

A Grave Decent Gown: The 1690 Glasgow Gown Order

By Neil K. Dickson

In the year 1690, in the midst of a turbulent period in its history, the University of Glasgow ordered gowns for two of its officers. I had been aware of that for some years¹ but was recently surprised to learn through social media² that the invoice for these gowns is in the University's archives.³ The invoice (Fig. 1) enables us to examine the designs of the gowns in detail, to see how they influenced academic dress at the University right down to the present day, and to understand the political statement they made at the time, when newly appointed officers were seeking to exercise their authority in the context of a changed national political scene.

The Gown Order

On 11 December 1690 the Senate of the University of Glasgow 'Ordered that a grave decent gown be made for the Deans of faculty of this university to be kept peculiarly for them to be worn on solemn occasions, and the gown now worn by the Rector to have on it some marks of distinction becoming a magistrate.'⁴

The University had—and still has—a single post called variously over time the dean of faculty or dean of faculties. This order is therefore for an official gown for the exclusive use of the person holding the post of dean of faculty in 1690 and his successors. It also tells us that there already existed an official gown for the rector, which was to have embellishments added to it 'becoming' (appropriate for) a magistrate.⁵ The rector was indeed a magistrate: he presided over the Rector's Court that dealt with disciplinary cases, and also at that date still claimed jurisdiction over criminal and civil cases involving members of the University to the exclusion of the local magistrates.⁶

1 I referred to it on p. 24 of Neil Dickson, 'Tradition and Humour: The Academic Dress of the University of Glasgow', *TBS*, 12 (2012), pp. 10–35, at <newprairiepress.org/burgonsociety> <https://doi.org/10.4148/2475-7799.1097>, where I cited as source Cosmo Innes (ed.), *Munimenta Alme Universitatis Glasguensis: Records of the University of Glasgow, from its Foundation till 1727*, 4 vols (Glasgow: Maitland Club, 1854), Vol. II, p. 350. Innes is available in electronic form from the National Library of Scotland <www.nls.uk> [retrieved 17 October 2020] and the original records to which it refers are in University of Glasgow Archives and Special Collections.

2 Tweet by Robert MacLean on 13 November 2019: <twitter.com/bob_maclean/status/1194700447245832200?s=20> [retrieved 17 October 2020].

3 GB248 GUA43599. (All reference numbers in this article beginning GB248 are for items in University of Glasgow Archives and Special Collections.)

4 Innes, Vol. II, p. 350.

5 For other evidence of the existence of a gown for the rector at that date and earlier see p. 52 of Jonathan C. Cooper, 'The Dress of Rectors at the Scottish Universities', *TBS*, 12 (2012), pp. 46–62, <https://doi.org/10.4148/2475-7799.1099>.

6 James Coutts, *A History of the University of Glasgow from its Foundation in 1451 to 1909* (Glasgow: James Maclehose & Sons, 1909) p. 13; J. D. Mackie, *The University of Glasgow 1451–1951* (Glasgow: Jackson, Son & Company, 1954) p. 205; Roger L. Emerson, *Academic Patronage in the*

The order having been placed, work on the gowns proceeded quickly, and the invoice is dated 27 December 1690. Thomas Pollock the tailor was however kept waiting for payment. The invoice is endorsed with an instruction to pay by Principal William Dunlop dated 13 April 1691 and a receipt from Thomas Pollock dated 23 April 1691. The payment is also recorded in Principal Dunlop's accounts, where it is described as 'for making ane black gown for the Deans of Faculty and for charging the Rectors gown with gold buttons silke stufte and other furnishing'.⁷

The designs of the gowns

A transcription and analysis of the invoice are in Appendix A and Appendix B at the end of this article. From these it is clear that the gowns had matching designs with velvet collars, the main difference between them being that the ornamentation on the rector's gown was mostly gold (appropriate for a magistrate) while the ornamentation on the dean of faculty's gown was entirely black silk.⁸ The neck buttons suggest that both gowns were intended to be worn closed, that is fastened at the neck. The quantity of ornamentation is surprising: the rector's gown has five dozen (sixty) ornaments which I shall call frogs, consisting of a barrel-shaped button with loops either side of it, and twelve drops, while the Dean's gown has sixty-six frogs.

