups who had influence with the council and were able to exploit it.

There is another specific aspect of this arrangement which seems to set the University of Edinburgh up as a promising choice of candidate for craftsmen attempting to access academic positions. Due to the way that the city of Edinburgh and its structures developed, the town council at this time came to be populated exclusively by merchants and craftsmen. Although others, such as the King and the church did have input into these decisions, these were the men who generally made all important decisions relating to the college. The town council was made up of 33 men who were all required to be burgess, thus limiting membership to the craftsmen and merchants of Edinburgh.\(^{44}\) This style of patronage, and the specific patrons involved, suggest that a similar incident as that which transpired at Leiden could well have taken place at the University of Edinburgh provided that nothing intervened to stop the process occurring.

During this time many of those with high standing within a European university had begun to realise that the temptation to hire family members, friends or the alumni of the college, including your own students, could have a deleterious effect on the development of both teaching material and university standards.\(^ {45}\) By having the same people and ideas recycled through a university, without any

\(^{44}\) Houston, *Social Change*, 5.

new men to add vitality and novel concepts, the level of education being offered could end up falling, while the curriculum stagnated. In order to avoid this, some universities sought to actively discourage individuals from being employed for non-academic reasons, as well as trying to avoid hiring alumni from that same institution; rules were introduced by a number of these universities to ensure that new staff would be drawn from further afield.\textsuperscript{46} As positive an effect as this may have had, it would render utilising town networks in order to more easily access an academic position considerably more difficult. In this sense also, Edinburgh seems to be well suited; it was generally unconcerned by this process and took very little action to avoid hiring local men and alumni. This is illustrated from the way that the very first class of students that ever graduated from the college included four men who would go on to become regents in the college: Charles Ferme, Philip Heslope, Patrick Sands and Henry Charteris.\textsuperscript{47} The latter two were also hired as principals of the college; this is particularly telling at a time when the college had so few teaching positions available. There were a few brief situations when the town council deemed that, as Grant puts it "the streams of learning at home were running low"\textsuperscript{48} and an effort was made to hire a college regent from outside of Scotland, but for the vast majority of the time they were happy to hire local graduates, with no legislation or tradition discouraging the employment of friends or contacts. It could be that the frequency with which Scottish graduates spent at least some of their time at overseas institutions meant that they could bring back new concepts themselves. In any case, the college remained a highly successful learning institution, despite being fairly unconcerned with regulating which men could be permitted to fill academic places; without any guiding legislation decisions relied largely on the whim of the town council. As Laurence Brockliss noted "although the University of

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{47} A catalogue of the graduates in the faculties of arts, divinity and law of the University of Edinburgh, since its foundation. (Edinburgh: Neil & Company, 1858).
\textsuperscript{48} Grant, Story, 673.
Edinburgh in the eighteenth century was one of the most dynamic centres of learning in Europe, it was also one of the most corrupt.49

This corruption would have had positive and negative effects on craftsmen and their families who were attempting to enter the college. It illustrates that there was no legislation restricting the effect that favouritism or family influence could have on hiring decisions, which indicates that there was potential to exploit networks at the University of Edinburgh. However, it also suggests that craftsmen would have to compete with other groups who were also attempting to benefit from this situation.

As one aspect of this thesis is concerned with determining how craftsmen may have participated in, or influenced, the formation of early modern science, it would be beneficial to choose a university that has at least some involvement with natural philosophy or early modern science. As it was, the College of Edinburgh not only developed some effective science classes, but so much so that by the latter half of the eighteenth century it had become widely regarded as being the best university for scientific scholarship in Europe.50 As one of the most highly esteemed universities for science during this stage, Edinburgh could prove to be a particularly insightful choice of topic. If the rise of academics from unorthodox backgrounds within a university could have encouraged an acceptance of manual experiment, then the College of Edinburgh, as an institution which enthusiastically embraced scientific ideas, could stand as a fine example of this having occurred. As the university had academics engaged in science at this time, this should make it easier to determine not just whether networks were providing access for those with unorthodox backgrounds into the university, but, if this is the case, whether men of science were being influenced by them.

50 Morrell, Scientific Eminence, 158.
Chapter 3: Between King and Council – Hiring at the University of Edinburgh

The question of who would have the authority to elect new staff to the university was largely decided before it was even decided that a college or university would be founded in Edinburgh. In order to understand what influence the merchants and craftsmen had over which individuals were chosen to be hired to the university, it is necessary to know exactly who was entrusted with this responsibility and why. There are other aspects of the hiring of new staff members which will need to be explained in this chapter, as the process of being elected to an academic role within the university was not straightforward, even if you held the patrons favour; as such, the involved system through which hiring actually took place will be summarised, as well as the system of regents which necessitated it. Although the majority of the college had new staff members elected in a similar manner, with the same patrons, some of the specific chairs had their own rules about how the hiring process functioned. A final aspect which will be covered within this chapter will be some of the exceptions to the normal methods through which applicants were hired; these only crop up occasionally throughout the history of the college but they do occur and so should be acknowledged. This together should give an adequate account of the type of hiring processes acting at the university during this time, illustrating how a network could function at the university and who would be important in ensuring its success.

The question of who would be given the responsibility of hiring regents and professors to the University of Edinburgh was largely settled as part of the earliest foundations of the college. The formation of the Scottish universities prior to this had begun with a formal application to the Pope, indicating that a particular area was believed to be well suited to the construction of a university and seeking permission to build one. The Pope would then consider the matter and, if the application proved to be successful, he would send out a papal bull,
granting the official status of a university;\textsuperscript{51} this then entitled the newfound university to teach classes, confer degrees and receive certain privileges. These privileges were impressive, including benefits such as freedom from almost all fees, taxes and levies for those working at the university. For Scotland’s earliest universities these privileges needed to be impressive, as those working there would generally receive little more than those advantages and an impressive sounding title; what they would usually not receive was a salary. This was chiefly because those roles would be filled almost exclusively by members of the church, so it was assumed that they would already be drawing some level of remuneration.\textsuperscript{52} They were relieved of their regular church duties if they were accepted to work at a university, but would retain their stipend. This was a fairly standard process through which many medieval universities began.

In contrast to this, the University of Edinburgh began in a very different manner. Being a post-reformation university it obviously could not be founded by applying to the pope. Even so, the process through which the university was created was quite unusual. The Scots magazine ran an article on the college in 1841 which stated that “the University of Edinburgh was founded by K. James in the year 1580, with as ample privileges as any other university in Scotland”.\textsuperscript{53} While this summary sounds fairly plausible, in reality the university was not founded in 1580, was not directly founded by King James and was not granted ample privileges. In fact, the University of Edinburgh began without any formal privileges and without possessing true university status at all. Why the university began in this way is still not quite understood, although there are several theories. So while many universities were brought into the world as officially recognised fully functioning organisations, Edinburgh evolved more slowly from something much more humble. Unlike Scotland’s other learning

\textsuperscript{51} Phyllis Riddle, “Political Authority and University Formation in Europe, 1200-1800”, Sociological Perspectives, 36 (1993), 50.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{53} Henderson, Robert, “A short account of the University of Edinburgh, the present professors in it, and the several parts of Learning taught by them”, The Scots Magazine, (Edinburgh: Sands, Brymer, Murray and Cochran, 1741), 371.
institutions, the University of Edinburgh began as a college.\textsuperscript{54} When it first opened it was only a fairly small college also, with the town council of Edinburgh originally employing only a single regent, Robert Rollock.\textsuperscript{55} Rollock had been working as a regent at the University of St. Andrews\textsuperscript{56} when he made an agreement with the council to “entre to the colledge newlie foundit within the said burgh for instructioun of the youth and professing of guid learning”.\textsuperscript{57}

Considering the ceremony with which other universities in the country had opened, and the affection the King seemed to have felt towards the university (it was not long after that he declared that it could be renamed King James College),\textsuperscript{58} he seems to have given it a surprisingly modest beginning. There are several reasons why King James may have taken this approach.

One such motivation may have involved the fact that universities were known to bring with them a number of risks and dangers which the King may have wanted to avoid taking responsibility for. It was widely understood that having a university set up in your city could have many drawbacks as well as benefits.\textsuperscript{59} This hesitation towards universities rested largely on concerns of how the students themselves would conduct themselves; throughout much of Western Europe students had held an unfortunate reputation for many years, on account of their “drunkenness, brawling and whoring.”\textsuperscript{60} This consideration did effect how the early university was to be structured and may have also influenced the king’s decision.

Another motivation which may have been important was that if the king had opened a university directly and became its formal patron, he would then have been directly responsible for its organisation and finances. In any case, King

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\textsuperscript{55} D. B. Horn, *Short History*, 6.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid, 6.
\textsuperscript{57} Morgan, ed., *Statutes and Acts*, 90.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid, 46.
\textsuperscript{59} Anderson, Lynch, Phillipson, *Illustrated History*, 3.
\textsuperscript{60} Anderson, Lynch, Phillipson, *Illustrated History*, 3.
\end{flushleft}
James VI decided on another course of action. In a charter of novodamus, the
King gave permission to the town council of Edinburgh to found new colleges
and schools, on land previously belonging to the Catholic Church, as they
pleased. The charter noted that in Edinburgh there were a number of “different
empty and spacious places (which formerly were held by the provost,
prebendaries, priests and friars) most well suited and advantageous for the
building of houses and buildings where the professors of good learning and
reading and the students of the same are to live and where they will be able to
have their daily classes and all other places convenient for hospitality”. 61 Rather
than creating a new university, or even specifically encouraging the town council
to do so, he just acknowledged that there was good land available and gave the
council permission to start building whatever schools or colleges they wished on
those sites.

Nor was the subject of what these institutions should teach particularly directed
or limited, as these schools and colleges were free to teach “grammar, the
humanities and languages, philosophy, theology, medicine and law or whichever
liberal arts which we declare detract in no way from the aforesaid
mortification”. 62 It was for the town council to decide whether to build colleges or
schools and what type of education they would like to offer.

The desire to open a college, rather than a university, may have been partly
based on a desire to keep the students who were to be attending the new
institution under control. As it was widely accepted that university students
could be disruptive and destructive, it was seen as important for those organising
the early College of Edinburgh that it should be a true college, with areas for the
students to sleep. The records of the town council in 1583, the year the college
was founded, stated that “It is thocht expedient and ordanit that all the students
of the townis colledge sall nichtlie ly and remayne in their chalmeris within the

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61 Joseph M. M. Hermans, Marc Nelissen, (ed.), Charters of Foundation and Early Documents
of the Universities of the Coimbra Group (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005) 43.
62 Ibid.
same” and that those who “will nocht ly thairin to be putt furth thairof”. The importance of this was that students could then be prevented from leaving the college after dark; in this way they could be prevented from undertaking the usual pursuits through which students had gained their regrettable reputation. This was reinforced in the list of college rules which stated that, as well as students having to sleep at the college, they were not allowed “to goe out at the yett efter that it be ones lockit be the janitor without leve obtenit of some of the Regents”. This curfew, together with the requirement to sleep nightly at the college and a list of other rules, was an attempt to curb the negative behaviour of the students. Admittedly the space which could be used for the purposes of accommodation was not ideal and it was decided in the year that the college opened that students would generally need to sleep “twa in ilk bed”. As well as these space restraints, one particular difficulty of this arrangement was that both students and staff were prohibited from going to “tavernes, or any uther unseemlie plaice for scollers to be fund in”, while the college itself had no provisions for feeding them. As a result of the challenges encountered during the early years of the institution these plans and intentions, which were initially enforced, quickly evaporated.

It is interesting that as a basic foundation document for the university, King James VI’s charter is unique in not actually granting the college even basic university privileges, like the ability to grant degrees to its students. It is also intriguing the way in which the college and the town council did not seem particularly perturbed by this, but just started permitting students to graduate anyway, with no particular authority to do so. It took a later charter in

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63 “It is thought expedient and ordained that all the students of the town’s college shall nightly lie and remain in their chambers within the same,” Morgan, ed., Statutes and Acts, 93.
64 “Those who will not lie therein will be put forth thereof,” Ibid.
65 “to go out at the gate after it be once locked by the janitor without leave obtained from some of the Regents,” Ibid, 124.
66 “Two in each bed”, Ibid, 93.
67 “taverns, or any other unseemlie places for scholars to be found in,” Ibid, 125.
68 D. B. Horn, Short History, 5.
69 Ibid.
Parliament to make official what probably should have been granted earlier; the rights and privileges of Edinburgh's college. It was only after the college had proved to be successful for a number of years that the King visited it, being so impressed with its progress that it was decided that the college could use his royal name and backing. A piece of legislation was read in the Parliament in 1621 announcing that "the said college in all tyme to cum to be callit King James Colledge". This same document also granted "the said college and the rectouris, regentis, bursaris and studentis within the samene, all liberties, fredomes, immunities and priviledgis appertening to ane free colledge", with the King acknowledging that if necessary he would release another royal charter stating as much. It was at this point that the college received official permission to allow students to graduate and so forth, when "the right of granting degrees, assumed without specific authority as the natural provision for a normal course in Arts, was now unquestionable". As everyone had just supposed that the university would probably be allowed to, they seemed to have functioned reasonably well for a couple of decades without any such permission. With the first charter allowing that any number of colleges or schools could be constructed in the burgh, this second charter in the parliament made clear many of the details which were absent from the first. This, then, was the way that the University was created, by a cooperative effort between the town council and the monarch, with the King allowing a great degree of flexibility to the council, allowing them to create a learning institution in such a way that they deemed would be most suitable for Edinburgh.

