

‘Hooded crows’? A Reflection on Scottish Ecclesiastical Dress and Ministerial Practice from the Reformation to the Present Day

By Graham Deans

The hooded crow was a species of birds originally described by Carl Linnaeus (1707–78) in his *Systema Naturae* (1758),¹ where he named it *corvus cornix*.² The image of the hooded crow has traditionally been regarded as an unflattering caricature of clergymen in black, while the grey plumage on the bird’s back symbolizes the academic hood. The hooded cleric is thought to be something of a *rara avis*, which perches in a crow’s nest pulpit, from which it emits its distinctive squawking noises, six feet above contradiction!

This association has, however, not been confined to Scotland, which is part of the natural habitat of *corvus cornix*. According to the well known eighteenth-century nursery rhyme ‘Who Killed Cock Robin?’,³ which reflects on what is to be done in the aftermath of the murder of the eponymous hero of the avian community, the rook (presumably because of its distinctive black appearance; see Fig. 1) was held to bear the closest resemblance to the parson who ought to be entrusted with the conduct of the victim’s funeral.

*Who’ll be the parson?
I, said the rook,
With my little book,
I’ll be the parson.*

The rhyme has been variously interpreted but the clerical connections and associations are significant. The real questions for those who are interested in the developments of the practice of ministry are these: ‘Should the crow be hooded?’ and ‘Is the possession of an academic degree anything to crow about?’

History of academical dress at Scottish universities, pre- and post-Reformation

Even before the Church of Scotland was reformed in 1560, it had always placed a high value and a strong emphasis on education in general, and the need for a well educated clergy in particular. The phenomenon of the Scottish wandering student was well known in the Middle Ages as he travelled all over Europe. It was a Scottish bishop, David de Mora-

¹ Article ‘Linnaeus’ in E. F. Bozman, ed., *Everyman’s Encyclopaedia* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1958), Vol. VII, p. 792. See also <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hooded_Crow> (accessed 20 March 2010).

² Latin, *corvus*, raven, and *cornix*, crow.

³ The earliest published record of the rhyme is in *Tommy Thumb’s Pretty Song Book* (1744) (according to Anon, ‘Nursery Rhymes’). That early publication noted only the first four lines. An extended version was printed around 1770. See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cock_Robin> (accessed 21 March 2010) for details. See also Lam, ‘Back to the Nursery and Beyond: A Short History of Nursery Rhymes’.

via,⁴ who in 1323 founded a college in Paris for the benefit of his countrymen, while other episcopal colleagues obtained from English kings safe conducts for students to reside at Oxford or Cambridge. Many Scottish students attended English universities in the Middle Ages, with the majority going to Oxford.⁵ There Lady Devorgilla of Galloway had founded Balliol College in 1282, in order to provide Scottish students with board and lodging, as well as some moral discipline.⁶ The first martyr of the Scottish Reformation, Patrick Hamilton, was a graduate of Paris (1520).⁷

The Scottish alliance with France, which was forged at a time when relations with England were particularly strained, gave many Scottish institutions, like Scots law and the Scottish university system, a more continental and less insular flavour than those of England.⁸

The intimate connection between the Scottish universities and the pre-Reformation Church is well known and well documented. In 1413, the University of St Andrews received its bull of foundation from ‘Scotland’s Pope’, Benedict XIII (1394–1417);⁹ this confirmed a charter given two years previously by Dr Henry Wardlaw,¹⁰ bishop of St Andrews, granting to ‘the doctors, masters, bachelors and all scholars dwelling in our city’ a state of privilege ‘within our City and Regality’, while the right to confer degrees was received in St Andrews amid great rejoicing.¹¹ The University of Glasgow was founded in 1451, when Bishop William Turnbull (who held a doctorate in civil law from the University of Pavia¹²) received a bull from Pope Nicholas V creating a university in the city, which was intended to specialize in the study of law;¹³ and in 1495, a similar bull from Alexander VI allowed the creation of a university in Aberdeen where Bishop William Elphinstone had already founded King’s College.¹⁴ At that time it was usual for bishops to be university graduates, although it was more common for them to hold degrees in arts or law, rather than theology,¹⁵ which doubtless would have proved useful qualifications for the roles that senior clergy often held as civil administrators in the pre-Reformation Church.¹⁶

4 He was Bishop of Moray from 1299 to 1326, and was a close associate of King Robert the Bruce. ‘Moravia’ is the Latinized name for the former county and Diocese of Moray.

5 Lindsay (1906, 1915), Vol. II, p. 276.

6 Burleigh (1960), p. 113.

7 Torrance (2004), p. 884.

8 Donaldson (1960), p. 29.

9 This description refers to the fact that at the time of papal schism which so troubled both the pre-Reformation Church and the academic world, Scotland became isolated in its adherence to, and support of Benedict XIII. (G. Donaldson, (1960), p. 32; Burleigh, (1960), p. 113.)

10 Wardlaw was educated at the Universities of Oxford (apparently) and Paris and held a doctorate in civil law. However, McGladdery (2004), p. 372, says there is no evidence for Wardlaw having studied at either Oxford or Cambridge, in spite of his being granted safe conduct to enable him to attend either of those two universities. He certainly did study at Paris, where he graduated BA (1383) and continued his studies at Orleans and Avignon. See also J. Kerr (1910), p. 41.