The University of Glasgow's portrait of John Orr of Barrowfield, who was elected rector in 1731, is of assistance (Fig. 2).⁹ The gown he is wearing could be the gown made in 1690. It certainly fits the description. We can see the velvet collar. We cannot see if there is a neck button because it would be beneath his scarf, nor can we see if there are any drops, the problem being that the invoice implies they were black which could make them difficult to see on a black gown. We can, however, clearly see large numbers of gold frogs—seventeen on the right sleeve alone. Indeed, given the configuration of them on the front of his gown, there could easily be more than sixty in total.

The influence of the gowns

The 1690 gowns have influenced academic dress at the University of Glasgow right down to the present day.

The current rector's gown is a direct descendent of the 1690 rector's gown. Over time the gold frogs have become larger in size and fewer in number. They have also changed shape and materials. A sketch of *c.* 1840 shows the rector's gown as having twenty-eight frogs (seven on the left and right fronts of the gown and on each sleeve) and instead of barrel-shaped buttons with gold loops the frogs appear to be strips of gold braid with tassels.¹⁰ A sketch of 1868 (Fig. 3) shows the frogs as gold rectangular panels with tassels.¹¹ The gold

Scottish Enlightenment: Glasgow, Edinburgh and St Andrews Universities (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008) p. 22.

⁷ Innes, Vol. III, p. 582; GB248 GUA26749.

⁸ See Cooper, pp. 48–49 for a discussion of the ornamentation considered appropriate for a magistrate.

⁹ This is the portrait referred to in Cooper, p. 52.

¹⁰ University of Glasgow, Special Collections, MS Murray 593, which is reproduced in Cooper, p. 47.

¹¹ Fig. 3 is a sketch by an unknown artist of the Prince of Wales receiving an honorary degree on 8 October 1868 reproduced in David Murray, *Memories of the Old College of Glasgow* (Glasgow:



Historic Environment Scotland (SCRAN image 000-000-145-808-R)

Fig. 2. John Orr of Barrowfield (Rector) 1732.



Artist unknown

Fig. 3. The Prince of Wales Receiving an Honorary Degree 1868.

rectangular panels evolved into the current fairly plain design by 1899.¹² The 1868 sketch and 1899 photograph also show that the velvet collar had greatly increased in size and prominence, and had acquired a gold fringe, but *c.* 1908 the collar was replaced by the current design, which is a square flap collar. It is made of the same material as the body of the gown, edged in gold, and matches the design of the collar on the vice-chancellor's gown.¹³

The current gown of the dean of faculties (as the post is now styled) is a direct descendent of the 1690 gown of the dean of faculty. In examining the changes over the years it is

Jackson, Wylie & Co, 1927), opposite p. 594. The rector is fourth from the left.

¹² Photograph of Lord Rosebery and Robert Story <www.universitystory.gla.ac.uk/images/UGSP00385.jpg> [retrieved 17 October 2020].

¹³ Dickson, 'Tradition and Humour', p. 24.

also necessary to consider the gowns worn by the principal and professors in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which were of the same general design, and which I discussed in a previous article.¹⁴ This raises a question. Was the design of the 1690 dean of faculty's gown influenced by the gowns that the principal and professors were wearing at that date, or was it the other way round with the designs of the principal's and professors' gowns developing from the 1690 dean of faculty's gown? The problem is that no detailed evidence has yet come to light as to what gowns the regents, professors and principal were wearing around 1690, other than that they appear to have been black.¹⁵

Portraits, engravings and photographs do, however, show how the designs of the gowns of the dean of faculty, principal and professors developed. As with the rector's gown, the frogs became larger in size, fewer in number and changed shape and materials. A series of photographs taken in 1870 shows considerable variation in the number of frogs on the principal's and professors' gowns, from none at all to approximately forty in the case of Principal Barclay's gown, which is far short of the sixty-six on the 1690 dean of faculty's gown.¹⁶ As Principal Barclay's gown is densely covered by the frogs this gives some indication of the increase in their size.