Not all of the original charter was vague and open-ended, however; what was established very clearly and specifically was who would have the ability to employ academics at the college, and later, the university. The charter states definitively that "the aforementioned provost, bailies and councillors and their successors, nevertheless with the advice of the ministers forever in posterity, will

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70 Ibid, 6.
71 Morgan, ed., Statutes and Acts, 52.
72 Ibid.
73 Ibid, 48.
have full personal freedom to choose appropriately persons most suited to give
the mentioned lessons with power of imposition and removal to themselves as is
most expedient to the most purpose to the best end".74 So in this sense the
University of Edinburgh was unique among the universities of Scotland as
having its town council in charge of employing and removing regents and
professors at the university. In many universities all such decisions were decided
on by others, often individual patrons. This charter decides which key groups
would be involved in selecting and electing new academics, as it highlights that
the town council, the ministers of Edinburgh and the monarch were all to have a
say in which men were to be hired by the university. This means that although it
would initially seem obvious to look for family and professional connections
with those individuals already employed by the college, the professors and
regents, although they could certainly influence appointments, often had less
control over who would be appointed as these three groups.

As it was, the monarch rarely intervened directly in appointments during our
era, although it became increasingly common after 1750.75 The minister’s level of
influence and input did vary, although they still maintained quite a large amount
of input on these matters for the period within our study. The most consistent
power over university hiring lay in the hands of the town council of Edinburgh,
followed by the ministers of Edinburgh; both having had their rights in such
matters established before the college began. As a result of this, as helpful as it
may have been to have successful friends or relatives within the college when
attempting to secure a position, being connected to a network which involved
members of the town council, or in some cases the church, could be just as
effective.

From the opening of the college until 1608 the town council had almost complete
control over who was to be employed. Although James VI’s charter had clearly
stated that the town council and its members should act "with the advice of the

74 Ibid, 43.
75 Morrell, Scientific Eminence, 162.
ministers forever in posterity”,\textsuperscript{76} this order was basically disregarded. Church ministers had been able to influence the council prior to 1608, but only through convincing the appropriate members of the council; the ministers had no actual vote themselves and no direct way to influence these matters. Nevertheless, this form of influence could still be quite effective, illustrated in the way that the career of James Reid was apparently affected by their lobbying.\textsuperscript{77} In 1604 James Reid made a comment which offended one of the church ministers, William Struthers. He, in turn, convinced other ministers to voice their discontent to the council. At this stage James Reid was quite popular with the town council and within the college. He also had a mandate from the Privy Council indicating that he was not to be fired. Regardless of these points in his favour, the efforts of the ministers still ensured that James Reid was forced to resign.

The Church of Scotland had always attempted to maintain an influential position in regards to schools, universities and colleges within Scotland. The immense importance which the church placed on these institutions of learning was largely due to the fact that they were seen as possessing the means to either preserve or disturb the acceptance of current orthodox religious beliefs. For this reason any place where the upcoming generations were taught needed to be kept under close scrutiny; they were seen to have had the ability to either instil in the next generation an understanding of what was deemed correct religious practice, or else to corrupt students by leading them to accept any of those many unorthodox religious ideas which were considered so morally dangerous by the particular church of the day.

When Scotland went through the reformation, shunning Catholicism and committing themselves to Protestantism, the importance placed on education became even more significant. It was a widely accepted belief within Protestantism that a system of correct education was one of the most vital

\textsuperscript{76} Morgan, Charters, Statutes and Acts, 43.

necessities of any well-functioning Protestant society. As Steven J. Reid states, this was an idea which had been reiterated throughout the work of many prominent figures within Protestantism, including Luther, Phillip Melanchton and Calvin. As such, once Protestantism was accepted within Scotland there was a corresponding move to ensure that the countries’ centres of education were all aligned with the beliefs of the new church. One attempt to produce a series of changes through which the education of Scotland would be improved were those outlined in the first book of discipline, most of which did not end up being enacted. Education was seen to be a vital element in encouraging religious orthodoxy and, as such, the ministers were not content with only an indirect influence on university matters. The ministers of Edinburgh were far from powerless, yet they lacked a formal vote on who was to be employed at the college.

This changed after 1608, when the ministers introduced a very direct way of making sure that they would have ongoing input as to which new staff members would be employed by the college. The Kirk-session had agreed to give £8,100 to the Town College, but this donation was only to be given under certain conditions. The first was that the council would agree to pay interest on the money which would then be allocated towards paying the regents salaries. The second was that the burgh’s ministers would be able to vote alongside the town council when it came to electing new staff members to the college. From this point on both ministers and council members had a direct, significant impact on who was employed by the college.

Although the ministers and the town council had wide control over who was employed by the University of Edinburgh during this time, some of the professorships had other groups helping to decide which individuals would be

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79 Steven Reid, *Humanism and Calvinism*, 1.
81 Ibid.
82 Ibid.
appointed. The first of these occurred in 1590 when the Senators of the College of Justice agreed that they would give £1000 towards hiring a “teacher of the lawes”\(^\text{83}\) for the college, if the town council of Edinburgh would agree to contribute the same amount towards that goal.\(^\text{84}\) The writers to the signet and the advocates of Edinburgh were supposed to add a final £1000, although they seem to have had doubts as to the benefits of this project.\(^\text{85}\) In return for their donation, these three groups were to share the responsibility of hiring a staff member to that role. The first individual to be chosen was Adrian Daman and it seems that each group was comfortable with this choice. Daman held the post for four years before moving on to another position.\(^\text{86}\) The second appointee was selected in 1594 by the Senators of the College of Justice; he was an advocate named Adam Newton.\(^\text{87}\) This led to a fierce disagreement, as Newton had been chosen without the town council’s input. The town council argued that “Mr Adame Newton, advocat, is nocht lawfully admittet to teache in the tounis colledge be resoun the tounis vote wes nocht tayne thairto, and thairfore thai discharge him that plaice.”\(^\text{88}\) All three of the groups agreed on who would be selected as the next appointee, but when he retired from the post, they decided that they would no longer have a Professor of Law; this may have been partly because neither of those chosen had actually ever taught any law during their time at the college, but filled the classes with other subjects such as Latin and literature. It was decided that the funding which was to go toward the Professor of Law could instead be spent on supporting a professor of humanity. Indeed, after he was removed from his position, the council even began to refer to Newton as having been a “teacher of humanitie”.\(^\text{89}\) As this money was being supplied by these same

\(^{83}\) Morgan, *Charters, Statutes and Acts*, 98.
\(^{84}\) Ibid. 82-83.
\(^{85}\) Ibid.
\(^{86}\) Ibid.
\(^{87}\) Ibid.
\(^{88}\) “Mr Adam Newton, advocat, is not lawfully admitted to teach in the town’s college by reason the town’s vote was not taken thereto, and therefore they discharge him that place,” Ibid, 99.
\(^{89}\) Ibid, 100.
groups, they also became the patrons of the new role of the professor of humanity.

In some cases regents and professors were also able to effect which individual was to be hired to the college, although in a quite different way. They were able to hire an assistant to take many (or all) of their lectures for them, and they did so under the agreement that this assistant would be able to take over the position when the regent retired or died; the approval of the council was still technically required, but this was a process in which they would not interfere without a significant reason. Some later professorships also involved collaboration with the advocates. Despite the fact that the town council of Edinburgh were keen to reiterate that they were primarily in charge of appointing men to university positions, they allowed that, whenever a new staff member was required for a position in the chairs of civil law, Scots law or universal history, the faculty of advocates could select two potential contenders from which the council could choose. These changes allowed an acknowledgement of the contributions made by other groups, whilst ensuring that the town council was still seen to remain in control of hiring to the college.

It may be assumed that as the church ministers and town council, and occasionally other groups such as the advocates, needed to share the responsibility of selecting and hiring new staff to the university, that they would constantly be working against each other, by trying to introduce their favoured appointee, over those favoured by the other group. It may also be assumed that the ministers would have individuals which they wished to employ, while the town council had their own favoured candidates. From this perspective it could be seen largely as a matter of numbers, wherein whoever has the most voters on their side, either the ministers, the town council, or the advocates, would be able to decide on the new staff, rendering the other votes irrelevant.

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There were several things to get in the way of this type of interpretation. Firstly, the town council was filled by very different men and often disagreed on who should be chosen; they were generally not a unified group. It was also the case that the challenging nature of the application process meant that decisions generally were based on the academic abilities of those applying, or at least that they had to have a high level of competence to be considered. Another point worth noting is that these groups were often not antagonistic toward each other. They weren’t only capable of tolerating the opinions of the other group; they actively cooperated to achieve mutually beneficial results and hiring applicants that suited them both. According to Thomas Craufurd, who was a regent at the college during the mid-seventeenth century, a somewhat dubious instance of this occurred with the election of Patrick Sands to principal in 1620.91

Prior to this, the previous principal of the college was Henry Charteris, who had been supporting the college even prior to its creation. Charteris had been hired on the suggestion of his predecessor, the first principal of the college, Robert Rollock. Like Rollock before him, Charteris held the positions of principal and the Professor of Divinity. Charteris had been assured of a pay rise, but when he mentioned this to the council they argued that such a thing was impossible, due to the spurious claim that they simply could not afford to do so.92 Charteris was then told by the council that if he wished to be paid more highly then the best thing that he could do would be to resign his position and begin working at a parish somewhere. Charteris seems to have understood what was occurring and resigned his role, leaving an empty place within the university.

Patrick Sands was at this time unemployed and looking for work, having failed to be accepted into the church. He did, however, have one important thing going for him; he was the brother-in-law of the then Dean of Guild, David Aikenhead. Patrick Sands had needed employment and so, according to Craufurd, “David Aikenhead, (whose sister [Sands] had married), being Dean of Guild, and having great power in the council, began to project a way get him made primer of the

91 Craufurd, History, 90-91.
92. Ibid, 91.
The first step of this plan was to make sure that the position of principal was vacant. This was the reason for the council’s deceiving of Charteris and their attempts to persuade him to leave his position and move on to other things. This event could be read as an example of the town council being able to outvote the other groups. This would mean that the council, who could have been keen to support their Dean of Guild Aikenhead in the hiring of his relative, would have had a greater number of votes than the ministers and got their way despite the wishes of the others.

As it turns out, however, some of the town council members weren’t convinced by this selection and the necessary votes actually came from among the ministers. This raises the question of why the ministers would support such a questionable decision. The answer seems to lie in the fact that Henry Charteris held two positions; he was both Principal of the College and Professor of Divinity. Patrick Sands, who was elected to be Principal had been unable to be accepted into the church and therefore could not be given the position as a Professor of Divinity. As a result of this, the positions which were united under Chateris became divided. The role of the Professor of Divinity was conveniently filled by a city minister. The act of cooperation which Craufurd suggests occurred between the two groups, disreputable as it may seem in retrospect, highlights the ways in which the ministers and members of the town council may have not always working at cross purposes. It also highlights that the town council should not be viewed as a body that always acted with one purpose. The case of Sands illustrates that favoured applicants could be given a helping hand into the university. Nevertheless, it was rare for the patrons of the university to push for applicants so blatantly. Usually it was only through the demanding selection process that it would be decided who best would fill an academic appointment.

So, although the ministers and the town council had the final say in who would be elected to almost all positions within the university, this does not mean that this was necessarily a simple matter, even if the patrons favoured you. The

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93 Ibid, 90.
ministers and town council were capable of nominating an individual who they deemed suitable, then immediately placing them in an academic position to begin teaching, but while this could happen, it rarely did. It was important that whoever was chosen should possess the necessary skills to fulfil their academic responsibilities. As it was, Patrick Sands did not stay teaching for long, but was soon also encouraged to leave his post. The ability to meet the requirements of a position was particularly important when the College of Edinburgh was still functioning under a regent system. The most common method which was employed to ensure that an applicant was suitably qualified was to hold a comparative trial. It should also be noted that positions were first offered to existing regents and professors, before being advertised. The town council would then release notices indicating that a position was vacant and that applicants were being sought. Sometimes when this failed to attract enough candidates, or if those who applied were considered unsuitable a second round of notices would be released. Craufurd noted that this occurred in 1611 to a group of applicants, when "the youngnes of their faces at first procured some delay". Generally there were enough applicants that this was not necessary.

When appropriate numbers of applicants had applied, they would be required to speak on classical texts, in both Latin and Greek, and to debate with one another, usually in Latin. These trials could be quite gruelling events. For instance, when Charles Lumisden resigned his position at the college to become a minister, it was decided that two new regents would be hired by comparative trial. Six applicants applied for the role and the public disputation lasted for ten days before two were finally selected. In some cases the strenuous nature of the trials yielded less than stellar results; for a vacant chair in 1612 only two people were found who would apply and the judges, not being able to choose between them, decided that the choice should be left to “the determination of an lot”, thus

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94 Ibid, 74.
leaving it to chance as to who would be selected.\textsuperscript{95} The trials existed to measure the applicant’s fluency in Latin and Greek, as well as other academic skills.

The particularly stringent nature of the application process reflected the challenges of being a regent, as they needed to be highly proficient in a range of different fields. Unlike many university systems, which favour specialisation, the regent system encouraged a high level of skill across a range of academic topics.\textsuperscript{96} With a professorial system, each professor would usually have one or two specialized subjects on which they taught exclusively. A regent, however, would begin with a group of bajans, students in their first year at college, and would stay with them, teaching them every subject they undertook throughout their course. Even when not actually giving lectures he required to be correcting his students and quizzing them; this was a constant job and one which required a high level of dedication and academic skill. It was for this reason that comparative trials tested on a range of subjects, with a particular emphasis on Latin; regents would not only need to teach their students Latin as a subject, but would need to teach basically all of the subjects that they undertook, in Latin.