11 Burleigh (1960), pp. 113–115. See also J. Kerr (1910), p. 41.

12 Durkan (2004), pp. 494–5.

13 According to Rashdall (1895), Vol. II, i, p. 296, one of the most prominent objects with all the Founders of the pre-Reformation Scottish Universities was to provide the country with educated lawyers.

14 In due course the city of Aberdeen would have a second college-university, when Marischal College was founded in 1593.

15 Burleigh (1960), p. 113. Other sources disagree.

16 Holeyton (2002), p. 465.

FIG. 1 The archetypical 'hooded crow'—the avian community's parson—the rook, complete with bands and book. Illustration from *The Death of Cock Robin* from the Child's Amusing Library series of books.



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Elphinstone and his colleague Bishop Kennedy of St Andrews professed to be specially interested in providing well-trained pastors 'to sow the Word of God more abundantly in the hearts of the faithful', and among the higher clergy there were many graduates, mostly from St Andrews, but a statistical check has thus far proved impossible.¹⁷ In the following century, under Andrew Forman, 'the outstanding example of the clerical diplomat and careerist',¹⁸ energetic measures were taken to restore order and discipline in his diocese (St Andrews), which had deteriorated significantly in the general demoralization after Flodden (1513). Older statutes were reinforced, dealing with clerical dress, residence, behaviour and professional duties. Stress was laid on regularity and decency in public worship, which parish clergy were to celebrate devoutly in clean surplices, and in a clear, high and intelligible voice, so that the people might be incited to devotion.¹⁹

The connection between academic and ecclesiastical dress

The ancient European universities (of which Bologna and Paris were the most outstanding examples) began life as communities of scholars and teachers in a religious school, centred round a great cathedral or monastery, where students and teachers were either priests or clerks in minor orders.²⁰

Although the evolution of academical costume is complicated by the secular and ecclesiastical contacts, which characterized some universities at the time of their early development, the religious character of early academical costume should be self-evident.²¹ Indeed (at the risk of over-simplification) it has been claimed by the Oxford antiquarian Anthony Wood (1632–95) that in its simplest and most general form, the academical gown

¹⁷ Burleigh, p. 116.

¹⁸ Burleigh, p. 110.

¹⁹ Burleigh, p. 112.

²⁰ Hargreaves-Mawdsley (1963), p. 4; Cant (1946), p. 20. Early universities were either communities of scholars (as Bologna) or of masters (as Paris).

²¹ Hargreaves-Mawdsley (1963), p. 4; Clark (1894), p. 8, Macalister (1896), p. 253. But see Y. Mausen (2005), pp. 36ff.

was originally derived from the earliest monastic habit, namely, the Benedictine.²² Professor Edwin C. Clark finds support for this in an early ordinance which he quotes from the Faculty of Canon Law at Paris (1387),²³ concerning the proper dress deemed most fitting and dignified for monks of that order. This, he notes, consisted of a *froc*,²⁴ and Hood or close Cope (*cappa clausa*) with similar Hood, or Scapular, but no *Mantellus* or *Rotondellus*.²⁵

To the 'normal' clerical and therefore academical dress of the Middle Ages, (which consisted of an undertunic (*subtunica*), tunic (*supertunica*) and hood (*caputium*)), beneficiaries, dignitaries and graduates added a habit, which took various forms.²⁶ Their outermost, and therefore most visible garment was most frequently, but not exclusively, the *cappa clausa*.²⁷

From the early thirteenth century onwards, the *cappa clausa* was regarded as normal academic dress (for Masters and Doctors) by the Universities of Paris, Bologna, Oxford and subsequent universities.²⁸ When it was eventually discarded by clergy²⁹ (amongst whom it was never popular), it became an exclusively academical garment, even if its use was confined to formal occasions. At Oxford, for example, it was prescribed that Regents in Arts and Theology had to wear either the *cappa clausa* or the *pallium* while delivering their ordinary lectures.³⁰ With the passage of time, as trends in fashion moved towards less cumbersome forms of dress, in keeping with a more active age,³¹ the habit came to be worn less and less frequently.³²

However, while the *cappa clausa* may be the 'original' form of academic dress (which survives in an academic context only in the convocation robes of doctors at Oxford³³ and

22 Quoted by Clark (1894), p. 9. Unfortunately he does not specify the precise source, and exhibits the same vagueness of which he accuses his authority! The difficulty of interpreting and evaluating Professor Clark's evidence has also been noted by Alex Kerr (2005), pp. 32–43.

23 Clark (1894), p. 9. The odd capitalization is original.

24 Mansion (1946), p. 279, defines this garment as a 'monk's cowl, frock, or gown.' The word 'frock' is misleading, but it should be understood as symbolising clerical status. When one is judicially deprived of such status that person is said to have been 'defrocked' or 'unfrocked'. One should also note that the word *froc* referring to an ecclesiastical garment also survives in the now rarely seen clerical formal 'frock coat'.

25 Quoted Clark (1984), p. 9.

26 A. Kerr (2005), pp. 43–44, quoting Brightman.

27 Clark, (1894), p. 9. Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, commanded its use at the Council of Oxford in 1222. (Macalister (1896), p. 256.)

28 Hargreaves-Mawdsley (1963), p. 5. According to Cant (1946), p. 20, Masters and Doctors at the University of St Andrews were entitled to wear the *cappa*, but this is much later than the Council of Oxford. It is not clear from Cant whether the *cappa* was worn *clausa* or *aperta*!