The velvet collar on the gowns of the dean of faculty, principal and professors was quite small and neat in the middle of the eighteenth century but by 1870 had greatly increased in size and prominence. From 1868 onwards the professors gradually abandoned their traditional gowns and wore instead graduate gowns and hoods. A new style of gown was created for the principal *c.* 1900. However, the dean of faculties, as he had become, continued to wear his traditional gown and still does so today, complete with frogs and large velvet collar.¹⁷

Figure 4 shows the dean of faculties in 1891.¹⁸ Close examination of it shows that the frogs on the front and sleeves of the gown have an unusual spacing. Instead of being evenly spaced, they are in pairs: two very close together then a large gap before the next pair. The current gown also has that feature. Perhaps that spacing was intended as a way of distinguishing the dean of faculty from the principal and professors whose frogs seem always to have been evenly spaced—but no evidence has yet been uncovered to prove or disprove that.

All the available illustrations of rectors, deans of faculty and professors from the eighteenth century onwards show them wearing their gowns open at the front as is standard practice in Britain today. This suggests that the neck buttons fitted to the 1690 gowns were a feature that was quickly discontinued. It also seems likely that the drops on the 1690 rector's gown were omitted from later versions of the gown as the frogs increased in size.

¹⁴ Dickson, 'Tradition and Humour', p. 12.

¹⁵ Response of the University to the parliamentary Commission in 1695: Innes, Vol. II, p. 517.

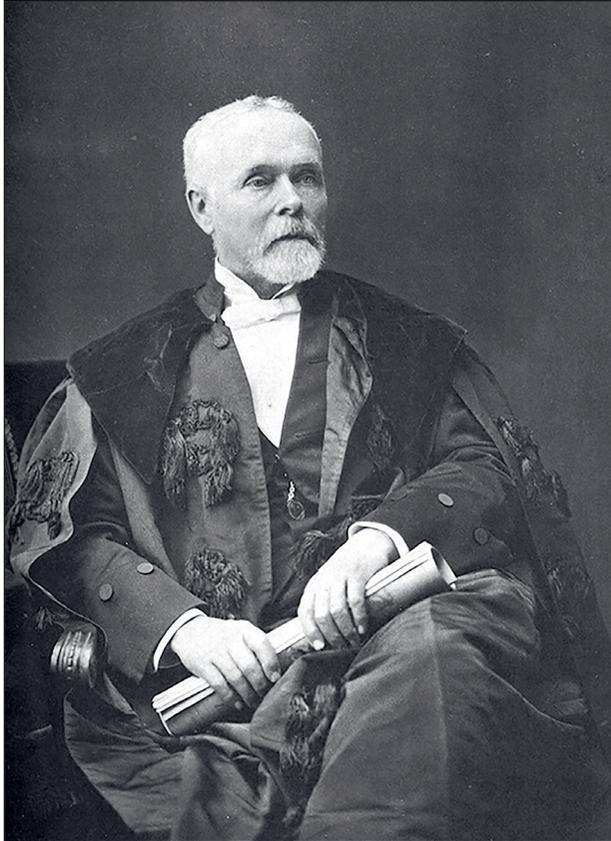
¹⁶ Dickson, 'Tradition and Humour' contains a selection of the photographs; the count of the frogs on Principal Barclay's gown was made using the official photograph of the Senate leaving the Old College in 1870 reproduced in Coutts opposite p. 432; these photographs are also accessible at <universitystory.gla.ac.uk> [retrieved 17 October 2020].

¹⁷ Dickson, 'Tradition and Humour', pp. 24, 25. The statement there that 'there is no evidence of a special design being created' for the dean of faculty has been overtaken by the discovery of the 1690 gown invoice.

¹⁸ This is an image of a photograph in William Stewart (ed.), *University of Glasgow Old and New* (Glasgow: T. & R. Allan & Sons and James Maclehose & Sons, 1891) supplied by University of Glasgow Archives and Special Collections (GB248 fUh.12).

The political context of the gowns

1690 was a time of political and religious turmoil. In 1688 the unpopular King James VII of Scotland and II of England, who was a Roman Catholic, fled to France. The English parliament, and then the Scottish parliament, declared that King James had abdicated and invited



University of Glasgow Archives and Special Collections GB248 fUh.12

Fig. 4. Robert Berry (Dean of Faculties) 1891.