Furthermore, for much of the early history of the college Latin was the only language to be spoken, with students needing to “speik Latine both in the scoolles, in the clois, in the fields, and in all uther plaices whair they ar together, and that none be found speaking Scots”.\textsuperscript{97} The standards of language which were expected of the masters were fairly high; it is hardly surprising that throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries there was a high regard for the standards of Latin which had been maintained by Scottish academics.\textsuperscript{98} Although it had been strictly enforced since the beginning of the college, the tradition of giving lectures in Latin had begun to be less widely practiced from about 1720 onwards, which Allan noted was “consistent with a Europe-wide

\textsuperscript{95} Ibid, 75.
\textsuperscript{96} Ridder-Symoens, ed., \textit{Universities in Early Modern}, 139.
\textsuperscript{97} “that they speak Latin both in the schools, in church, in the fields, and in all uther places where they are together, and that none be found speaking Scots”, Morgan, ed., \textit{Statutes and Acts}, 124.
\textsuperscript{98} Grant, \textit{Story}, p. 270.
trend towards the vernacularisation of university teaching". 99 The regent system was kept, despite several earlier attempts to get the college to modernise, until 1708; 100 this means that even after the switch from regents to professors there were still a couple of decades in which lectures were delivered in Latin. At this time the college abandoned the regent system through an Act of the town council, and began to have professors that specialised in a specific field. 101

The use of comparative trials meant that, generally, even applicants who were favoured by the town council or ministers often had to undergo quite an ordeal before being accepted to academic roles. In some ways this was quite a good way of running things, as those who were unable to cope with the challenges of the application would presumably struggle with the difficulties of the position itself. It ensured that the vast majority of those who were hired by the college, regardless of what connections and influence may have aided them, were both highly studious and eminently capable. The effort involved in running comparative trials meant that they were abandoned around 1703 and the deciding panel no longer had this process to help them in their decision making. 102

Chapter 4: Prosopography and the Regents of Edinburgh

In the proceeding chapters I’ve examined how the hiring practices of Edinburgh University functioned, from the founding of the university until midway through the eighteenth century. By keeping this process in mind, it becomes easier to understand how the overlap of networks might have operated to allow men to be hired into roles at the college, even though these positions may have been otherwise inaccessible to them. The town council of Edinburgh had the most constant and reliable control over who would be selected to fill academic

100 Willis, *The Universities*, 87.
102 Emerson, *Patronage*, 337.
positions within the college. This responsibility of choosing and removing staff was also shared with the Kirk ministers of Edinburgh, the advocates of Edinburgh or the regents and professors already working at the college. The King also had a right to select staff, although this rarely occurred during the time of this study. It also appears that the only aspect of the hiring process itself which may have prevented or discouraged the members of these groups from choosing individuals on the basis of familiarity, shared beliefs or any other reason they wanted, rather than academic prowess, were these comparative trials. It should also be acknowledged that these trials had been abandoned by 1703 and, in any case, the council was not obligated to follow the recommendations of those men who were selected to judge these events.

Thus far it appears that, from the founding of the university until 1703, for a man with a craft or merchant background to have gained a position at the college based on their affiliation, they would be required to display a certain level of academic success. This is not an insurmountable barrier, however, provided that craftsmen and merchants received a decent level of early education, a consideration which will be discussed in chapter 7.

It is also worth reiterating that, firstly, the town council of Edinburgh had long been filled exclusively by members of the burgess, a class largely composed of merchants and craftsmen and that, even more significantly, the town council was populated entirely by members from these two groups. This was a tradition which had been reinforced by the King’s decree arbitral, which was passed down in 1563, which clearly stated that it was only merchants and craftsmen who could be accepted as members of the town council. If ever someone from a merchant or craft background was to use their connections to access a university career, Edinburgh would seem like an ideal place to do so.

Having found evidence that such a situation was possible in Edinburgh, it then became necessary to look for evidence that such a process did occur. It was necessary to ascertain what business the families of those academic men were

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103 The Sett, and Decreet Arbitral of King James VI, (Edinburgh: J. Wardlow, 1700) 10.
involved with, be it as craftsmen, merchants or any number of other occupations. As this thesis aimed to compare the biographical details of a large collection of people from a specific time and place in history, it was decided that this research could be suitably achieved through prosopography.

This form of history is often explained in relation to biography, as it has some superficial similarities. It has even often been referred to as ‘collective biography’. By understanding the differences between these two approaches it becomes easier to comprehend what it is that makes prosopography distinct and why it makes an ideal technique for dealing with this kind of situation.

In a biography the facts relating to a subject are considered individually and worked into a narrative; this is a way of creating and explaining history through constructing a story about a subject, basing it on the information that can be gathered about them. This type of narrative is typically organised around a particular idea or argument. Although a prosopography is built from the same kind of specifics, such as the year someone was born, where they lived or their occupation, it depends on keeping these points detached from a narrative.

Instead, the biographical minutiae are arranged on a grid so that each detail can be directly compared to the information of other individuals, from within the specific group being studied. In fact, particulars relating to an individual’s life will often need to be extracted from a story, so that they can then be reconstituted as a prosopography. In this way, biographies can be seen as one of the raw materials of prosopography, as they bring together the types of information that this form of history requires.

The confusion that exists between these two terms is why some historians argue that the name ‘collective biography’ should be avoided altogether. It is also felt that this name fails to capture the wider aims which are incorporated in this

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106 Ibid. 185.
technique.107 As Stevin Shapin argued “employing collective biography, modern prosopographical analysis is not the routine collected biography of the Victorians but a sophisticated tool for establishing links between action and context… Our use of the term prosopography, rather than ‘collective biography’, reflects the fact that the former stands for a coherent and well-developed technique in the study of history, with its own rules and modes of addressing itself to historical questions”.108 This, then, is how this thesis attempts to understand the backgrounds of the professors and regents of Edinburgh’s college; particularly what businesses or occupations the families of the academic staff were engaged in.

One difficulty which exists in this type of research is that some groups of individuals are more likely to have records kept of their personal details than others. The most illustrious men of the time could be expected to have more complete biographies than others, and this could provide a bias in which information is recorded. It should be reiterated that it was those who were well-known or successful at the time who were more likely to have information recorded about them; there are men who subsequently became quite well regarded but who still have unknown parentage and mysterious origins. This is one of the main limitations of prosopography. It is for this reason that there are only certain groups of people who can be effectively studied using its technique. Those men or women whose lives were well documented are the only ones who can support this type of study.

For many men and women no record has survived of many of the details about their lives. Lawrence Stone has made the point that, as prosopography is heavily dependent on having a reasonable number of fairly detailed sources, this excludes all those groups whose life details were not preserved in written sources; this would prevent many historical groups from being studied in this


way. Fortunately for this research, Stone also notes that some careers make individuals generally well-suited to being studied through a prosopography and among those groups which are generally the best subjects for prosopographical research are the “intellectuals and educators”. As regents and professors, there are remaining records explaining many aspects of their lives. Chance does play a role in which biographical information has survived, however, so even in groups which are favoured for this type of research there are gaps present in the information which can be accumulated.

There was an attempt to uncover a few key pieces of biographical information relating to each family of the many academic staff which worked at the University of Edinburgh during this time. This was then organised according to the stringent procedures necessitated by a prosopographical approach. Through doing this, it was hoped that this study would be able to form a broad but accurate conception of the backgrounds of the college’s academic staff and potentially provide some insight into whether any networks were operating to influence those who were hired to the college at that time. An understanding of where regents and professors were originating from allowed an understanding of whether craftsmen or merchants were frequently elected and how they fitted into the broader picture of university hiring.

Although prosopography can be a very useful way of determining patterns across a group, it only produces meaningful results when strict rules are adhered to. Most importantly, one needs to be very specific about just what question you are attempting to resolve; this question will shape the rest of your study, directing what information will need to be collected and dictating what will be discarded as irrelevant. It is for this reason that for a prosopography to function it requires a specific and well-considered statement of the historical question which is to be addressed. If you are vague or indecisive in formulating the question that is to be answered, then the results will be much less reliable and far

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110 Ibid.
less useful. The strength of any claims that you make off the back of that research will likewise be negatively affected.

As this is the case, the question needs to be very specific, dictating the specific limits on the information that is to be collected. Due to this process, prosopography should always focus on a distinct group of people - preferably one which can be clearly distinguished from others. It also needs to be restricted to a set period of time. These decisions are the filters which decide who will be included and excluded from the study and which information will be deemed relevant or irrelevant. If the time period chosen is too large, or is unspecified, then the study could become so unwieldy that is unmanageable, or impossible to complete. If any of the limitations are not kept consistent throughout the work then the results have the potential to be misleading. Dion Smythe wrote that prosopography is most successful in gaining useful results when the specifics and limits of the study are well-defined, and this includes which historical question will be addressed, who will be included in or excluded from the study and which period of time which will be under consideration. By being careful when establishing the starting question and being consistent with the information which is gathered one can avoid many of the pitfalls associated with this type of research.

One of the real strengths of prosopography is that it is capable of absorbing and utilising information from a wide range of different sources. While careful limits should be placed on what biographical details you are collecting, there should be no limit to the type of sources from which you draw that information. As Smythe wrote, “it is the pooling of this wealth of material which gives prosopography its edge”. The records which were often kept at the time detailing when people were born, were christened, were married or were buried

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112 Ibid.
113 Ibid.
114 Ibid.
is a particularly useful source, as it exists for people regardless of their success. The various histories which had been written about a university are also useful, as they are often one of the few places that list general details about the more obscure professors and regents who worked there. A wide selection of different references are vital to ensure that as much detail as possible is brought together into the one comparison; each type of record also usually focuses on a particular type of individual, so by combining numerous types together a more complete and balanced picture can be created.

The key question which this thesis was hoping to resolve was whether craft or merchant networks were influencing which individuals were being selected to work as academics at Edinburgh’s college. This is a challenging piece of information to get to, as there is no direct way of knowing whether those same individuals would have been employed in that situation if they had not been connected to a merchant or craft background. What was able to be achieved, using the prosopography, was to determine whether there were any patterns which could be observed among the backgrounds of those men who were selected. It was possible to uncover which backgrounds were more commonly represented than others. With an understanding of who was chosen it then becomes important to separate out which factors may have led to those men being chosen.

It is a perfectly reasonable objective to try and determine generally what background a subject derived from, but prosopography requires us to be specific about which particular pieces of information are going to be collected. As the primary focus of this thesis is on networks that revolve around particular occupations, such as craft or merchant guilds, it makes sense to look for these classifications in our research; but whose occupations should be the focus? This thesis could have endeavoured to understand whether the regents and professors themselves had also been involved in a non-academic career, as this would be the most direct path through which a network could be effecting which applicant was chosen.
There are several difficulties with this approach. Firstly, there are not enough regents and professors who held careers outside of academia to support a prosopography. It was uncommon for individuals to establish a career in a different area before working at the university; it did happen and can provide an interesting study when it occurs, but these examples provide far too small a sample to be of any use as a prosopography. Craftsmen would find this particularly difficult, as many were adults before they even commenced their apprenticeship, which lasted for about seven years. There would presumably then be an understandable reluctance to immediately change careers.

By limiting a study to those men who had actually worked personally in careers outside of the college the forthcoming results would have a high chance of being quite misleading. One reason for this is that of those men who did have careers outside of the university, most came from the same few academic fields. There are certain positions within a university, such as teaching medicine or law, where working at external vocations alongside your university commitments was much more common, and in some cases was even expected. For example, many professors of medicine worked as physicians themselves, but it would not necessarily follow that a strong network of physicians was influencing the hiring decisions of the council and convincing them to hire men from within their network. Focusing on the additional occupations of the regents and professors themselves is not the only approach that can be taken. One would not need to have actually worked at a craft to enjoy the benefits of being associated with a craft or merchant network; they may have simply been related to, or connected with, someone with influence in that field. By limiting this study to the relatives of a regent or professor it was possible to separate the influence of networks from the skills and experience of the individual, things which may be legitimately taken into account for that role.

As such, in this prosopography the details which will be collected are geared towards elucidating the occupations of the academic’s fathers. This will provide sufficient information for a prosopography while still providing insight into
whether networks were effecting those decisions as to who would be hired to the college. The academic’s fathers have been chosen for this purpose as they are likely to have an interest in the careers of their children and many had the occupational connections to exert some useful influence in this direction. It is also generally easier to access reliable information on the fathers of an individual than basically any other relative.

Having decided to focus on the occupations undertaken by the fathers of our subjects, it becomes necessary to clearly define how these different careers will be categorised. It is important to be able to distinguish consistently between different types of occupation throughout the study so that the details remain constant and the results remain reliable. There are many different types of work undertaken in Edinburgh during this time, so one needs to be clear as to which would constitute a craft, or which activities would mark someone as a merchant. This task has been made somewhat easier by the strict legislation of the time and the jealous zeal with which individual types of work were monopolised and protected.