29 As Archbishop Langton's instructions to clergy (given by the Council of Oxford in 1222) were increasingly observed only in the breach (cf. Hargreaves-Mawdsley (1963), p. 5). Although the Archbishop of Canterbury has no jurisdiction north of the Border, this has not always been the case. J. Kerr (1910), p. 40, n. 1, comments on the fact that for a long time he was considered the 'head' ecclesiastic in Scotland, much to the dissatisfaction of the Scots, whom the Pope would not allow to have an archbishop of their own. The first Archbishop of St Andrews was not appointed until 1465.

30 Clark (1894), p. 29.

31 Hargreaves-Mawdsley (1963), p. 6.

32 A. Kerr (2005), p. 50.

33 Principally the DD, but also Doctors of Canon Law. See Rashdall (1895), Vol. II, ii, p. 643 and A. Kerr (2005), p. 44.

congregation dress of the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge³⁴), it is not the source of the modern day 'ordinary' academic gown which is currently regarded as the distinctive dress of the scholar.³⁵ Alex Kerr, following Clark,³⁶ has traced this gown to the medieval *supertunica* or *gona* which was worn *under* the *cappa*. Kerr describes the *supertunica* as 'a loose-fitting, sometimes pleated gown with fairly narrow sleeves, like those of a modern jacket or coat' which 'simply turned little by little into the bachelor's gown we know today—and the doctoral full-dress robe—as the sleeves widened and the front opened up.'³⁷

The 'international aspect' of dress at medieval universities (which has since broken down) has been mentioned by R. A. S. Macalister.³⁸ Perhaps the best explanation of this is also offered by Alex Kerr: 'Academic dress exhibited the same general pattern (but by no means uniformity) all over western Europe in the Middle Ages, but it diversified along national lines from the sixteenth century onwards.'³⁹ This international aspect, noted by Macalister, may have resulted from a requirement of the Church, in the interests of discipline, to establish and regulate some uniformity of dress, in keeping with the system of degrees and rules of precedence which were accepted in all universities founded after Bologna, Paris, and Oxford.⁴⁰

Scotland found its inspiration for the establishment of its institutions of higher education not in England, but on the Continent. In the thirteenth century Paris was the centre of intellectual activity in Europe,⁴¹ and when, two centuries later, Scotland's first university was founded at St Andrews, its constitution was modelled on that of the University of Paris,⁴² to which Scottish students had traditionally migrated since the 'Wars of Independence'.⁴³ The first teachers at St Andrews were mainly graduates of Paris.⁴⁴

Given that all three of the pre-Reformation Scottish universities were essentially founded by distinguished churchmen, each of whom had benefited from a Continental education,⁴⁵ it would seem natural to suppose that when academic dress was introduced there, it should have been influenced by European practice in general, and that of Paris in particular.⁴⁶

34 A. Kerr (2005), p. 50.

35 Cox (2000), Chapter 2, cf Clark (1894), p. 9.

36 Clark (1894), pp. 11–12.

37 A. Kerr (2005), p. 47. It is tempting to mistake this for a cassock—until one reads the sentence in full.

38 Macalister (1896), p. 253.

39 A. Kerr, (2005), p. 42, acknowledging Hargreaves-Mawdsley (1963), pp. 4–6.

40 Hargreaves-Mawdsley (1963), pp. 3–4.

41 J. Kerr, *Scottish Education: School and University* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910), p. 31.

42 J. Kerr (1910), p. 43.

43 English students had been recalled from the Continent by order of Henry II in 1167. See Rashdall, (1895), Vol. II, ii, pp. 329ff, 345.

44 Cant (1946), p. 1.

45 See McGladdery (2004), pp. 372–3; Durkan (2004), pp. 594–4; Macfarlane (2004), pp. 326–8 for details of the qualifications of the respective founders. References are condensed from the *Oxford National Dictionary of Biography* (Oxford: OUP), 2004.

46 Hargreaves-Mawdsley (1963), p. 138. At St Andrews, Scotland's earliest University, academic costume was based on the model of Paris (Cant (1946), p. 19).

Academic Dress in the pre-Reformation Scottish Universities

It is not entirely clear as to what academic dress was initially worn in Scotland's three pre-Reformation universities,⁴⁷ as Scotland does not have a particularly great quantity of illuminated manuscripts, brasses, stained glass,⁴⁸ or even stone;⁴⁹ but it would seem that in those early days what was worn were probably the same type of black garments that were common to most European universities.⁵⁰

The University of St Andrews

Hoods were prescribed for all graduates of St Andrews at an early date. As in England, furred hoods were associated with those who had earned the BA degree, and red cloth or silk hoods were associated with those who had graduated as Masters of Arts.⁵¹ This latter observation is also supported by the evidence from David Calderwood's account of the trial of Adam Wallace in 1550 in which he states that the prosecuting counsel, John Lawder (or Lauder) of Morebattle (1481–1551 or 1556) was clad in a surplice and a red hood.⁵² Lawder is believed to have been a graduate of St Andrews.⁵³ After the Reformation, however, the BA degree fell into disuse,⁵⁴ and hoods for all degrees were given up as 'the Kirk looked with hostility upon such memorials of the papal world as academical dress'.⁵⁵ Hoods were not revived at St Andrews until 1865–66.⁵⁶

The University of Glasgow

When the University of Glasgow was founded in 1451, it was resolved that its dress be modelled on that of the University of Bologna, but the academical costume of Paris was not without influence. Dress was to be clerical in character.⁵⁷ The furred hood was originally the mark of the bachelor (although masters' hoods were furred as well);⁵⁸ and as early as 1452, Masters of Arts⁵⁹ were ordered to wear a cloth *cappa*⁶⁰ and a master's bonnet or *birre*

47 *Viz.*, St Andrews, Glasgow, and Aberdeen.