William of Orange and his wife Mary (daughter of King James), who were both Protestants, to become joint sovereigns of England and Scotland. Both parliaments moved quickly to entrench their own supremacy, the Protestant religion and a requirement that future kings and queens must be Protestant. In Scotland there was a further issue regarding the governance of the church. Since the Scottish Reformation in 1560 there had been considerable strife over whether the reformed Church of Scotland should be Episcopalian (governed by a hierarchy of bishops and archbishops) or Presbyterian (governed by assemblies of ministers all of whom had equal status).¹⁹ In 1690 the Scottish parliament abolished the Episcopalian structure then in place and entrenched Presbyterianism.

In 1690 the Scottish parliament also appointed a Commission which held office for more than five years. The Commission's principal function was to inspect all schools, colleges and universities and ensure

that all teachers and teaching conformed to current political and religious thinking.²⁰ University staff were required to take an oath of allegiance to King William, not just as actual ruler but also as rightful ruler, and to subscribe to the Westminster Confession of Faith, which is a declaration of belief in Protestant Presbyterianism.²¹

19 This simplified description of the differences between Episcopacy and Presbyterianism greatly understates the deep and complex differences that affected the whole relationship between king, parliament, the church, its clergy, its members and local landowners.

20 The Commission also issued instructions regarding academic dress: see Dickson, 'Tradition and Humour', p. 12, and Jonathan C. Cooper, 'The Scarlet Gown: History and Development of Scottish Academic Dress', *TBS*, 10 (2010) pp. 8–42 (p. 14), <https://doi.org/10.4148/2475-7799.1082>.

21 Coutts, pp. 163–68, explains these developments in the context of the University of Glasgow.

At the University of Glasgow this led to what has been described as the *Purge of 1690*, but was in fact a much more orderly and civil handover than that name implies.²²

In 1690 the University of Glasgow was run as a university with one college. The College was governed by the seven academic staff comprising the principal (James Fall), four regents (William Blair, John Boyd, George Sinclair and John Tran), each of whom took a group of students through the entire Arts curriculum, one professor (James Wemyss) who taught his specialist subject and one person (Thomas Gordon) who was both a regent and a professor.²³ The University was run by the seven academic staff plus the chancellor, rector and dean of faculty. This structure caused these three officers to act in effect as external supervisors of the College. Before the Reformation and during Episcopalian government of the church after the Reformation, the archbishop of Glasgow was *ex officio* chancellor of the University. The rector and dean of faculty were elected positions, with elections being held annually—and with the re-election of the existing occupant of a post being permitted and frequently occurring.

By early 1690 the University was taking steps to adapt to the new order. George Sinclair, who had previously been forced to resign as a regent in 1666 because of his political and religious views,²⁴ had already been reappointed. Thomas Gordon, who was a Jacobite,²⁵ resigned. However, the most significant development was what happened at the annual election of the rector, which was delayed by a month from 1 March to 1 April 1690. Recent rectors had generally been Episcopalian clergymen.²⁶ The new rector was a layman, David Boyle of Kelburn, who was a prominent politician and became the first Earl of Glasgow in 1703.²⁷ His appointment started a trend: he was the first of a long line of public figures who were elected as rector.²⁸ The post of chancellor was vacant because the conversion of the church from Episcopalian to Presbyterian government had abolished the post of archbishop of Glasgow. (A new chancellor was not appointed until 1692 when John Carmichael, second Baron Carmichael and later first Earl of Hyndford, was appointed. He was a member of the parliamentary Commission, and chaired the visit of the Commission to the University mentioned below.)²⁹ The annual election for the dean of faculty, normally held in June or July was postponed, and the post treated as if it was vacant. (The outgoing dean of faculty was an Episcopalian clergyman.) When the election was held on 11 December 1690 the new dean of faculty was Patrick Simpson, a Presbyterian minister with strong political links.³⁰

The parliamentary Commission visited the University in August 1690. The members of the Commission explained the requirements regarding the new oaths and the Westminster Confession of Faith and instructed the academic staff to appear before them in

22 Emerson, pp. 26–34.

23 In 1690 the University's teaching arrangements were in transition from the regent system that dated back to its foundation to the professorial system that is currently in use.