Those men who were working as merchants in the city of Edinburgh needed to be burgess and members of the merchant’s guild. These guilds were a way of self-regulating the crafts and ensuring that particular prices, procedures and standards were upheld. The rules of the guild also stated that anyone who was caught undertaking the activities of a merchant without being a burgess and guild member would be punished; usually this involved the confiscation of the goods. The merchant guild of Edinburgh was designed to protect and represent the Town’s merchants, and a part of this involved ensuring that there was a clear distinction maintained between accepted city merchants and others. Likewise, the majority of crafts during this period were also organised into individual incorporations with similar aims and limitations. The fourteen incorporated guilds which existed in Edinburgh during this time were the goldsmiths, skinners, furriers, hammermen, wrights, masons, tailyeours or tailors, fleshers

\[115\] Houston, Social Change, 5.
(butchers), baxters (bakers), cordiners (shoe-makers), websters or weavers, waulkers (wool-cleaners), chirurgeons or surgeons, bonnet-makers and dyers.\footnote{116 David Daiches, \textit{Edinburgh}, (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1978) 32.} These last two groups were amalgamated into a single guild. Having these distinct guilds makes classification of individuals easier as men at this time would need to be careful not to publically call themselves craftsmen or merchants if they were not connected to one of these groups, as it would quickly attract legal attention if they did so. Burgess were the only members who were allowed to participate in either craft or merchant activity, so this separation also helps to avoid people who may otherwise be involved with the crafts in a more casual way; the effort involved in becoming a craftsman and the difficulties incurred for those participating in these practices illegally were presumably enough to discourage most people from involvement with the crafts if it was not going to be a serious occupation. As this thesis aimed to determine whether members of craft guilds were able to use their networks to access university positions, the jealousy and tireless effort with which these distinctions were maintained became helpful in keeping track of those who were craftsmen or merchants, separating them from those who were not. Some few crafts did not have guilds at this stage, but they were still included if they were later incorporated into a craft guild or similar.

There is one group which certainly qualifies as a craft, but which will not be treated as an ordinary craft for the purposes of this study; these are the chirurgeons, or surgeons, of Edinburgh. Although it may seem unusual to treat one craft differently from the others, the development of the status and role of surgeons over this time warrant this exception. Although surgeons had formed a craft guild, one which was joined with the barbers of the city, many practitioners were not content to remain craftsmen. From its earliest days the surgeons incorporation had constantly worked to recreate itself as a learned or professional society, rather than a craft guild.\footnote{117 Helen Dingwall, \textit{A Famous and Flourishing Society: The History of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, 1505-2005}, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University press, 2005) 1.} By the time of our study it had
made considerable progress towards this goal, becoming much closer to recognition as a profession, rather than a craft.\textsuperscript{118} In attempting to determine how craftsmen and their families were able to gain roles in academia the surgeons of Edinburgh are thus distinct from the other groups, as they were individuals who were in their process of ending their craft and remaking it as a profession. They had even come to monopolise the teaching of anatomy at the college, a fact which would have introduced an added complication if they were treated as normal craftsmen.\textsuperscript{119} For this reason they were included in the study, but they were not listed among the crafts.

As well as collecting the name and profession of each academic’s father, a range of other bits of information will also be kept. The other names which will be held include the regent’s mother, wife and father-in-law. The birth and death dates for all of these individuals will be kept, together with where they were born, lived or died. In many cases only some of this information will be available for each person. Although this may seem like a lot of information to connect about individuals who may not seem directly involved, there are two main reasons why it has been included. The first is that they may become involved in networks and if they do then it will be useful to have this information available. The second, and more important reason, is to do with verifying sources.

In this study, the materials which could be used as sources of biographical information were limited by the need to ensure that only that information which was reliable was being included. One part of this challenge was to be convinced not just that the source itself was likely to be reliable but that the information gained was relating to the correct individual; many of the regents and professors had names which were very popular during this time. This matter was further complicated by the fact that the same names were often passed down from father to son, or else reused within the same family. In some records there were even one or more pages filled entirely with recurrences of a single name. Confusion could easily occur, so a special effort was required to separate out that

\textsuperscript{118} Ibid. 75.
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid. 74. Anderson, Lynch, Phillipson, \textit{Illustrated History}, 43.
information which could be unambiguously attributed to the correct subject. Fortunately many of the sources which were utilised for this study specifically named the individual as being a regent or a professor at Edinburgh University. One way to help guarantee that you are dealing with the correct individual, in situations where their connection to the college is not directly stated, is by comparing their secondary details. If you know the name of the regent’s wife, or mother or father-in law, then you can compare this to those listed and you will be less likely to confuse them with other individuals, including those within their own family. These, then, are the specific pieces of information which will form the basis of this prosopography.

Despite the many sources which were incorporated in this study, there were still many regents and professors for which the necessary details could not be determined. With such a small amount of material available on some individuals, a wide range of primary sources became even more crucial to piece together their identity. Unfortunately, many of the academics of Edinburgh have only scant details remaining about their lives outside of the college. In total just over half of the regents and professors studied had the relevant reliable biographical information available about them. Having established how this study was to be undertaken, involving a prosopographical approach involving the regent’s family, and formulated the specific limitations of our prosopography, this study should be able to determine what effect, if any, the guild networks of Edinburgh were having on which men were chosen to teach at the city’s university.
Chapter 5: Powerful Networks and a Lack of Craftsmen

Edinburgh seems like the ideal place for networks to function to bring people into the university. It had similarities to Leiden University and one of its primary patrons was the town council; the town council having been made up exclusively of merchants and craftsmen. As such, it may be expected that quite a few craftsmen would have been helped into an academic position, even despite the demanding application process. This chapter will discuss the results of the prosopographical study and will then try to offer an explanation as to why, despite its seemingly high level of potential, craft networks do not seem to be functioning to get craftsmen and their families into the University of Edinburgh at all. As mentioned already, the basis of a strong prosopography is a clear limit on who you wish to study and a wide range of sources to help you to bring together as much relevant information as possible. This list of the regents and professors employed by the university has been based on the information found in 'A catalogue of the graduates in the faculties of arts, divinity and law of the university of Edinburgh, since its foundation', checked against Craufurd and Grant’s histories of the university. In doing so, the focus has been limited to those who were employed between the opening of the college in 1583 and the year 1750. A variety of sources was used in this study, including the dictionary of national biography, the burgess records, church records, individual biographies and histories of the college (particularly Grant, Craufurd and Bower). At least some details have been collected relating to the majority of regents and professors in the college. A full list of the staff members which were included in this prosopography is listed in Appendix A, together with their position at the university and each father’s name and profession.

Unfortunately the life histories and family connections of even quite well-known Scottish historical figures are often unavailable. Gathering information on the professions of the parents of regents and professors is challenging; there are

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some whose names are not even known, while others only have very vague information retained about them, referring to them as residents, honest citizens or burgess. In this situation it is important to favour the reliability of your source material over getting as high a quantity of information as possible. With this in mind, roughly half of the regents and professors studied have information accessible about their parent’s professions which was reliable enough to be included. Enough pieces of information have been brought together to highlight a number of points.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure 1., The occupations of regent’s fathers, 1583-1750</th>
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<td>Ministers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Law</td>
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<tr>
<td>Noblemen</td>
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<tr>
<td>University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scholars</td>
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<tr>
<td>Merchants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physician</td>
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<td>Army Surgeon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Craftsmen</td>
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<td>Total known</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unknown Regents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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Fig 1., the list of regents and professors is taken from A catalogue of the graduates in the faculties of arts, divinity and law of the University of Edinburgh, since its foundation.¹²¹

¹²¹ A catalogue of the graduates in the faculties of arts, divinity and law of the University of Edinburgh, since its foundation. (Edinburgh: Neil & Company, 1858).
Only those regents and professors who actually worked at the university have been included in this study, as several men were selected to posts but did not end up actually taking a position, or were blocked from doing so. Many of the subjects in this study did not have reliable information available relating to their families and, as a result of this it could be the case that more regents had parents who worked as craftsmen or merchants than these results suggest. While it is certainly possible that other staff members did have craft relatives, there are reasons to believe that these groups did not constitute a large percentage of the unknown subjects. Some groups are poorly represented in this type of study because they were not involved in activities that required record-keeping and lacked the means, the ability or the inclination to preserve this type of information themselves. Craftsmen belonged to a ‘literate profession,’ which required writing and record-keeping, and they possessed high literacy levels compared to many other occupations of the time. Furthermore, the status of being a burgess could be inherited by the sons of a burgess, so there was a strong incentive for burgess to keep track of this family information. This was one of the most common ways to become a burgess, together with marrying into a burgess family. This process also meant that the town council kept lists of how new burgess gained their burgess-ship, including listing their fathers if it had been inherited. Many regents of Edinburgh were granted burgess due to good works or through an honorary membership, which indicates that they had not already inherited this status. While ideally the information in this study would be more complete, burgess are one of the groups most likely to have reliable details on their families available, so gaps are more likely to have come from less literate occupational groups.

After the university moved on from a regent system in 1708, each staff member was to specialise in a specific field of learning. It is quite possible that this change to distinct professorships had an effect on who was being hired, with people

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123 Ibid.
from certain backgrounds favoured in particular fields. As such, as well as laying out the professions of staff members during different times in the history of the university, I have organised the available data from those staff members working after 1708 according to the four main faculties. These were Arts, Medicine, Law and Theology. Figure 2. highlights that, while there are some minor patterns in the way that they are distributed, hiring practices are not simply split along faculty lines. Instead, each area seems to contain a mix of individuals from varied backgrounds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professions of Regent’s fathers</th>
<th>Academic Disciplines</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ministers</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Noblemen</td>
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<td>University Scholars</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchants</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physician</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craftsmen</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24</td>
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*Alexander Pitcairne worked as both a merchant and a magistrate.

Fig 2. This data is based on the same sources as Fig. 1, listed in full in the appendix.
As is illustrated in Figure 1, of those whose father’s professions could be obtained the clear majority were churchmen. This is hardly surprising considering the close connection that existed between education and the church; one of the key functions of the early college was to train clergy for the newly established church.\textsuperscript{125} In the very early days of the college a rule needed to be introduced that regents would agree to “complete a certain period of tenure”\textsuperscript{126} and thus stay with their students for the full course. This requirement came about due to the fact that so many young regents saw their positions as transitory, often moving on to positions elsewhere, often inside the hierarchy of the church. Some positions at the college could only be filled by members of the church, such as being a professor of divinity. As previously noted, the church ministers were also one of the groups which had a certain amount of voting control over who would be elected to the college;\textsuperscript{127} a power which they felt was important enough to justify their paying a considerable sum of money to obtain it. Finally, this was a time where religious allegiance was a foremost consideration when it came to hiring new members to the college. As mentioned earlier, the church had claimed authority over all spiritual matters at every university and college in Scotland, and deciding whether those men who were chosen to be employed were sufficiently godly, and as importantly, possessed the right types of religious beliefs, was seen as falling clearly within this jurisdiction; exactly what constituted correct religious beliefs was something that changed drastically over time.

One of the other aspects which was believed to have a decisive impact on how effective and reliable a teaching institution was going to be, were the beliefs and values of those who were teaching; by ensuring that staff members firmly supported the church of the time, they could also be more confident that individual teachers were less likely to be slyly imparting incorrect theological beliefs through their teaching. These men were role models to the

\textsuperscript{125}Todd, \textit{Culture of Protestantism}, 56.
\textsuperscript{127}Anderson, Lynch, Phillipson, \textit{Illustrated History}, 40.
impressionable, so even if they were not directly teaching a religious topic, they should still be seen as accepting church orthodoxy. Political affiliation was just as important, and in some cases basically inextricable from religious convictions. This keenness to guarantee the loyalty of teaching staff shortly after the reformation occurred led to universities and schools being visited and inspected by members of the church; each staff member needed to pledge their allegiance to the new church and the king. Those staff members who refused to make such an oath would be removed from their academic positions and replaced by people who supported, and would be prepared to promise their ongoing loyalty to, the aforesaid religious and political groups.

This process of purging the universities of those sympathetic to Catholicism was unnecessary at Edinburgh; as it had been established as a protestant university Catholicism had never been accepted there. This is notable in the sense that people were being excluded from being considered for university appointments; Catholics were prevented from holding teaching positions in Edinburgh during this time, as was the case throughout all Scottish universities. This obvious preference was not, however, the only effect that religion was having on hiring practices at the University.

For those who have never studied this area of Scottish history it may be assumed that the reformation ushered in a period of religious stability, united as the country was under Protestantism, but this does not take into account “Protestantism’s own inescapable tendency to fragment”. Almost as soon as it had formed the Protestant church had begun to be split by internal divisions. One of the earliest and most damaging of these conflicts was that which occurred between Episcopalianism and Presbyterianism; it was also this schism which had the most noticeable effect on who was permitted to teach at the University of Edinburgh. One of the key separations between these two religious groups was that Episcopalianism believed that there should be a place for bishops within the church; at this stage, this belief seems to have been based as much on political

and financial considerations, as religious ones. Through the middle of the sixteenth century the King had been in conflict with the newly established church over the matter of finances, with the King viewing bishops as an effective way of ensuring that he maintained some access to the resources of the church. 129 By appointing individuals to these offices purely on the basis of how likely they were to assist the king in this regard, the King could ensure that it became easier to gain access to church resources. 130 Outrage over this approach convinced the General Assembly that they were right to oppose Bishops and, by 1580, it “declared them to have no scriptural authority and to be a corruption in the Kirk”. 131 This was a situation which would not last long.

King James was kidnapped and held in 1582, an event later referred to as the Ruthven Raid. This move had the approval of the general assembly and the new, temporary government had some presbyteries built in acknowledgement of this. This government relied on the king’s imprisonment for its power, so when King James VI escaped, a new administration was put in place, led by James Stewart, Earl of Arran. 132 King James had for many years looked unfavourably on Presbyterianism. He resented his lack of control over the church and, particularly the lack of bishops, forcing him to have such limited access to the Kirk finances. He was also presumably unimpressed that the church seems to have been fairly supportive of his having been kidnapped. It has even been claimed that his dislike of this form of church governance supposedly once led him to remark that “a Scottish Presbytery… is as well fitted with monarchy as God and the devil”. 133 It was not long before he made an attempt to remove what he saw as an irritating and unworkable system. His response was to reintroduce Episcopalianism in 1584, shortly after the College of Edinburgh first opened.