48 As noted by Hargreaves-Mawdsley (1963), p. 137.

49 Cant (1950), p. 89, comments on the unique example of the stone representation of the Provost Hugh Spens (d 1534) wearing gown and hood, at St Andrews. He says this is 'the only illustration of the early everyday dress of a Scottish academic dignitary of the medieval period'. The image is of poor quality, but may be seen in Crawford, ed., (2012), p. 3. See also A. Kerr (2008), p. 141.

50 This assertion applies particularly to St Andrews: R. G. Cant, (1946) 19–20, quoted H-M, (1963), p. 137.

51 Hargreaves-Mawdsley (1963), p. 138, quoting Cant (1946), pp. 19–20. However, Cant does not specify the material from which the masters' hoods were made.

52 D. Calderwood, (1841), vol. I, p. 263.

53 From <<http://undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/usbiography/l/johnlauder.html>> (accessed 14 Aug. 2011).

54 R. G. Cant (1946), p. 19, n. 1.

55 Hargreaves-Mawdsley (1963), pp. 138–39.

56 R. G. Cant, (1946), p. 119.

57 Hargreaves-Mawdsley, *ibid.*, p. 139.

58 *Ibid.*, 140.

59 To qualify for the degree candidates had to be at least twenty years old, and have attended the University for at least three and a half years. They were also presumed to be holders of the bachelor's degree. (J. Coutts, (1909), p. 25.)

60 C. Innes, *Munimenta* (Glasgow, 1854), vol. II, p. 180; Hargreaves-Mawdsley, (1963), p. 140.

tum;⁶¹ a number of hoods were ordered in 1463, and in the same year a red hood lined with miniver was bequeathed to the University.⁶² In 1464 James Hynde was appointed keeper of vestments, and was to be responsible for hiring out academical dress for degree ceremonies, and a fund was raised for that purpose.⁶³ By 1490 it appears that the BA degree had died out and that most students graduated as Masters of Arts, with a hood of blue cloth being worn at the ceremony.⁶⁴ Gowns were also worn, but hoods, along with the *pileus* and the *birretum*, were rejected after the Reformation.⁶⁵ The distinctive colour scheme of red gowns for undergraduates and black for graduates seems to have been maintained since at least 1634, following a royal visit,⁶⁶ and were still in regular use over a hundred years later.⁶⁷ Bursars at that University were also expected to wear dark gowns.

The University of Aberdeen (King's College)

The earliest evidence for the regulation of academical dress at Aberdeen dates from 1529, from which it is clear that there was a strong French influence. Doctors of Canon Law and Medicine were to dress according to the customs of the University of Paris, and Doctors of Civil Law according to those of the University of Orléans.⁶⁸

In an inventory dating from 1542, there is evidence of furred hoods being in the possession of the Faculty of Arts for holders of the BA;⁶⁹ the faculty also owned four other hoods of various colours—one of 'French brown', one 'English red', and two black. There is also mention of four *epitogia*, three of which were red, and one 'French brown'.⁷⁰ Bursars in the Arts Faculty were enjoined to wear hoods at all times, the only exceptions being in their own rooms or in Church.⁷¹ At the same time candidates for the priesthood in the Faculty of Theology were ordered to wear 'round hoods'.⁷²

61 Coutts (1909), p. 26.

62 Ibid., p. 140. C. Innes, *Munimenta* (Glasgow, 1854), vol. II, pp. 199–200, states that 'unum caputium rubei coloris de le scarlet fodoratum cum le miniewar' was given to the Faculty of Arts by the executors of the late Master Patrick Leich. See also Coutts (1909), p. 28.

63 Coutts (1909), p. 28.

64 So says Hargreaves-Mawdsley (1963), p. 140; C. Innes, *Munimenta* (1854), vol. II, p. 256. However, the evidence from Coutts (1909), p. 29, suggests that the hoods worn in the Faculty of Arts were furred and red.

65 Hargreaves-Mawdsley (1963), *ibid.*

66 Ibid., pp. 140–41, and Cooper (2010), p. 18. It also appears that the General Assembly of 1642 ordered all students to have gowns, and in 1664 masters and students were instructed to wear them in college and in public. (Cooper, (2010), p. 19.)

67 This was noted by John Wesley in 1753; quoted Hargreaves-Mawdsley (1963), p. 142. See also Cooper (2010), pp. 19–20.

68 Hargreaves-Mawdsley (1963), p. 142.

69 C. Innes, *Fasti* (1854), p. 571, lists 'xxi caputia bacalaureorum artium foderata'. The University of Aberdeen may have used fur for its hoods in the Middle Ages, but has not done so for any of its hoods since their use was revived (with completely new designs) in the 1860s. (This is clear from the file by Naomi Brechin, 'Graduation Hoods' downloaded from the university website, 25 Feb. 2010).

70 C. Innes, *ibid.*, p. 571, lists these items in the following terms: 'iiii epitogiae, quorum tria ex tela rubea Anglicana, et unum ex ly Fransche brown, cum quatuor (*sic*) caputiis, uno videlicet ex ly Fransche brown, uno ex tela rubea, et duobus nigris.' One cannot help wondering whether the prescription of the *epitoge* for holders of the LTh qualification in the mid-twentieth century was a conscious revival of ancient practice.