24 Innes, Vol. II, pp. 336, 337; GB248 GUA26626, GB248 GUA32002.

25 The term Jacobite is used for a supporter of King James VII and II and his Roman Catholic descendants.

26 Innes, Vol. III, pp. 324–28.

27 Emerson, p. 29.

28 For a complete list of Rectors see <universitystory.gla.ac.uk>.

29 Emerson, pp. 28–29.

30 Emerson, p. 33; Innes, Vol. III, pp. 357, 358.

Edinburgh in September 1690. At that meeting in Edinburgh, Principal Fall explained his unwillingness to take the new oaths and was deposed. He was, however, publicly thanked by the Commission for his work and the University paid him six months' salary in compensation for the loss of his post.³¹ One of the regents (William Blair) and the professor (James Wemyss) also declined to take the new oaths and were deposed. William Blair received six months' salary in compensation.³² The three other regents (John Boyd, George Sinclair and John Tran) took the new oaths and were confirmed in post.³³

At this point Thomas Gordon asked for compensation, claiming that although he had resigned as regent he had not resigned as professor. He sought payment of 600 merks a year for three and a half years. After some negotiation, he submitted a further resignation letter and received 1,000 merks.³⁴

A new principal (William Dunlop) was speedily appointed and inducted into office on 11 December 1690.³⁵ Steps were also taken to fill the other vacancies and to reduce the number of regents and increase the number of professors.³⁶

In December 1690 the University of Glasgow therefore had new men in charge. It had a new rector, a new dean of faculty and a new principal, all with strong involvement with, or connections to, the new national political regime. The rector and the dean of faculty had very different backgrounds from their predecessors. Both of them would have been fully aware of their differences from their predecessors, their external supervisory role in relation to the college, all the upheavals that had taken place, and the expectations of the political regime. I suggest that in these circumstances both of them would have been keen to establish their positions and exert their authority, and that the gowns ordered for them were designed to provide visual support for that. I suggest that it is no coincidence that the gowns were ordered on 11 December 1690, the very day on which the recently elected new rector was joined by the newly elected dean of faculty and the newly inducted principal.³⁷

Summary and Unanswered Questions

The gowns purchased in 1690 for the rector and the dean of faculty made a political statement and have influenced academic dress at the University of Glasgow right down to the present day.

31 £880 13s. 4d. Scots: Innes, Vol. III, p. 595; GB248 GUA26630; converted to sterling in Coutts, p. 168. It was the custom of the University to pay six months' salary to any principal, professor or regent who resigned 'excepting the case of censure': Innes, Vol. II, p. 324. Therefore, the University in making the payment was generously treating him as if he had resigned in normal circumstances.

32 £660 Scots: Innes, Vol. III, p. 595; GB248 GUA26630. As explained in the previous footnote, this was treating him as if he had resigned in normal circumstances. One would expect James Wemyss to have been treated in the same way: Coutts, p. 168, states he was but Innes is silent.

33 Coutts, pp. 166–68.

34 A merk or mark was 13s.4d., that is two thirds of a Scots pound. Therefore 600 merks equals £400 Scots. Innes, Vol. II, p. 348, Vol. III, pp. 595, 596; GB248 GUA34786, GB248 GUA26630.

35 Principal Dunlop was regarded as a loyal supporter of the new national political regime: Emerson, p. 28.

36 For example, George Sinclair demitted office as regent to become the first professor of Mathematics in 1691: Coutts, p. 170; Innes, Vol. II, p.349; GB248 GUA31997.

37 The attendance list for the meeting of Senate that ordered the gowns was the rector, the principal, the dean of faculty and the three regents then in post (John Tran, John Boyd and George Sinclair), the six of them being listed in that order, which presumably reflects their view as to seniority: Innes, Vol. II, p. 350.

Principal Dunlop's accounts record other purchases of items for use in formal ceremonies around 1690. There are payments for a black velvet pileus (academic cap), and a gown for the bedellus,³⁸ but there appears to be something missing. One would have expected that, when the new chancellor was appointed in 1692, he would have been provided with a new gown to match the gowns of the rector and dean of faculty. Was he? What did it look like? Was this the point when the black gown with frogs and white fur facings (used by chancellors and vice-chancellors in the nineteenth century) was designed?³⁹ We do not (yet) know the answers.