129 Houston, Penguin, 192.
130 Ibid.
131 Ibid.
This was attempted together with a more direct attempt to seize control over the church. Firstly, several acts of parliament were passed under “the menacing gaze of Chancellor Arran”, which was chiefly involved with revoking any acts which the new government had created. It stated that “considering that in the saidis assemblies certane his subjectis have takin upoun thame to justifie and auctorize the fact perpetrate aganis his hienes persoun and estate at Ruthven and prosecutit thairefter, quhill his majestie at Goddis pleasour recoverit his libertie, having in thair pretendit maner maid actis thairupoun, kepis the same in register, and as yit semis to allow the said attemptat, althocht now publictlie condampnit be his hienes and estatis as treasonable…. Oure soverane lord and his thrie estatis assemblit in this present parliament dischargeis all jugementis and jurisdictionis spirituall or temporall ... not approvit be his hienes and his saidis thrie estatis convenit in Parliament”.

As well as nullifying the effect of those acts passed while he was captured, King James also used these same acts to further increase his direct power over the Kirk, reinstating bishps and thus re-establishing much of his control over the church. It read that “our Soverane lord and his thrie estatis assemblit in this present Parliament ratefeis and apprevis and perpetuallie confirmis the royall power and auctoritie over all statis alsweill spirituall as temporall within this realme in the persoun of the kingis majestie our soverane lord his airis and successouris”.

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134 Houston, Penguin, 192.
135 “considering that in the said assemblies certain [individuals among] his subjects have taken upon them to justify and authorise the fact perpetrated against his highness’ person and estate at Ruthven and prosecuted thereafter while his majesty at God’s pleasure recovered his liberty, having in their pretended manner made acts thereupon, keeps the same in register, and as yet seems to allow the said attempt, although publically condemned by his highness and estates as treasonable... Our sovereign lord and his three estates assembled in this present parliament discharges all judgements and jurisdictions... not approved by his highness and his said three estates convened in Parliament”. Donaldson, ed., Documents, 154.

136 Ibid.
137 ‘Our Sovereign Lord, and his three estates assembled in this present parliament, ratifies and approves and perpetually confirms the royal power and authority over all states, as well spiritual as temporal, within this realm in the person of the Kings majesty, our sovereign lord his heirs and successors’. Ibid.
responsible for reintroducing Episcopalianism, asserted that these bishops, together with other chosen men, should represent “the kingis majesties Commissionaris in Ecclesiasticall causis, Shall and may direct and put ordour to all materis and causis ecclesiasticall within thair dioceisis, visit the kirkis and state of the ministrie within the same, Reforme the collegeis thairin”.  

The way in which the King viewed bishops as his own commissioners illustrates the inextricable links between religion and politics during this time. This forceful and retaliatory act of Parliament came to later to be referred to by many as the ‘Black Acts’. One of the most significant things which this act of parliament highlights is that Bishops were to be given the power to inspect and reform the colleges. This process of ‘visiting’ the colleges to ensure that correct religious allegiances were being maintained, often resulting in the university being purged of those members who were unable to pledge sufficient loyalty to the current form of church governance, was a common process throughout the early modern period in Scotland.

Although the ‘Black Acts’ had seemed to put a decisive end to the matter, in reality it was a constant tug-of-war between the two religious and political groups, with the college staff needing to maintain views consistent with the prevailing church orthodoxy. The ongoing growth and success of Presbyteries after the Acts of 1584 meant that within a decade another act was passed through the Parliament supporting a return to Presbyterian Church governance in 1592; it supported general assemblies, synods, presbyteries and Kirk sessions as being the appropriate way for the church to be organised and governed.  

Although an act had been produced in 1592 which supported a Presbyterian government, it had not ensured that there was one consistent Presbyterian system throughout Scotland, and the existence of specific men as commissioners to help organise the

138 “The King majesties' Commissioners in Ecclesiastical causes, Shall and may direct and put order to all matters and causes ecclesiastical within their dioceses, visit the kirkis and state of the ministrie within the same, reform the collegeis therein…” Ibid, 156.

system allowed Episcopalianism to be reintroduced. The repeated shift between the two systems continued for many years.

It was a confused and fierce time in Scottish history; one in which Episcopalians and Presbyterians became bitterly opposed, with the latter group being riven into smaller, hostile groups. This period of history was so damaging for the Church of Scotland that many of these divisions still remain. Throughout this era the colleges were seen as important forces to keep under close control. With every change in government the schools and universities were purged, in an attempt to “ensure that the schooling of boys and young men accorded with new views and was in the hands of friends of the new rulers.” When King Charles II brought back an Episcopalian government this type of purging occurred, with Presbyterians replaced at the college by Episcopalians; legislation from this time required new professors and regents to swear an oath of allegiance to Episcopalianism and the King. At Edinburgh during this same time the patrons of the university were also doing their best to ensure that the university had conformed to the new system. Christine Shepherd highlighted the severity with which these standards of orthodoxy were enforced, noting that the town council of Edinburgh had appointed a number of bailies [judges] to scrutinise the staff of the university, looking for any signs of disloyalty to the government. They had even threatened to close the university down if members of staff were found to be insufficiently loyal. Despite being rigorously enforced these changes were nonetheless short lived. The fluctuating religious climate of Edinburgh may very well have made it a stressful time for many. As one 19th Century historian, John Harrison, expressed it, the situation was only suited to those who were prepared to undergo pain and misery for their convictions “or else for men whose moral

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140 Ibid. 168.
142 Ibid.
145 Ibid.
146 Ibid.
back-bones were so supple that they could, without inconvenience to their consciences, change sides at least once a twelvemonth.” It seems that this passage could have equally well described the situation inside Edinburgh University during this time under switching Presbyterian and Episcopalian regimes; the history of the college appears to be riddled with examples of men who fell into one category or the other.

By 1690, all the grammar schools and the five universities were purged by a Parliamentary Visitation Commission eager to ensure that Episcopalian teachers, professors and masters, who might oppose the new Whig regime, were extruded and replaced by a corps of loyal teachers whose morals, Whiggism and Presbyterian commitments were beyond question. One way of ensuring this was to choose loyal members of the church and their children to act as teachers, professors and regents; this may provide a further explanation for the high numbers of ministers’ children who were being employed during this time. Whenever a candidate was blocked from applying or lost their position because of their religious beliefs, another individual would be hired; one whose ideals were better suited to the church of the time. William Cleghorn, who was a member of the clergy, seems to have gained his position in this way, when the church decided to block the appointment of David Hume on religious grounds. Robert Rankin was forced to resign in 1638 as he had refused to swear allegiance to the covenant. Alexander Colville was actually offered a position which he was then prevented from accepting by the General Assembly. John Drummond was hired, but only held his position for seven months, when he was removed for refusing to swear an oath of allegiance.

Thomas Burnet was hired to the College of Edinburgh in 1686, being put forward for his position by the chancellor, after having supported the king and the notion that he should hold absolute control over the country. It has been claimed that

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149 Brockliss, *Gown and Town*, 155.
his position was granted to him as a result of some theses he published, criticising the reformation and stating that King James VI should have the power of creating and removing laws as he saw fit, without any need to consult parliament.\textsuperscript{150} This serves as an example of the ways that political and religious beliefs and actions can help to provide access to academic positions. It is, however, not a reliable method of doing so. The very same things which had secured Burnet the position in 1686 were those which caused him to be removed in 1690.\textsuperscript{151} Religion and Politics was heavily involved with which staff members were to be permitted to teach at the college. The few times when regents and professors were purged from the universities are clear examples of this effect, but it was also occurring more generally throughout this time.\textsuperscript{152} These events are one obvious way that political and religious ideas could influence university staff, but there is evidence that even when governments were stable these factors were still present; these influences were continually affecting who was chosen to fill academic positions.\textsuperscript{153} So the church was able to have a say in who was chosen, through their voting privileges and the several situations where oaths of allegiance were required to be taken, the church also had the power to block any applicants from being hired who they deemed unsuitable. This was illustrated in those examples, of Mr Alexander Colville, mentioned earlier, who had been offered a position at the college, but who was banned from doing so by the general assembly, forcing a new appointee to be sought, and David Hume, who was also prevented from being hired.\textsuperscript{154} With such a close relationship to the college and so much power over who was being hired and who was removed from their positions it is no wonder that the children of churchmen were so highly represented among the academics of the institution.

A high selection of regents came from aristocratic families, having parents who are lairds, barons or baronets. There is evidence that, although they had no direct

\textsuperscript{150} Christine Shepherd, “Philosophy and Science in the Arts Curriculum of the Scottish Universities in the 17th century,” (PhD., University of Edinburgh, 1974) 308.
\textsuperscript{151} Ibid, 308.
\textsuperscript{152} Carter, ed., Distinctiveness and Diversity, 28.
\textsuperscript{153} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{154} Brockliss, Gown and Town, 155.
voting power over the college, they still seemed to possess a strong level of influence with the town council on such matters. It seems that they had a greater effect on the election of new staff members than even this prosopography would suggest. This is illustrated, not just in the way that so many of their children were elected to positions within the college, but that other men, who were not their direct descendants, were still elected through their involvement. Charles Erskine, himself the son of a baronet, was hired through the influence exerted by his cousin, who was an Earl of Mar.\textsuperscript{155} Some illustrious men such as Earl Ilay and Henry Dundas are known to have been responsible for many men having been accepted into positions at the Scottish universities during this era.\textsuperscript{156} Those who had the power to effect appointments often did; if not for their relatives, then for those who had found their favour. Many regents and professors seem to have been employed in respectable positions within a college as the result of having either been related to, or having gained the friendship of, well-placed members of the nobility.

A large number of the regents and professors parents were themselves other professors, regents or university staff, suggesting that family connections were even more common in Edinburgh than has been assumed. In a similar manner to the aristocracy, the effect also seems to be even larger than this study would suggest. The prosopography shows that there were seven regents, out of those listed, whose fathers had also worked as academic staff at a university. It seems as though all of these men had worked at Edinburgh. Rather than attempting to have an effect the votes of the town council, which during this time was a process on which the staff of the college generally had very little input, they used the other approach through which new members of staff could be chosen. It was mentioned earlier in this thesis that regents and professors were able to hire an assistant. Academic positions at Edinburgh were generally held for life, until the individual died or chose to retire; they would not be forced from a position on


\textsuperscript{156} Emerson, \textit{Patronage}, 10.
account of old age or declining teaching standards. These positions could even actually be sold to other people, if required, although the town council still had the final say in such matters. What many of these men chose to do was to hire an assistant to take many (or all) of their lectures for them, paying them a percentage of their salary, on the agreement that they would be able to take over the position when the regent retired or died. While this was sometimes merely a financial arrangement, it could also be set up to provide employment for an academic’s son, taking him on as an assistant to teach lectures and then retiring. It was through this process that some of the ‘family university’ aspects of Edinburgh’s college were established. In this way an academic position could be passed down within a family. In some few cases new academic staff could be chosen in this fashion without even involving direct family members. Adam Watt, for example, was hired to an academic post when Lawrence Dundas offered to retire so as to let Watt have his place; the two men were not related, but Dundas had been friends with Watt’s father, who was also named Adam. These type of relationships and agreements were common throughout the college.

Another group which was quite well-represented among the parents of the academic staff were advocates and judges. The advocates were the other group which had in some circumstances been granted a vote on hiring new members to the college, but only for a few positions. It is interesting to note that these regents and professors were not limited to the three law professorships which existed at various times within the college, or those which the advocates and law men were able to vote on, but were involved in teaching a range of academic fields. Their success in having their children appointed to positions in the college may have been party due to the new wealth and status which law men were acquiring. By the end of the seventeenth century the advocates of Edinburgh had become wealthier than the city’s merchants and craftsmen combined.\textsuperscript{158} They were still

\textsuperscript{157} Peter Moraw, Gesammelte Beitr"age zur deutschen und europ"aischen Universit"atsgeschichte, (Leiden: Brill, 2008) 50.
\textsuperscript{158} Michael Lynch, Scotland: A New History, 254.
prevented from membership on the council, which was reserved for craftsmen and merchants, but they may still have had other ways of influencing voting decisions. One possibility is that the ministers of Edinburgh helped to vote in certain advocates. Although advocates were unable to join the Edinburgh town council, they could still become involved with the kirk session. Lynch notes that in the kirk session of 1574 advocates represented five of the twelve elders present.

The members of the university who were appointed during this time do seem to reflect the different groups which held sway over appointments through their influence and their voting. These, together with the staff members themselves and their more direct way of ensuring appointments, provide limited space in which other networks could exert any effect. The strength of those other influential groups, with which the merchants and craftsmen of Edinburgh were required to compete, is now evident. With this in mind, it becomes important to focus on how often the children of merchants and craftsmen were actually represented among the university staff. The town council was apparently made up of burgess, a class dominated by merchants and craftsmen; how did their guild connections fare amongst the forceful influence of others? There were some regents and professors working at the college of Edinburgh whose parents had worked as merchants. There were some men such as Andrew Stevenson, James Fairley or David Dickson whose parents were merchants and who may have been hired to the college as a result of their parents connections. Other regents or professors had parents who were merchants, but were also involved in those other dominant professions which seem to have been securing appointments around this time. Examples of this include Archibald Pitcairne, whose father was both a merchant and a magistrate and Andrew Plummer, whose father, Gavin, had a flourishing career as a merchant before becoming treasurer to the town council. The merchants seem to be able to have found a niche among those gaps left among those more powerful groups.