71 Hargreaves-Mawdsley, *ibid.*, p. 143, C. Innes, *Fasti* (1854), p. 265.

72 Hargreaves-Mawdsley, *ibid.*, pp. 142–43, C. Innes, *Fasti* (1854), p. 260.

In the aftermath of the Reformation, academical dress fell into neglect. Attempts were made to revive it following a visitation to King's College in 1634 when Charles I commanded that all members of the college should wear gowns according to their several degrees and faculties. However, any suggestion of the revival of the hood at that time was probably seen as a lost cause.⁷³ In actual fact, Macalister notes that Charles's actions were strongly objected to by the clergy, some of whom expressed a fear that he would order them to wear 'hoods and bells', and that in 1634 they petitioned the King not to interfere with the arrangements of his predecessor (who had sought by Act of Parliament to regulate both clerical costume and academic dress⁷⁴); this request appears to have been granted.⁷⁵

The Post-Reformation Scottish Universities

The Universities of Edinburgh (1582) and Marischal College, Aberdeen (1593) are post-Reformation foundations. Edinburgh had no great tradition of academic dress until the nineteenth century, and its students were reluctant to wear the red gowns in use at the other Scottish universities.⁷⁶ Marischal, however, did have a tradition of wearing academic gowns, and the red undergraduate gown and the black graduate gown were in regular use until the institution merged with King's in 1860.⁷⁷ I have not found any evidence of hoods being used at Marischal.

The impact of the Reformation

The cultural impact of the Reformation on Scottish ecclesiastical and academic life was profound. Church buildings were severely simplified or 're-ordered'⁷⁸ in line with the new Reformed aesthetic,⁷⁹ which was an inevitable consequence of the sea change in the under-

⁷³ Hargreaves-Mawdsley, *ibid.*, p. 143. It has been suggested to me that the university authorities regarded the King's order as a crypto-Catholic move, and resented his interference just as strongly as the clergy did. In the case of Aberdeen this does not appear to have been so. King's College in fact took the King's recommendations very seriously (McLaren (2005), p. 16), and enforced the wearing of gowns rigorously, as did Marischal College (McLaren (2005), pp. 46–47). Glasgow seems to have accepted the King's recommendations regarding the wearing of gowns and academic habits without demur, although the university's historian comments that 'Such matters as these, one would think, need hardly have called for the high intervention of royalty.' (Coutts (1909), p. 96). St Andrews seems to have responded to the King's instructions with neither any great enthusiasm nor overt hostility (Cant (1950), pp. 203–4). In the case of Edinburgh, it appears that the King was initially welcomed by the city and by the university, but the favourable reception did not last (Dalzel (1862), Vol. II, pp. 97–98); proposals concerning the wearing of gowns were not introduced until 1694 (*ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 251).

⁷⁴ Noted by Hargreaves-Mawdsley (1963), p. 139; John M. Bulloch, (1895), p. 131; and W. McMillan, (1950), p. 37.

⁷⁵ Macalister (1896), p. 204.

⁷⁶ Hargreaves-Mawdsley (1963), p. 145; J. Bulloch, (1895), p. 136. For a detailed history of the use of the scarlet gown by undergraduates at Scottish universities, see Cooper (2010), pp. 8–42. With reference to Edinburgh, see pp. 29–31.

⁷⁷ See McLaren (2005), cover illustrations, and pp. 19, 38, 46–47, 61, 92, 96, 103, 118, 123, and 129, and Cooper (2010), pp. 20–29.

⁷⁸ See Whyte (1996), pp. 159–76, but esp. p. 161.

⁷⁹ For the Reformed Aesthetic, see Fergusson (2009), pp. 23–35. For the perils attached to the 're-ordering' of Churches, see Dawson, 'Patterns of Worship in Reformation Scotland' in the same book (pp. 137ff).

standing of the purpose of the Church and of its worship; patterns of ministry were also being radically altered; and the universities would have to modify their courses if they were to provide appropriately trained ministers.

The early Scottish Reformers, in their attempts to affirm the place of the universities as centres of academic excellence,⁸⁰ sought not to abolish or destroy them,⁸¹ but to reorganize them and to fill them with teachers to suit their own likings. Indeed the National Scottish Kirk has always looked towards the universities to educate its ministers; unlike other Presbyterian denominations it has never had its own theological colleges or seminaries.

It was perhaps inevitable that St Andrews would be singled out as the 'first and principal' seat of learning,⁸² as was befitting of the nation's ecclesiastical capital at that time. Yet the university remained 'a strange and disordered place' between 1560 and 1579 as reform was repeatedly delayed.⁸³

At Glasgow, the university, which had been dependent upon the Church prior to the Reformation, remained subject to ecclesiastical influences after it. It was quickly recognized that ministers had to be provided to carry on the work of the new religion all over the country; consequently their training formed a great part of the university's work. Thus new chairs of Divinity were founded, while professors who did not conform to the wishes of the new regime faced the prospect of loss of office.⁸⁴

Meantime at Aberdeen, King's College remained as strongly clerical as it had been before, but its task now was to turn out much needed parish ministers instead of priests.⁸⁵

Hargreaves-Mawdsley's statement⁸⁶ alleging Presbyterian hostility to all things academical therefore needs to be qualified: while it is true that some of the leading Covenanters objected even to degrees in Divinity, the fact remains that the Church after the Reformation sanctioned such degrees,⁸⁷ and drew up orders for proceeding towards them,⁸⁸ making it evident that they intended the divinity faculties to produce graduates who were proficient and 'mighty in the Scriptures'.⁸⁹ Nor was such hostility exclusively confined to Scotland: 'outright republicans and presbyterians' in the University of Oxford were seeking in 1658 to abolish academical dress, but were successfully resisted.⁹⁰ This brings us to the question of the relationship between ministerial attire and academic dress—and the repression of the latter, which came about in consequence of the revision of the former.

