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978-0-521-88057-2 - Union and Unionisms: Political Thought in Scotland,
1500-2000

Colin Kidd

Frontmatter

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Union and Unionisms

Although the dominant political ideology in Scotland between 1707 and the present, unionism has suffered serious neglect. One of the most distinguished Scottish historians of our time looks afresh at this central theme in Britain's history, politics and law, and traces the history of Scottish unionist ideas from the early sixteenth century to the present day. Colin Kidd demonstrates that unionism had impeccably indigenous origins long predating the Union of 1707, and that it emerged in reaction to the English vision of Britain as an empire. Far from being the antithesis of nationalism, modern Scottish unionism has largely occupied a middle ground between the extremes of assimilation to England or separation from it. Nor is unionism a simple ideology to interpret: at its most articulate, Scottish unionism championed the British-Irish Union of 1800, not the uncontroversial Anglo-Scottish Union of 1707. At a time when the future of the Anglo-Scottish union is under scrutiny as never before, its history demands Colin Kidd's lucid and cogent examination, which will doubtless generate intense and profound debate, both within Scotland and beyond.

COLIN KIDD is Professor of Modern History at the University of Glasgow, and Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford. His previous publications include *Subverting Scotland's past* (1993), *British identities before nationalism* (1999) and *The forging of races* (2006).

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[More information](#)

CONTENTS

- Preface [vii]
- 1 Introduction: the problems of Unionism and banal unionism [1]
 - 2 Unionisms before Union, 1500–1707 [39]
 - 3 Analytic unionism and the issue of sovereignty [81]
 - 4 Narratives of belonging: the history and ethnology of organic union [134]
 - 5 From assimilationist jurisprudence to legal nationalism [173]
 - 6 The two kingdoms and the ecclesiology of Union [211]
 - 7 Early nationalism as a form of unionism [257]
 - 8 Conclusion [300]
- Index [305]

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PREFACE

The purpose of this book is not to produce a comprehensive history of Scottish unionism as a political phenomenon, but to offer a taxonomy of Scottish unionist discourses from the vantage point of the historian of political thought. Indeed, the book is an expanded version of the Carlyle Lectures in the History of Political Thought given in the University of Oxford during Hilary Term 2006 under the title, ‘The varieties of unionism in Scottish political thought, 1707–1974’. I am grateful to the Carlyle Electors for their invitation, and particularly to George Garnett, who organised the social side of things, including the Carlyle Dinner, and to Peter Ghosh, who steered me towards the neglected topic of Scottish unionism. I also feel an enormous debt to the Warden and Fellows of All Souls who took the opportunity presented by the Carlyle Lectures to rescue me from a prolonged period of quondamnation. Several Fellows of the College were staunch supporters of the lecture series, and I owe special thanks to the political scientists, Peter Pulzer and Chris Hood, for congenial discussions of problems beyond the immediate ken of the historian, to Fergus Millar for generous support on several fronts and to Charles and Carol Webster and the wider Webster family for their kindness and hospitality. Elsewhere in Oxford John Robertson and Brian Young welcomed my participation in the wider life of the University, and I have very fond memories of the seminars at the Voltaire Foundation. Back in Glasgow, I should like to thank my

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[More information](#)

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Heads of Department, Thomas Munck and Don Spaeth, and my teaching colleagues, Martin MacGregor and Irene Maver, for their indulgence of my lecturing jaunts to Oxford. I should also like to thank Dauvit Broun for discussions over many years on the origins of Scottish political thought, Karin Bowie for conversations on the Union itself and Gerry Carruthers for insights into the Scottish literary tradition. I also owe a special debt to my colleagues in Law at Glasgow, especially Lindsay Farmer who first showed me several years ago how one might put together a lecture series on this topic and who read a couple of chapters in draft, Adam Tomkins, Tom Mullen, Scott Veitch, John Finlay, Ernie Metzger and Mark Godfrey. Furth of Glasgow John Cairns, Paul Brand, Clare Jackson and Kenneth Campbell have been helpful in matters juridical. I owe a special debt of thanks to Ewen Cameron of the University of Edinburgh for his kind offer to read the entire text in draft. Roger Mason read chapter 2, which is profoundly indebted to his own pioneering work in this field. Any mistakes that remain are entirely my responsibility. It has been an unalloyed pleasure to work with Richard Fisher at Cambridge University Press. I should also like to thank Teresa Lewis, Rosanna Christian, Jo Breeze and Linda Randall at Cambridge University Press for their various endeavours. Valerie Wallace did another splendid job on the index. Lucy, Susan and Adam tolerated – or perhaps relished – my absences, though they also made a trip to Oxford over half-term, and I am grateful to all those people who made them most welcome in Oxford. My daughter's first question on arrival at All Souls was: 'Does this College have cheerleaders?' Special thanks, therefore, to Gerry Cohen who improvised an All Souls cheerleaders' routine to amuse my children.

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The text of this book had been completed and I was tinkering with footnotes and the like when in the summer of 2007 I experienced a brain haemorrhage. I was overwhelmed by the messages of support I received from so many quarters, and I should like to thank family, friends and colleagues for their kindness during that difficult period. To two of my hospital visitors I already had enormous obligations stretching back over thirty years: to my cousin, David McIver, who hosted my first visits to the archives in Edinburgh, and to my former Latin teacher at Glasgow Academy, Vic Hadcroft.

My father, George W. Kidd, died suddenly a few months after the lectures were delivered. He did good by stealth; possessed a fund of fine jokes, which he knew how to tell; and had a boundless enjoyment of the antics of animals, babies and small children. This book is dedicated to his memory.