159 Ibid.
160 Ibid.
The number of regents and professors whose parents had been involved with the crafts appears to have been even lower. Of all the details which could be collected, there were only four men whose parents could be deemed to have participated in some form of craft. Increasing the number of details which relate to the parents of these regents and professors by further research will obviously help to make these results more conclusive.

Although they were a very small fraction of those who were hired, the details of the lives of these men’s fathers seem to be fairly telling. They suggest that being a craftsman is not sufficient to secure your child a position at the college, even despite their connections within the council. These three individuals and their parents all had strong connections among those other more powerful groups, as well as the crafts, which seem to have influenced the regent’s selection.

One of the most successful of these men, whose parents were involved with the crafts, was the Reverend Henry Charteris (c.1565-1628), who was even employed as a principal of the college. He was the son of a book printer, who was also named Henry Charteris (d.1599). His mother was most likely Katherine Ker (d. 1577). Charteris Snr is a well-known figure in Scottish book printing, particularly as at one stage, between 1586 and 1590, he is acknowledged as owning the only printing press in Scotland.161 This monopoly resulted Charteris Snr was often employed by the council and the college to make books.

Henry Charteris Snr was a book printer, in that he owned a printing business, but as it was successful he was able to leave the actual craft work to his employees. This was necessary, as it was this which allowed him to join the merchant’s guild; the rules of that organisation sought to discourage working craftsmen from membership. It is known that this took place as Charteris Snr is listed in the burgess lists as being a merchant burgess and guild brother. This situation would have allowed him to develop connections among both the merchants and craftsmen. No book-binders guild seems to have ever been

established in Scotland, so joining the merchant’s guild was the only way in which successful book-binders like Charteris Snr were able to access burgh politics. He was elected to the town council, being re-elected 7 times and attaining the position of bailie. This position would presumably have been ideal for furthering his son’s career. Charteris Snr’s position as a craftsman was useful, in that it allowed him to expand into the merchant guild and the council, but it appears to be these later positions which were the most helpful in assisting his son in gaining a position in the college.

Another Edinburgh college regent who came from a craft background was William Cleghorn, whose father, Hugh Cleghorn, worked as a brewer. This seems to be another example of a similar situation to Charteris, where craftwork acts a starting point, before acceptance into the merchant’s circle. Firstly, Hugh Cleghorn is also recognised as having been a merchant burgess, again indicating that he was recognised as a merchant and, as such, that his business was successful enough that he could abstain from any physical involvement with the brewing itself, leaving the work to his employees. While William Cleghorn’s father never became a council member, William seems to have other links to the college, as he was the grandson of another William Hamilton, a former Principal. Even with these links, his hiring seems to have been largely the result of the church attempting to avoid hiring David Hume, rather than having any particular interest in hiring him. He was fortunate in this regard, although he was still chosen rather than others, a fact which may have been influenced by his family’s links.

162 Ibid, 17.
163 Ibid. 32.
165 Dalzel, History, p. 413.
167 Brockliss, Gown and Town, 155.
The final individual is George Meldrum (abt. 1634-1709) whose father, Andrew Meldrum, worked in the town as a dyer. It seems that Andrew became a burgess in 1634 and, more importantly, was listed as a 'trade burgess', rather than as a merchant. This implies that at this stage he was manually involved with his craft, was a member of a craft incorporation, or guild, and saw it as his primary occupation. Andrew Meldrum, like Charteris and Cleghorn, would also have needed to have stopped undertaking physical work at some stage, leaving it to his employees, as he also became a council member and a bailie. This pattern suggests that for craftsmen to be able to assist their children in accessing the college, they needed to be successful enough that they could stop physical craft work and access roles among the merchants and the council. It seems that there were not many men who were able to accomplish this. Meldrum also had links with another powerful group as he was a professor of divinity who joined the college late in life after having been involved in the church for many years. As a minister himself he may also have been able to muster support from this section of votes.

Of all those men employed by the town council over the first few centuries of the college, basically only three men had any links to the crafts. These appointments suggest that it was not enough to just be a member of a craft guild, but to be successful enough to be able to stop craft work and to become merchants and council members. This, together with holding connections in other areas, seems to be the only way that craftsmen could have children who would be accepted as regents and professors. The College of Edinburgh seemed ideally suited to favouring craftsmen and their families who wished to move into academia; this raises the question of why this process was so difficult, and therefore, uncommon. This kind of process seemed to have been working at Leiden University, but was largely absent from Edinburgh. These results suggest that something more complicated is occurring in Edinburgh than was originally supposed.
There was one other individual who was selected to be a professor at the University of Edinburgh and who had a very clear connection to the crafts; he became the Professor of Laws at the University of Edinburgh and his name was Adam Newton. His father, who was also named Adam Newton, was a burgess, a craftsman, and a member of a craft guild. The Professor’s father was working as a baker (or baxter, as they were referred to in Edinburgh at that stage).

It is quite likely that his father was in fact a deacon of the crafts also and involved with the early history of the college. Although it is difficult to confirm this, an episode in Maitland’s History of Edinburgh appears to illustrate that it could very well be so. Maitland mentions that prior to the opening of the college a petition was put to the Privy Council, ensuring that the new college would receive funding which had been left to it in Robert Reid’s will, and was being held by another; this was an event to which Maitland claims “the college of Edinburgh owes its Origin”. Among those who signed were the “Deykins of the craftis” including one “Adame Newtoun, Baxter”.

There are several significant things about the appointment of Adam Newton. Firstly, it is worth noting that he was employed as a Professor of Laws. Like several of the other men who had filled this position, Adam Newton never actually taught anything relating to the law, but instead gave lectures on the humanities. It was a short-lived professorship, whose creation and removal was described in chapter three; it was, understandably, soon replaced by a Professor of Humanity. Regardless of its tenuous links with the law, the position of ‘Professor of Laws’ had been partly founded by, and was still largely funded by, the Advocates and Writers to the Signet.

This allowed them a considerable vote in who was to be selected to fill the role, simultaneously reducing the percentage of voting power arising from the town council. In this particular instance, the advocates actually decided to disregard

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169 Ibid.
170 Ibid.
the town council altogether and independently choose someone who they thought was well suited for the position. This is one of the only examples of anyone outside of the town council ever having chosen who should be employed to a role in the college and they decided to pick the son of a craftsman. Within four years the town council had removed Adam Newton from the university as, although he had been teaching the subject well during this time, he had been selected for the job without their approval; they dismissed him regardless of his success in that position, which could imply two potential conclusions. One was that the town council was very jealous of its position relative to the college and was keen to ensure that they had sole control over who was to be appointed to the university. Secondly, it could be interpreted to mean that they were also not particularly happy with the advocate’s choice of professor. That is, not just that the advocates were wrong for making that type of decision without the Council’s input, but that they had also made what the council saw as the wrong decision, while the town council was not able to prevent it. If they had favoured the appointee, but nonetheless believed that the advocates should be discouraged from taking any future liberties, there are more direct ways that they could have chastised the advocates. Instead, they removed the professor from his job, effectively punishing him for a breach of procedure which he really had very little to do with, so that they could then work together with the advocates to replace him with another choice. Although it is speculation, it could be argued that both of these motivations were behind the council’s decision.

In any case, it still remains that one of the only sons of a burgess craftsman who was ever hired to the college was done so during one of the only times that the town council was denied any input into the matter. This individual was then removed from the college by the town council, without having committed any misdemeanour himself, as soon as it could be conveniently arranged. This can be seen as almost an exact opposite of the predicted outcome, as not only were craftsmen and their relatives poorly represented within the university, but they seemed to stand a better chance of being chosen when the town council, which
was filled by craftsmen and merchants, was not deciding who it was that should be selected.

It now appears that many aspects of these results were unexpected and require further explanation. Crucially, it seems important to ask why it was that the hiring choices at Edinburgh University were so different to those of Leiden, when the universities had much in common. The central difference between them lies neither in the college or its organisation, nor in those men seeking to apply for positions; the relevant point of distinction lies in the structures of Edinburgh itself.

Chapter 6: The Town Council of Edinburgh and the Craft Minority

Edinburgh initially appeared to be a very promising topic for researching whether craft networks were influencing a specific university, other than Leiden. This was reinforced by the fact the hiring of new staff members to the college was principally in the hands of a town council which was drawn exclusively from amongst Edinburgh burgess, a social grouping which was largely composed of craftsmen. As it turns out, however, there were aspects of the town’s structures which would have made it very challenging for a craftsman, or similar, to move from his own network into that of the university. The difficulty lies in Edinburgh’s complex system of social classes, its bitter rivalries and an unequal distribution of power which had been created and maintained over many years. In order to make sense of what is occurring at the college, this situation also need to be understood.

As has already been mentioned, Edinburgh was a royal burgh, allowing it privileges regarding trade and exports and giving it a financial edge over many other towns.171 As a result of which it had grown so that by the seventeenth

171 Davidson, Discovering, 34.
century it stood as a large and wealthy city. As a result of its high status and financial success influence and power in Edinburgh were sought strongly and guarded fiercely. These privileges and benefits were not, however, open to all the citizens of Edinburgh; they were reserved for a select body of individuals. The name ‘burgh’ had legal implications, indicating that a town would be granted privileges, but that these were only to be shared among an exclusive group of residents known as the burgess. The burgess, along with being the only people allowed to utilise those privileges granted to the city, were also the only people in the city who were eligible to vote in city elections, or be elected to positions in city politics. The idea that burgess should have some input over city politics and possess rights which were not granted to others was an idea with a long tradition in Scotland. Burgesses were also the only individuals who were permitted to work as merchants or craftsmen. The burgesses of Edinburgh only made up a small percentage of the city’s inhabitants, with it having been estimated that by 1688 they only made up, at most, 7% of the population. The rest of Edinburgh society was made up of the ‘unfreemen,’ those from which all of these privileges were withheld. These men were those who Michael Lynch called the ‘hidden majority’ of Edinburgh. Unable to work as craftsmen or merchants, many became journeymen, servants, apprentices and unskilled labourers.

172 Houston, Social Change, 1.
174 Davidson, Discovering, 34.
175 Ibid, 35.
176 Ibid.
178 Houston, Social Change, 5.
179 Davidson, Discovering, 35.
180 Ibid.
181 Lynch, Edinburgh and the Reformation, 52.
182 Ibid.
The burgess would usually be expected to pay for their burgess-ship in the form of a fee, as well as contributing to the taxes of the town.\textsuperscript{183} As they were required to meet these expenses in order to be allowed to work as craftsmen or merchants there was a strong incentive to make sure that they were the only ones who enjoyed those rights; this was done by discouraging any unfreemen who attempted to work in such a manner without approval.\textsuperscript{184} Both merchants and craftsmen sought to defend their monopolies and protect their burgess privileges in this way;\textsuperscript{185} this was often accomplished using legal means.\textsuperscript{186}

Within the burgess, the central division lay between the merchants and craftsmen of Edinburgh. As occurred in many other areas of Europe, a small powerful group of Edinburgh’s merchants had come together and organised themselves into a guild, largely as a means of coordinating their activities and protecting their rights and privileges as burgess. It also aimed to represent the interests of the merchants more generally and in all of these respects it proved to be very successful. The organising power of the guild allowed merchants to develop their wealth and position in Edinburgh.\textsuperscript{187} There was a great deal of variation in the wealth and power of individual merchants\textsuperscript{188} and, as might be expected, it was the wealthier more powerful merchants, the type of men first formed the guild, who achieved and gained the most through the guilds activities.

In gaining representatives among the city’s government the merchants were particularly successful.\textsuperscript{189} Only burgess could be elected to fill city positions, which meant that despite their wealth and numbers, the city’s professionals were automatically excluded. The craftsmen of Edinburgh were originally eligible to be elected, but did not share in the powerful position of the merchants. Their first

\textsuperscript{183} A.J.S. Gibson, \textit{Prices, Food and Wages}, 21.
\textsuperscript{184} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{185} Lynch, \textit{Edinburgh and the Reformation}, 49.
\textsuperscript{186} Gibson, \textit{Prices, Food and Wages}, 21.
\textsuperscript{188} Lynch, \textit{Edinburgh and the Reformation}, 53.
\textsuperscript{189} Houston, \textit{Social Change}, 6.
guild, or incorporation, was not formed until 1474, and the craftsmen were often far behind the merchants in terms of privileges and representation. In 1469 parliament passed acts allowing outgoing town councils to elect the incoming town council and establishing that four men of the old council were required to sit on the new. As Lynch notes, this had the effect of “concentrating power in the hands of merchant-dominated councils now able to re-elect themselves with impunity”, and forming what Jenny Wormald called an “unchallenged ruling oligarchy”. The manner in which merchants controlled burgh politics caused resentment among the craftsmen, who pushed for representation over the following centuries.

By 1538 there were two craftsmen accepted onto the town council. After some civil unrest it was eventually decided that an independent body should settle the matter, so in 1583 King James VI released his decree arbitral, which was responsible for “deciding all differences betwixt Merchants and Trades, anent the Government of the City of Edinburgh”. This has traditionally been seen as a win in the craftsman’s struggle for representation and power against the merchants, as it allowed them the highest level of representation on the town council which they had ever possessed. At the same time, however, it also removed their right to meet together as a craft without permission, which seriously undermined their ability to push for further changes in the future. It also ensured that, while there were now 8 craftsmen on the council, they would

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198 Decreet Arbitral.
always be held as a minority. The regular council would consist of 18 men, of whom 8 were craftsmen and 10 were merchants. None of the higher positions on the council could be held by craftsmen. For a craftsman to gain a higher position on the council, they needed to abandon the crafts entirely and become exclusively merchants themselves. While in office, not only were they not allowed to undertake any craftwork themselves, but they also were not allowed to own a craft business or let their employees do craftwork for them. Even once they had left the position, they were not permitted to return to craft work, without the express written permission of the council.