Elements of ministerial attire in the reformed church

Ministerial dress became considerably simplified in the aftermath of the Reformation, as the emphasis shifted away from a predominantly liturgical and sacramental understanding of ministry towards one that placed much greater emphasis on expounding to the peo-

80 Coutts (1909), pp. 49ff.

81 Cant (1946), p. 43.

82 Ibid. This is also confirmed by Knox et al. (1560).

83 Cant (1946), p. 49.

84 Coutts (1909), p. 49.

85 Carter and McLaren, (1994), p. 18.

86 Hargreaves-Mawdsley, (1963), pp. 138–39.

87 Knox et al. (1560), in particular, Chapter V, 'Concerning the Provision for Ministers, etc.' (electronic version accessed 1 June 2010).

88 Sprott (1882), pp. 247–8.

89 Coutts (1909), p. 50.

90 Hargreaves-Mawdsley (1963), p. 106. For further details, see Gibson (2010), pp. 43–46.

ple the Holy Scriptures and the Word of God as well as (rather than ‘instead of’) offering them regular Communion. Of all the principal Reformers, only Zwingli⁹¹ was opposed to weekly celebrations of Communion.⁹² Therefore on the whole it would not be true to say that the Reformers devalued the sacraments.⁹³

As W. D. Maxwell correctly points out, Calvinist Reformers discarded most of the traditional ecclesiastical vestments, viewing them as objects of ‘superstitious symbolism’,⁹⁴ but preferred to retain the normal outdoor dress of the clergy, which was also worn in church.⁹⁵ This consisted of a cassock, plain black gown,⁹⁶ hood, bands (or other neckwear), and a scarf. The black velvet cap (see Fig. 2) and gloves then worn are now obsolete.

The Cassock

Strictly speaking, the cassock is not a vestment,⁹⁷ but is principally an undergarment (Latin: *subtunica*, French: *soutane*). Its use is not restricted to clergy, and is often worn by choristers, particularly in the Anglican tradition. In congregations of the Kirk, however, such a garment is often viewed with grave suspicion when used as dress for the choir.

No such objection is voiced when worn by the clergy. Originally designed to be worn outdoors,⁹⁸ it is worn today as an indoor garment beneath the gown (in the Reformed tradition) or surplice (in the Anglican tradition). Normally it is black, but in recent times many of the younger Scottish clergy have taken to wearing a blue cassock. I have also seen maroon, grey, and even light green examples. Purple is perhaps considered ‘too episcopal’! The right to wear a red or scarlet cassock remains confined to royal chaplains; that practice dates from the early years of the twentieth century.⁹⁹

The ‘plain black gown’: its origins

The black preaching gown which is now associated with the Genevan or Reformed divines, has, in spite of opposition by divines on both sides of the Scottish/English Border during the seventeenth century, now become the standard vesture in Presbyterian churches.¹⁰⁰ It has been said to have developed from the medieval gown worn by a number of professions, notably teachers and by legal practitioners (solicitors and English judges;¹⁰¹ Scottish judges wear red robes¹⁰²) but particularly by academics and members of universities. However, if Harrison and Robertson are right in their assertion that the ‘preacher’s gown’ is the older form of the academic gown,¹⁰³ then the opposite is the case. The use of a black gown

91 Zwingli was the leader of the Swiss Reformation at Zurich. He was one of the principal Reformers, ranking third in importance after Luther and Calvin.

92 See Maxwell (1955), p. 51, and (1936), pp. 81–87.

93 *Ibid.*, p. 51, n. 1.

94 Maxwell (1955), p. 51.

95 Maxwell (1948), Appendix B: The Minister’s Robes, pp. 150–153.

96 Described by Evelyn Underhill as the ‘Genevan’ (*sic*) gown. See Underhill, (1943), p. 292.

97 McMillan (1949), p. 32.

98 As noted by Duncan (2006), p. 932.

99 Baldwin, e-mail to author, 6 July 2012.

100 Dickie and Pye (1980), vol. 15, pp. 634–40 (p. 637).

101 English judges wear black on most days, although High Court judges and judges in the Court of Appeal wear red on certain days.

102 E-mail from Prof. Herbert A. Kerrigan, QC (13 Aug. 2011).

103 The claim is made by Harrison (1845), p. 28, quoted by Robertson (1869), p. 103, n. 85.

FIG. 2 John Knox memorial in Queen Street Church, Aberdeen. Knox had no degree, so wore no hood. He does have a scarf or 'a furring of martens about his neck' (Whitley (1960), p. 214) and a black velvet cap, which was worn both indoors and out. The red sleeves of the royal chaplain's cassock are undoubtedly an anachronism, based on the reformer's role as a member of the Chapel Royal in the Court of King Edward VI of England.

in worship, as an alternative to the traditional ecclesiastical vestments has been traced back to Christmas Day, 1521, when Professor Andreas Karlstadt celebrated the Eucharist at the castle church in Wittenberg, wearing his 'professional' (not clerical) gown. The innovation (if that is what it really was) gained favour amongst the Reformers whose roots were in the academy. For some it was a visible means of distancing themselves from the Catholic Eucharistic doctrines with which they profoundly disagreed.¹⁰⁴