Acknowledgements

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I am very grateful to Robert MacLean's colleagues in Archives and Special Collections, University of Glasgow who most efficiently provided me with images of relevant items in spite of all the restrictions imposed on them by the coronavirus pandemic.

I also thank Rev. Dr Graham Deans, FBS, for explaining to me the complex differences between Episcopalianism and Presbyterianism, and the University of Glasgow and Historic Environment Scotland for permission to include Figures 1, 2 and 4.

38 In 1693 and 1694 respectively: Innes, Vol. III, pp. 584, 585; GB248 GUA26749.

39 Fig. 3 shows the vice-chancellor wearing such a gown in 1868. (He is the fourth from the right in that picture.) See Dickson 'Tradition and Humour' for photographs of a surviving gown of that design (p. 33), and for references to nineteenth-century photographs and a portrait of such gowns (footnote 90 on p. 25). These nineteenth-century photographs and portrait are also accessible at <<https://universitystory.gla.ac.uk>> [retrieved 17 October 2020].

Appendix A: Transcription of the Invoice⁴⁰

This transcription retains the original spelling, which is inconsistent and often phonetic. Abbreviations have been extended in square brackets. Uncertain words with possible reading have been placed in square brackets with a question mark. For clarity, the items relating to the dean of faculty's gown, which come first, have been separated by a space from the later items that relate to the rector's gown.

	£ s d
Impri[<i>mis</i>] for 10 els a qwarter and a half of Razasiper at 5 [pounds] p[<i>e</i>]r el –	51.17.06
Item for 3 els and a half of perssian at 3 [pounds] 4 [shillings] p[<i>e</i>]r el –	11.04.00
Ite[<i>m</i>] for a qrter and 3 nails of velvat at 14 [pounds] p[<i>e</i>]r el –	06.02.06
Ite[<i>m</i>] for half ane el of Bwckram 6 [shillings] and a Nek Bwtton 6 [shillings]	00.12.00
Ite[<i>m</i>] for 5 ells off forratt Ribbon at 2 [shillings] 6 [pence] p[<i>e</i>]r el and an el of gallown 3 [shillings]	00.15.06
Ite[<i>m</i>] for on [ounce?] off Silk	01.01.04
Ite[<i>m</i>] for 5 dwble dozom and a half of Long Tailed Lwps at 1 [pound] 5 [shillings] p[<i>e</i>]r do[<i>zen</i>]	06.17.06
Ite[<i>m</i>] for 5 dozom and a half of Barrall Bwttons at 6 [shillings] p[<i>e</i>]r do[<i>zen</i>]	01.13.00
Ite[<i>m</i>] for making the Gown off Razasiper	06.00.00
Ite[<i>m</i>] for Remaking the Rectors Gown	03.12.00
Ite[<i>m</i>] for 5 dwble dozom off Gold and Silk Lwps at 6 [pounds] p[<i>e</i>]r do[<i>zen</i>]	30.00.00
Ite[<i>m</i>] for 5 dozom off Barrall Bwttons Tiffed at Both ends w[<i>i</i>]t[<i>h</i>] gold & silk threed 1 [pound] 10 [shillings] p[<i>e</i>]r do[<i>zen</i>]	07.10.00
Ite[<i>m</i>] for a qwarter and 3 nails off vellvatt at 14 [pounds] p[<i>e</i>]r el	06.02.06
Ite[<i>m</i>] for 12 drop off Silk at 1 [shilling] 4 [pence] p[<i>e</i>]r drop	00.16.00
[Ite[<i>m</i>] for half ane el off Bwckrom 6 [shillings] and for a Nek Bwtton 6 [shillings]	00.12.00
	134.15.10

⁴⁰ Courtesy of Robert MacLean.

Appendix B: Analysis of the Invoice⁴¹

Prices are believed to be in Scots pounds, shillings and pence. There was a fixed exchange rate: £12 Scots equalled £1 sterling. Scots pounds were divided into twenty (Scots) shillings which in turn were divided into twelve (Scots) pence, just like pounds sterling. The symbols £sd were used for both Scots and sterling pounds, shillings and pence.

A Scots *ell* was 37 inches (93.8 cm), a *quarter* was a quarter of a yard, that is 9 inches (22.7 cm) and a *nail* was a sixteenth of a yard, that is 2.25 inches (5.7 cm).