One aspect of the history of medieval and early modern Scotland largely which been given quite a lot of attention was the rivalries and competition between merchants and craftsmen; these encounters had been set up as an all-consuming conflict which divided towns and cities across the country. More recent historians, such as Michael Lynch, have now begun to call this explanation into question. Lynch argues that the terms merchant and craftsmen covered a range of different levels of success and influence and that as a result of this many merchants would have had little to do with such conflicts. He also makes the important observation that the disagreements between merchants and craftsmen only appear to be all-pervasive by disregarding the majority of the population, who were not burgess. These are helpful points to keep in mind, as they

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201 “The Counsel to consist of Ten Merchants, to wit, the auld Provost, Four auld Baillies, Dean of Gild, Thesaurer of the nixt year preceeding, and Three merchants to be chosen to them, and als to consist of Eight Crafts-men theirof Sex Deakens, and Twa uther Crafts-men, makand in the hail the said counsel Eighteen Persons.” (The council is to consist of ten merchants, to wit, the old provost [mayor], four old baillies [judges], Dean of Guild, Thesaurer [Treasurer] of the next year preceding, and three merchants to be chosen to them, and also to consist of eight craftsmen [including] six deacons and two other craftsmen, making in the whole the said council eighteen people.” The Sett, and Decreet Arbitral of King James VI, (Edinburgh: J. Wardlow, 1700) 10-11.

202 Decreet Arbitral, 10.
203 Ibid.
204 Ibid.
206 Lynch, Edinburgh and the Reformation.
207 Lynch, Edinburgh and the Reformation, 50.
208 Ibid, 52.
provide a useful context for the merchant and craftsmen interactions, which help to curb the overstatements which have sometimes occurred when discussing this area of history. Some recent historians seem to go even further, seeming to indicate that there weren’t serious conflicts between these groups, and that the apparent attempts to exclude craftsmen from either the merchant’s guild or burgh politics is the result of misunderstanding.

Lynch himself acknowledges that tensions existed between merchants and craftsmen, but argues that they were limited to specific groups and particular cities and that Scottish history at large should not be built around such disagreements. While merchants may not have all made up a united and cohesive group a small group of the wealthiest and most powerful did “fit the classic pattern”. These 150 or so men filled more than two thirds of the positions on the council and sought to maintain their prosperity and control over city politics. The craftsmen were the only other residents of the city who could have challenged these high-ranking merchants for political power and representation in Edinburgh. This is because they were the only other burgess, meaning that no other individuals were eligible for election.

Elizabeth Ewan argues that the merchant guild was not concerned with excluding craftsmen from the merchant guild, and instead focused on keeping out the unfreemen. As evidence for this, it is noted that “many burgesses combined the two roles of craftsmen and merchant”. While unfreemen were certainly prohibited from joining the guild, it was never easy for craftsmen to be accepted either. The only way that a craftsman would be accepted into the

209 Brown, Queen Mary.
211 Lynch, Spearman and Stell, Medieval Town, 264.
212 Houston, Social Change, 346.
214 Ibid.
215 Ewan, 233.
216 Ibid.
merchant guild was if they agreed to forevermore abstain from physically undertaking any craft work. This is obviously a difficult requirement for a craftsman and would appear to render the vast majority of craftsmen ineligible for membership. Some craftsmen did become successful enough that they could employ others to undertake all of their craftwork for them and these men could then qualify for acceptance into the merchant’s guild. This meant that this road to wealth and political representation was only open to a small group of the craft elite, who were able to afford to become merchants themselves.

It was a similar story in burgh politics. In the sixteenth century half of the craft guilds were not permitted to have any representation on the council. The council were keen to ensure that these restrictions were never loosened to allow more craftsmen access to council positions. For those few successful craftsmen who could be accepted into a position on the council, they were heavily outnumbered by merchants and legally prevented from acceptance into any of the higher positions.

From the perspective of an individual from a craft background relying on the merchant dominated town council to move them into a position at the university, it seems clear that the social structure of the town, and the nature and power balance within the town council would not have made this an easy task to accomplish. This is true even acknowledging the fact that craftsmen had more power and representation on the council and in town life than they had ever had before. Although there are still many regents unaccounted for, whose parents may have been able to gain access to the university through craft networks and connections, it seems likely that during the time of this study, craftsmen would have either not belonged to a profession fortunate enough to have formed a guild, or else were in no real position to be appointing members to university positions anyway.

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218 Ibid.
Merchants, with more powerful positions and a majority vote on their side, would have been better placed to utilise networks in that way. This could help to account for the fact that more men with merchant backgrounds had been given positions at the university than craftsmen, although they are still not particularly well-represented. It could be the case that, as there seems to have been a large number of groups interested in appointing men to these few positions, there were often considerations for council members beyond their personal bonds; even merchants on the council had some difficulty appointing relatives to such positions. Those few men with craft backgrounds who were accepted to teach at the university often had parents who were also merchants, or became merchants, and had successfully gained positions on the council itself. It was rare enough for the craftsmen on the council to gain such positions for their own relatives; it seems that they would have been unable to assist the lower members of their fraternity in this regard, even if they had any particular desire to do so. There were also groups such as the ministers and advocates, whose votes also needed to be taken into consideration. This situation makes it easier to see why networks involving the craft guilds were not allowing craftsmen into Edinburgh University, unless they were among those lucky few who had relatives on the council itself.

Although craft networks do not seem to have been operating to bring members of its ranks into the University of Edinburgh, the potential for this type of movement is still highlighted. In this particular case, there seems to be factors which are specific to the history of Edinburgh which are preventing this type of transfer across networks from occurring, but even in this situation there were a few individuals from craft backgrounds whose parent’s craft background had paved their way to an academic career, this was achieved by owning a successful craft business which transitioned into a merchant career. Crafts and merchants did often end up competing for power and representation; if craftsmen had have been more equally represented on the town council then their potential to engage in this type of networking may have been greater. With sufficient representation on the council the craftsmen could have been in the same dominant position
which the merchants held, or may have cooperated with other groups to secure their success, as the merchants and ministers did with the resignation of Charteris. It does seem, however, that even the merchants of Edinburgh had not been able to secure a great number of positions within the university for its members. Edinburgh was a unique town and, as a result of its prominence, factors such as the competition between groups for power seem to have often been more pronounced than in other areas. While craftsmen and merchants had difficulty in having their connections accepted into Edinburgh University as teaching staff, it is still quite reasonable to believe that craft networks involved with other institutions may have had no such difficulties restricting their function. By conducting similar studies in other areas hopefully a better understanding can be developed of the influences that these types of networks were having on the academic environment of universities and colleges during the early modern period.

Chapter 7: High schools and opportunities amongst the burgess of Edinburgh

The results of the prosopography illustrate that while men from a wide range of family backgrounds were being hired to teach as regents and professors within the University of Edinburgh, there were very few individuals arising from a craft background who were being chosen to fill these academic roles. An explanation for this has been suggested, namely that the rivalry and intense animosity between the craftsmen and the merchants was responsible. The merchants held a dominant position within the town council, possessing a majority of voting members and filling all of the higher positions. The town council, as the major patron to the university, was chiefly responsible for employing new staff members; no university staff were to be chosen without their approval, unless directly hired by the monarch. I would suggest that it was this specific situation
that was preventing the other craftsmen on the council from allowing their connections to access positions at the university. At this stage it becomes important to consider an alternate explanation which could equally account for the lack of craftsmen in teaching positions, when the sons of merchants had successfully been employed.

As has already been established, there was quite a strenuous application process involved in becoming a professor or regent; one which was necessarily challenging, considering the onerous demands of the position. The most demanding aspect of this trial involved discussing classic texts and debating with other applicants; this could take several days and was to be conducted strictly in Latin. This reflected the fundamental requirements of the job, as the vast majority of classes and lectures were to be given in Latin. Given that a high degree of Latin fluency was a prerequisite for undertaking this type of career, could it be that the sons of craftsmen had simply not received the level of early education necessary to converse in Latin fluently. Many people did not receive any language education at all during this time and becoming competent in Latin was more advanced study than learning basic English. It is unfortunate for trying to uncover whether craftsmen did have the necessary level of education to complete the application process, that only a small selection of the names of unsuccessful applicants for university positions was ever recorded. The few men from craft backgrounds who were accepted into the university do provide evidence that at least some of the children of craftsmen were receiving a Latin education, but it may be the case that these few were exceptions and for most individuals with a craft background this was still the limiting factor. By establishing the level of education available to the majority of craftsmen's children it will be easier to determine whether they were being trained in skills, such as Latin, which would have been a necessity to be hired to the university. This will help us to establish whether these men were unqualified to work at the university, or were simply overlooked by the merchant dominated council.
The importance of education for the young had long been acknowledged in Scotland, with many groups attempting measures to get children into schools. As early as 1496 King James IV had brought in an act encouraging the higher classes of Scotland, including the burgess, to “put their eldest sonnis and airis to the sculis”. They were to be enrolled at eight or nine years of age and continue these studies until "thai be competentlie foundit and have perfite Latyn". This was an attempt to increase justice throughout Scotland, by ensuring that judges were all well-educated. In some ways this may have been quite successful; although it is confused by the fact that although King James' act included a fine of twenty pounds for those who failed to comply, there is no evidence that this was ever actually enforced or that anyone ever paid this fine. In any case, it highlights that there was an interest in encouraging school attendance in Scotland during this time. In the seventeenth century the Privy Council also attempted to stimulate education, by creating two acts in 1616. One was to implement the building of schools in any parish that could support it, with the second requiring that the children of wealthier families were to be sent to be educated when they were nine years old and also suggesting that inheritance should not be passed on until basic English literacy had been acquired. These efforts appear to have been in vain, as financial difficulties prevented these goals from being realised. That they were suggested illustrates an ongoing interest in increasing the standard of education being received by children in Scotland.

Education was something which was deemed very important to the protestant church, as they realising that as well as helping to create future churchmen, it could be an important instrument for propagating morality in the next generation. This is reflected in the work of Knox and the reformers in encouraging education, with the first book of discipline stressing the importance

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219 [put their eldest sons and heirs to the schools] “King James IV legislation 1496”, Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707, Accessed 17 December 2013, http://www.rps.ac.uk/
220 [they be competently instructed and have perfect Latin] Ibid.
222 Stewart, Story, p. 52.
223 Todd, Culture of Protestantism, 24-5.
of the "vertuous education, and godly up-bringing of the youth of this realme" and recommending that "every severall kirk have one schoolmaister appointed, such a one at least as is able to teach Grammer, and the Latine tongue, if the town be of any reputation". As it turned out, during the Reformation insufficient resources could be gained from the old church to finance the plans of the new. Compromises needed to be made to deal with funding difficulties and the recommendations outlined in the first book of discipline were never adopted in full.

Despite the many attempts to foster education in Scotland and to encourage attendance, illiteracy rates still seem to have been high; many were unable to read and write in English, let alone possess the Latin skill which would be required of a craftsman's son if he was attempting to work at the University. Rab Houston argued that the positive claims often made about the success of Scottish education during this time are misleading; he conducted a study into Scottish literacy, which claimed that for adult males during the seventeenth century, illiteracy rates would be roughly 75%, and that if anything this was most likely to be a minimum. This rough guide suggests that the vast majority of people living in Scotland would not have had the necessary English education to write their own names; less would have received training in Latin. Many individuals would have found a lack of early education one significant factor preventing them from being employed by a university. There was also another interesting result of the study: illiteracy rates were generally lower in those burghs which were more economically developed and which possessed an assortment of different occupations. Houston argued that this was most likely because these places held a relatively large number of individuals in 'literate occupations,'

225 Ibid.
226 This figure was based on each individual’s ability to write their own names.
227 Ibid, 88.
228 Ibid, 87.
including merchants, craftsmen and professionals. Edinburgh was, in fact, an anomaly due to its having such high numbers of those from literate professions, including a strong representation of craftsmen. Edinburgh had particularly low illiteracy rates, which set it apart from other Scottish cities during the 1600s. As well as this, craftsmen were involved in a literate profession, requiring some degree of reading and writing skills for success. It therefore seems very likely that the sons of craftsmen in Edinburgh had a good chance of receiving at least a basic English education, a chance not granted to the majority of children in Scotland at this time. Be that as it may, this doesn’t necessarily mean that they would also be schooled in Latin education, which may be less practical in their day to day work. Yet craftsmen were not ordinary residents in Edinburgh; they were among the burgess. This means that whenever the town council sought to increase the education standards for the upper class in Edinburgh, they too were included.

In Edinburgh during 1579, the teachers of the town’s high school, and the master of the school, complained of the ‘ingratitude’ of the city’s parents and threatened to leave to a more rewarding area, if the parents of the area weren’t encouraged to pay reasonable rates for each student. In introducing legislation allowing this, the council noted the importance of education and the hurt which would have been done to the burgh by its lacking a high school.