The black gown which Karlstadt had unilaterally initiated (without, apparently, any encouragement from his academic colleagues) was used (with various modifications) all over Europe. Luther was initially appalled by Karlstadt's actions,¹⁰⁵ and insisted that he return to the 'old ways', but within three years he also took to wearing a black gown for the conduct of worship.¹⁰⁶ It has been said that he did so 'to show that he had the necessary academic proficiency at his disposal to interpret and proclaim the Word'.¹⁰⁷ However, it should be remembered that the Lutheran Church (especially in Scandinavia) retained most, but not all, of the historic vestments,



Photograph courtesy of Archie Mitchell, MA

¹⁰⁴ Holeyton, 'Vestments' in Bradshaw, ed. (2002), pp. 469–70. Presumably their principal objection was to the doctrine of transubstantiation, but probably also to the concept of the Mass as 'sacrifice', and the practice of denying the cup to the laity (my conjecture).

¹⁰⁵ See Maxwell.

¹⁰⁶ See Laird, 'Clergy Vestments: The advent of the "Geneva Gown" in public worship' (1983). Available at <<http://www.glaird.com/vestment.htm>> (accessed 29 Dec. 2009).

¹⁰⁷ Roets and Dreyer, quoted by Duncan (2006), p. 934, n. 7.

rejecting only those that signified a celibate clergy.¹⁰⁸ (Nevertheless, certain Lutheran ministers who have come into the Church of Scotland have preferred to wear a black gown and bands for the conduct of worship.) Karlstadt's example was quickly followed by Zwingli who prescribed the wearing of a cassock and gown for the conduct of worship in 1525.¹⁰⁹

Significantly, however, there is no mention of a hood worn with the gown at that time. Nevertheless, the wearing of it is interpreted as a signal of a commitment to an academically trained Reformed ministry.¹¹⁰

The 'plain black gown': its alleged 'academic neutrality'

Maxwell seems to suggest that there is a difference between the clerical and the academic gown, but does not specify what that difference actually is.¹¹¹ For that we have to turn to the observations of Harrison, who describes the clerical gown as having a 'standing collar' and being 'straight at the hands' with a narrow wristband. This narrow wristband had since given way to the 'modern' custom of having the full sleeve tucked up to the elbow. The academic gown, he says, is almost exclusively that of the MA.¹¹² This distinction has given rise to much speculation that the clerical or 'Geneva' gown should be considered to be 'academically neutral', thus entitling non-graduate clergy to wear it. This also raises the question regarding the appropriateness of a graduate choosing to wear a hood over such a garment.

But this neutrality of the Geneva gown is open to challenge, as is its very name.¹¹³ For Evelyn Underhill the Geneva gown is simply the preaching garment in the Reformed tradition.¹¹⁴ However, in a 'throwaway comment',¹¹⁵ Percy Dearmer avers that 'the gown has nothing to do with Geneva, and being a priestly gown is more sacerdotal than the surplice.'¹¹⁶ Even Maxwell, a respected Presbyterian scholar, admits that the robes worn by the clergy of the Reformed Churches 'are not, and never were confined to Geneva and Scotland.'¹¹⁷ W. McMillan backs up Dearmer's assertion by quoting a reference to a priest's 'blacke gowne' belonging to the incumbent at Fettercairn at the time of the Reformation, and who did not conform to the Reformed Church.¹¹⁸ Against this, it has been claimed that 'After the reformation, clerics who were not university graduates, and for greater distinc-

108 Dickie and Pye (1980), p. 637.

109 Duncan (2006), p. 934, n. 7.

110 Duncan (2006), p. 934.

111 Maxwell (1948), p. 151.

112 Harrison (1845), p. 26 and ff., esp. p. 28.

113 It has been suggested that the term 'Genevan' may have originally been understood as a term of opprobrium, like the remark attributed to Elizabeth I of England who dismissed continental psalm tunes which were not to her liking as 'Genevan Jigs'.

114 Underhill (1943), p. 292. Harrison (1845), pp. 25–26 says that the black gown is 'the preaching gown' in the Church of England. Whether Underhill intended to convey the impression (drawn from her previous sentence describing the Scottish service devised by John Knox) that the gown had a simple and austere dignity of its own, just like the service of worship in question, must be a debatable point.

115 Based on the arguments of Robertson (1869), pp. 89–103.

116 Dearmer (1902), p. 285, Quoted by W. McMillan (1949), pp. 25–32 (p. 25).

117 Maxwell (1948), p. 150.

118 *Ibid.*, pp. 25–26. It has been suggested that the 'priest's gown' with its 'pudding sleeves' gathered at the wrist rather resembles the ICC doctor's robe (see Figs. 6 and 7 for illustrations of the American gown). The 'pudding sleeve' gown (in modified form, and worn with a black scarf) is still the undress gown of Cambridge Doctors of Divinity [d8]. See Groves (ed.) Shaw III (2011), p. 30.

tion from Roman Catholic priests, adopted the black Geneva gown, still in use in Scottish churches.¹¹⁹

Robert Gribben supports the belief that the Geneva gown is academically neutral on the ground that its form and shape do not conform to a specific or official design prescribed by any university.¹²⁰ However, this seems to be contradicted by the fact the design of the gown once prescribed by the University of Aberdeen for its MA graduates was supposed to be ‘black silk, Geneva pattern’.¹²¹