Materials

- Barrel buttons** Buttons shaped like a barrel (broader in the middle than at the ends).
- Buckram** Coarse linen or hemp, gummed and calendered,⁴² used for stiffening. (This was probably used here to stiffen the yoke, collar and shoulder wings.)
- Drop of silk** A decorative element made of silk covering a wooden core.⁴³
- Forratt** Probably ferret, which was a stout cotton tape or silk ribbon (the latter being more likely here).⁴⁴
- Gallown** Galloon or woven lace, what we would now call braid, often wide with a decorative weave structure, sometimes with metal thread.⁴⁵
- Lwps** Loops. The loops for the rector's gown are gold and silk; the long-tailed loops for the dean of faculty's gown were probably of braided silk. Dwble dozou is double dozen, that is a dozen pairs of loops or twenty-four loops. The quantities of loops and barrel buttons on both gowns suggest there was a loop on each side of each button, as does the statement that the barrel buttons on the rector's gown are tifted (tufted) at both ends with gold and silk thread.

41 Courtesy of Dr Susan North.

42 'Calendered' is the name given to a process for finishing the surface of a cloth by pressing it in a machine with rollers, using a combination of moisture, heat, and pressure.

43 Annabel Westman, *Fringe, Frog and Tassel: The Art of the Trimmings-Maker in Interior Decoration* (London: Philip Wilson Publishers, 2019), p. 241.

44 C. W. and P. Cunnington, *Handbook of English Costume in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Faber & Faber, 1954), p. 218. The word forratt or ferrett also occurs in another invoice by Thomas Pollock: GB248 GUA78181. That invoice, dated 1694, is addressed personally to Principal Dunlop and is for clothing for himself and his family. A transcription accompanying that invoice in the Archives interprets ferret as fur from the animal of the polecat family known as a ferret, which is now believed to be a misattribution.

45 Florence Montgomery, *Textiles in America 1650-1870: A Dictionary Based on Original Documents, Prints and Paintings, Commercial Records, American Merchants' Papers, Shopkeepers' Advertisements, and Pattern Books with Original Swatches of Cloth* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1984), p. 245.

- Neck button** Given its price, this was presumably a large decorative button to fasten the gown together at the top of the front of the gown just below the neck of the wearer.
- Ounce of silk** Silk when measured by weight (one ounce equals twenty-eight grams) is usually silk thread for sewing.
- Perssian** A thin plain silk, principally used for linings in coats, petticoats and gowns, originally from Persia but copied in Britain.⁴⁶ This was probably used here to line the sleeves and part-line the body of the gown—the yoke at the back and the front to below the arm holes.
- Razasiper** Probably the French silk raz-de-St-Maur, often rendered in English as radzimir or rasdimore. This was a serge (twill-weave) fabric of silk, or silk and fleuret (fine wool), or a wool warp and silk weft, dyed black. It was well known in the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth; Queen Victoria wore it for mourning.⁴⁷ The 10 ells, quarter of an ell and half of a quarter of an ell of Razasiper give a length of about 384 inches or 9.75 metres. Silk was traditionally about 20 inches (51 cm) wide. Roughly seven widths would be needed to make the gown (one for each front, one for each sleeve and three for the back (gathered into the yoke). This makes each panel about 54 inches (137 cm) long. The back panels were likely shorter and the sleeves shorter still, leaving some extra for the collar, shoulder wings and yoke.
- Velvet** A cut pile-weave silk.⁴⁸ This was probably used here to ‘face’ (cover the upper surface of) the collar.

The work on the rector’s gown is described as ‘remaking’ the gown, and the list of materials consists only of embellishments (loops, buttons, velvet and drops) and buckram. This suggests that the tailor may have ‘turned the gown’, that is unpicked all the seams and turned the pieces inside out on the principle that the inside of the silk would be in better condition than the outside (a technique that only works for reversible fabrics). The gown would then be sewn back together with the fresh buckram, a velvet facing on the collar, and the addition of the loops, buttons and drops.

⁴⁶ Montgomery, p. 321.

⁴⁷ Montgomery, p. 330.

⁴⁸ Montgomery, p. 270.