The principal school in Edinburgh was the High School of Edinburgh, later renamed the Royal High School. When Hercules Rollock was hired to lead the school, he attempted to reinvigorate the institution and once more boost learning within the burgh. In a move to support his endeavour, the town council decided that the high school, under the care of Rollock, should be made the only Grammar school in Edinburgh. They moved that “all uther grāmer scholes

\footnotesize
229 Ibid.
230 Ibid.
232 Ibid.
within this burt be visetet and dischairget”.\(^{233}\) It is interesting to note that the town council of Edinburgh increased the number craftsmen’s children, along with the other burgess and nobility of Edinburgh, who were attend school in the area not by increasing the number of schools, but whilst restricting them.

Even at this point in time schools were only tolerated that had been sanctioned by those in authority.\(^ {234}\) As George Stewart pointed out, it is an unusual situation that, at a time when there was a push to encourage schools and education in Scotland, any sufficiently educated man who wished to found a new school in which they could teach would generally be prevented from doing so.\(^ {235}\) This may have been because they understood the power of education; even when just learning English or Latin, the allegiances and principles of the teacher were important. It wasn’t simply a matter of education needing to be encouraged, but the orthodox approved kinds of education. Having fewer schools made it easier for them to be monitored and regulated. On the other hand, it could be that this policy was not entirely concerned with stimulating appropriately orthodox education in Scotland, but may have represented a move by the town councils to ensure that the schools which they managed were well-frequented and successful.\(^ {236}\) If this is true, then the discouragement and closure of other schools may have also been a way to eliminate the competition.

If this wasn’t enough encouragement to ensure that the school would be highly attended, they also demanded that fees would need to be paid to Rollock for any child who was sent to any other grammar school outside of Edinburgh; the act read that “all burgesses of this burt haivin their childrein in hous with thame be dischairget fra putting or retening thaire bairnis [children] at any uther schole for


\(^{235}\) Stewart, \textit{Story}, 7.

\(^{236}\) Kerr, \textit{Education}, 84.
lerning of gramer except the said hie schole within certane dayes under ane
amand to be payet to the said M. Hercules everie quarter for everie bairne
utherways teache”. 237 James Scotland argues that this monopoly on schools
must not have been successful, as just two years later, in 1586, masters of ten
lecture schools in the area were “called in and admonished to ‘teach soberly’”, 238
indicating that other schools were still permitted to function within the burgh.
This confusion might stem from a misunderstanding of the different categories of
school which existed in Edinburgh at this time, divided into categories based on
how they were financially supported, the age of their students and what they
were permitted to teach.

Each type of school possessed its own area of learning which they alone were
allowed to teach. The ten school masters who had been called on to visit the town
council were from ‘lecture schools’, which were sometimes referred to as English
schools; these were “where the rudiments of reading, spelling and counting were
taught”. 239 In the act of the town council, however, one section refers to “grāmer
scholes” and another to “any uther schole for lerning of gramer”. When grammar
schools are mentioned in Edinburgh during this time they are not referring to
English language. The Grammar schools, also called high schools, “existed to
teach Latin Grammar”. 240 These were institutions in which children would be
enrolled only after earlier education, such as at a lecture school. Lecture schools
did sometimes try and encroach on the territory of the Grammar schools by
teaching subjects such as Latin, just as the high schools were sometimes tempted
to teach the subjects reserved for the universities; each institution was usually
quite fierce in defending their own intellectual realm, however, so most such
attempts were quickly discouraged. Understanding the differences between these

238 Scotland, The History, 80.
240 Law, Education in Edinburgh, 30.
different types of school not only makes sense of J. Scotland’s confusion, but also highlights something of interest for our topic; the burgess of Edinburgh were all forced to send their children to one specific school and as it was a grammar school it strictly taught how to read and write Latin. This seems to suggest that the sons of craftsmen, as the children of burgess, would most likely have learnt to write and speak Latin.

It is also important to note that, unlike many of the other attempts to legislate a change in educational practices, these seem to have actually been enforced. Restricting the teaching of Latin in Edinburgh to a single school does seem to have occurred. An example of this was the case of George Haisty who, in 1589 was asked by the council “to desist and ceise fra all teacheing of ony grammer within the liberty and fredome of this burgh in tyme cuming, inrespekt of the privilege grantet to maister Hercules Rollok, principall maister of the Grammer schole of this burgh”.

As a result of the high levels of attendance at the school they were able to support the most teaching staff of any high school in the country.

The high school of Edinburgh was not only visited by local children, but had long been frequented by sons of upper class families from across the country. These “boys of noble families, or of the landed gentry, many of whom lived part of the year in Edinburgh, were accustomed to attend the High School along with the sons of burgesses”. This situation allowed the sons of craftsmen to receive a Latin education as comprehensive and well regarded as that of the most highly esteemed families in the country. By making it mandatory for burgess to enrol their unoccupied children in this school more craftsmen’s sons were able to access this opportunity than at any time previous. Their chance of the children of the burgess receiving an education as complete as any other was increased by the

242 Scotland, The History, 81.
243 Law, Education in Edinburgh, 60.
lack of segregation within the school. There was no separation at all based on class or social background and burgess and nobility all took classes together. As Scotland wrote, “the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were the heyday of “democracy” in the burgh schools, and many witnesses write of the fact that laird’s sons and labourers sat side by side. One speaking of Edinburgh high school at the end of the eighteenth century remarked ‘I used to sit between a youth of a ducal family and the son of a poor cobbler’”. 244 This suggests that even the poorer burgess were being given the chance to be educated in Latin.

With even the less financially successful burgess sending their sons out to get a Latin education, the majority at the high school of Edinburgh, an aspect of this research is clarified. It seems that the sons of craftsmen would have received a high level of early education, including having been taught Latin; they would at least have had a similar standard of skills and education to the merchant’s children who were accepted to teach at the college, including a reasonable level of Latinity. This allows us to be more confident in our original conclusion, as the separation between applicants bearing merchant or craftsmen parents is not to be found here, in the early educational opportunities which they received.

Chapter 8: Shifting networks and the city of Edinburgh

The craftsmen and artisans of Edinburgh appeared to be in an ideal situation to be able to move a member of their own company, or the son of such a member, into a teaching position at one of the most esteemed educational institutions in the country. They, along with the merchants of the city, were the main patrons of the college and so shared almost complete power over the university; they were involved with basically all hiring decisions.

Despite this, very few regents or professors at the University of Edinburgh had fathers who were craftsmen; not only this, but the few who were seemed to have gained their roles in ways which did not in any part involve a connection to the crafts. It could have been assumed that craftsmen were simply lacking the

244 Scotland, The History, 80.
educational background or specific skills to qualify for such a role. In actual fact these men and their offspring had, as a result of their burgess status, received sufficient education to undertake such a position, being educated alongside the children of some of country’s wealthiest and most illustrious men. It could be that these individuals simply lacked the inclination to work at the university; this would raise the question of why they were not, when so many others were keen to use their influence and connections to do so. These were prestigious positions which were well paid, so there is no immediately obvious explanation as to why this should be the case.

One possible explanation for why this particular type of favouritism seemed to rarely occur in Edinburgh, which has been outlined in this thesis, was that the ongoing struggle between the merchants and the craftsmen of Edinburgh for power in the had created a situation where the two groups were disinclined to favour the advancement of the other. In this way, the benefit gained from having friends and connections on the voting panel was largely nullified by also having rivals within the same group. This was a process which may have also had a similar, although less formidable effect on the merchants of Edinburgh, helping to explain why, although they were more successful than the craftsmen in having their connections and relatives chosen, potentially as a result of having more voting members on the council, it was still a relatively small selection. If this interpretation is correct then applicants with no direct connection to merchants or craftsmen, but with other points in their favour, beyond academic excellence may be in a better position than a craftsmen or merchant, even if they had connections within the council. This could help to account for the fact that, while connections to the crafts or merchants seldom seemed to have any effect on hiring practices, connections with the upper classes or specific illustrious individuals, and their recommendation of that applicant to the council, was a recurring theme in the election of new staff.

In the beginning of this thesis it was suggested that the corruption which was known to be prevalent in Edinburgh University could stand as a factor which
may have indicated that merchants and craftsmen would be able to use their connections to access positions within the college. One of the only safeguards in place to prevent men from being chosen for many reasons beyond academic ability was the comparative trials. Even then these trials, which could be circumvented by the council if desired, were abandoned by 1703. Craftsmen and merchants seemed to be in a good position to utilise this situation. In actual fact the merchants and craftsmen had relatively few of their offspring accepted as regents or professors and the high level of corruption at the college seems to have been one reason for this.

Edinburgh University had so many factors biasing the council’s decisions that this particular type of influence, based on a connection with the merchants and craftsmen of the town, had to compete with them all for acceptance. If the town council was generally immune to this type of pressure and the effect of merchants and craftsmen’s connections was one of the few influences which they paid attention to, then the university may have been filled with the sons and relations of merchants and craftsmen. As it was, so many different groups were attempting to manipulate the council’s choice that the hiring of fellow merchants and craftsmen were drowned out by the lobbying of others.

It should also be remembered that individual connections and academic prowess were not the only considerations which had to be taken into account when it came to deciding on new staff members for the college. Increasingly the political and religious orthodoxy of an applicant became the most important factor in deciding who was to be chosen. Careers were formed and finished on the basis of a staff member’s religious or political beliefs; particularly if they committed them to writing, or refused to take an oath of allegiance. The constant shuffling of staff into and out of the university based on whichever style of church governance was in charge at the time further increases the confusion around which applicants were to be hired; in this climate it becomes easier to see why these groups, and especially craftsmen who had a voting minority in any case, may

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245 Emerson, *Patronage*, 337.
have found it difficult to further the interests of their own specific group at the
university.

This study also suggests that the scientific success of the University of Edinburgh
did not stem from the hiring of artisans or craftsmen, or their sons, to academic
posts. This is not to say that this process was not affecting other universities; as
we’ve mentioned, in Leiden there is compelling evidence that it was. Nor does it
mean that this type of situation had no part to play in the formation of early
modern science. It was noted towards the beginning of this thesis that to uncover
how widespread and influential that type of network overlap may have been
during this time similar studies would need to be conducted in a range of
different universities. One of the things highlighted by this study is that artisans,
even reasonably powerful, successful or influential ones, will find it difficult to
make this transition into academia if they are competing against other groups
and individuals with similar aims or are dependent on their rivals to do so. Even
though it seemed to be an almost perfect situation for the craftsmen, the lack of
cooperation between them and the merchants of Edinburgh seemed to have
stymied either group’s chances of bringing more than a few representatives into
the university.

The Zilsel thesis, including its more recent versions, contends that it was the
coming together of academics and the craftsman which allowed early modern
science to be created. In the city of Edinburgh there was a situation where
craftsmen did have a chance, albeit a slim one, of having their children accepted
to teach at a university. Their children were, in a sense, a blending of scholar and
craftsman. This is not, however, the type of situation which these historians had
in mind, as there is one important requisite which is not being met. Zilsel
contended that it was the breaking down of the social barriers between scholars
and craftsmen which facilitated the formation of early science. While craftsmen
could be placed in a situation on the town council where they had some influence
on who was elected to work at the university, they were first required to
permanently abandon manual labour. This division between manual and non-
manual work had not become blurred, but was still being rigorously upheld. Craftsmen could become more like scholars, but scholars were not becoming more like craftsmen. As such, even despite those individuals who came from craft families and worked in the universities, there was still no real blending between these two occupations. One of the key distinctions between them, the use and avoidance of manual labour, was still carefully maintained. For early modern science to form, these social limitations first needed to be relaxed or removed. Craft networks do seem to have the potential to connect craft families with academia, but this alone is insufficient unless these other conditions are satisfied.

By conducting this type of study in other European university towns, where social distinctions based on physical work were less rigidly enforced, we will hopefully be able to develop a better understanding of the effect that craft networks may have had on the emergence of early modern science.
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### Appendix A: Regents and Professors of Edinburgh University, 1583-1750

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date &amp; place of Birth</th>
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<td>John MacLaurin (1658 - 1698) From 9 years old, Colin was raised by his uncle, Daniel MacLaurin, also a minister</td>
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<td>Sutherland, James</td>
<td>b. 1638</td>
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<td>Sir Robert Preston</td>
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<td>Preston, George</td>
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<td>Alston, Charles</td>
<td>b. 1685, Eddlewood, in the Parish of Hamilton, Lanarkshire</td>
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<td>Halket, James</td>
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<td>Father</td>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Year</td>
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<td>1726</td>
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<td>Gavin Plummer</td>
<td>A prosperous merchant and later (1708-9) treasurer to the Town Council</td>
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<td>Advocate</td>
<td>1747</td>
<td>Medicine: Institutes of Medicine</td>
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</table>

Notes

+ indicates that the individual is repeated elsewhere in the list.

Abbreviations


Burke P&B: Burke's Peerage and Baronetage

ChamBD: Chambers, Robert, Biographical Dictionary

ColtGen: Colt, George, History and Genealogy of the Colts of that Ilk and Gartsherrie, and of the English and American branches of that family. 1887

DalHist.: Dalzel, Andrew, History of the University of Edinburgh from its Foundations, Vol 1-3, Edmonston & Douglas, Edinburgh, 1862

DNB: Dictionary of National Biography


GiW: Bell, John, Grapes in the Wilderness, Edinburgh, 1680.

GrantHist: Grant, (Sir) Alexander, The story of the University of Edinburgh during its first three hundred years, two volumes, Longmans, Green, and co., 1884

MarAb: Officers of the Marischal College and University of Aberdeen, 1593 - 1860, University Press, 1897.


Hiring practices and craftsmen at the University of Edinburgh, 1583 - 1750

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Mitchell, Aaron Geoffrey

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