The principle underlying Gribben’s assumption would appear to be similar to that which applies to the ‘literate’s’ hood, meaning that it could be worn by someone who does not possess a university degree.¹²² Gribben points out, as does Maxwell,¹²³ that John Calvin adopted the black gown because it was ordinary street dress. That ordinariness might on the face of it suggest neutrality. But Gribben undermines his case when he states that it happened that most if not all of the leaders of the Reformation were university graduates, and indeed Doctors of Divinity, and their street dress (in an age when you could tell what people did by what they wore)¹²⁴ was ‘a long black robe’¹²⁵ which John F. White describes as ‘the medieval scholar’s gown’.¹²⁶

Possibly all clothing makes a statement about our identity. Gribben quotes the adage, ‘What we wear reveals who we are.’¹²⁷ White goes further when he says, ‘Clothing is a means of communication, and what clergy wear says something about the event.’¹²⁸ And it has been pointed out that when a celebrant opts to wear ‘ordinary clothes’ when presiding at the Eucharist, their very ordinariness makes an extraordinary theological and sociological point.¹²⁹ In that case there can be no such thing as sartorial neutrality, nor, one suspects, ‘academic neutrality’.

The Hood

The hood began life purely as a functional garment, to shield the head from the elements. In the early Middle Ages it was the common property of all, and was worn by people of all classes. The style and patterns of the hood were settled in the course of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when, in spite of the garment’s lay origin, the hood was adopted by

119 Art. ‘Gown’ in G. Sandeman, ed. (no date, but probably 1906), Vol. 4, p. 2865.

120 Gribben (2008, 2010), n. 15.

121 T. W. Wood, (1882), p. 20. The reliability of this source is open to question. It has been suggested (by Dr Groves) that Wood may have been reporting what he had been told in response to his enquiries, and that Aberdeen graduates were wearing Geneva gowns in default of another one. McLaren’s observations (2005), p. 109, that students who graduated there in the mid-nineteenth century tended to do so in gowns borrowed from some clerical friend suggests (a) that Dr Groves’s conjecture is probably right, and (b) that Aberdeen’s two college-universities were not too particular in their prescribed requirements for the correct gown to be worn at graduation ceremonies. This probably continued after the Fusion of 1860.

122 See Groves (2002), pp. 15–16.

123 Maxwell (1948), p. 150 and n. 1 on same page.

124 Gribben (2008, 2010), paragraph 1.3.

125 Gribben, *ibid.*, paragraph 2.9.

126 White (2000), p. 108.

127 Gribben, *ibid.*, paragraph 1.3.

128 White (2000), p. 108.

129 Grisbrooke (1978), p. 488, quoted by Duncan (2006), p. 939.

monks, clergy, and by universities.¹³⁰ At first it had no academic significance, but by the fifteenth century, after it had been abandoned as an item of ordinary dress (and particularly in the academic community by undergraduates¹³¹), the hood had come to be regarded as the symbol of the fact that the wearer was a graduate. Early regulations concerning the style and substance of the hood were not so much prescriptive as proscriptive, as sumptuary laws were introduced to curb excesses and to restrict ostentation. However, sumptuary legislation was never particularly effective, and was largely repealed in 1603, which coincides with the abandonment of the hood in the Scottish universities. By that time the hood had developed into the bright and decorative garment worn on specific occasions. After all, the hood is not a vestment but an academic badge.¹³² As such, some denominations now consider it to be an elitist garment for clergy to wear when conducting worship (most notably the Presbyterian Church in the USA) except when preaching at a graduation ceremony.

It is surely conceivable that the rejection of the wearing of hoods by clergy of the Reformed churches in the late twentieth century may also have been a kind of protest against a form of worship that had come to be regarded as too cerebral.

The Bands

Gribben claims that bands are a survival of the old style of academic neckwear, which in due course became formalized.¹³³ However, McMillan, while affirming that bands are undoubtedly of medieval origin, concedes that whether that origin is civil or ecclesiastical remains in dispute.¹³⁴ In some universities (notably Oxford and Cambridge) they are part of the academic dress sometimes but not invariably worn at graduations.¹³⁵

At an Ordination Service in 1979 the Revd Dr John Gray of the University of Edinburgh described the bands as symbolic of the tongues as of fire which appeared at Pentecost and descended on the apostles (Acts 2:3).¹³⁶ While they undoubtedly mean different things in different contexts (they are also worn by academics and English barristers, but not by Scottish advocates¹³⁷ who normally wear a white wing collar and a white bow tie if they are junior counsel, or a linen 'fall' if they are senior counsel¹³⁸), bands are in the Church of Scotland the distinctive mark of ordination. Licentiates and Probationers for the Holy Ministry may not wear them.¹³⁹

130 One curiosity noted by Cant (1950), p. 121, is that the hood was falling into disuse by clergy in Scotland long before any of the country's universities were founded. He notes that the statutes of 1366 at the Cathedral in Aberdeen forbade the use of the hood by canons, and ordered the fur almuce instead. He cites as evidence *Registrum Episcopatus Aberdonensis* (Maitland and Spalding Clubs), Vol. II, p. 62.

131 Macalister (1896), p. 255.

132 Sprott (1882), p. 247. See also Robertson (1869), p. 103.

133 Gribben (2008), p. 2 and p 5, n. 13. Cf. Duncan (2006), p. 933.

134 McMillan (1950), p. 39.

135 Venables and Clifford (1998), p. 7. No bands were worn by candidates at the graduation ceremony when I received my Master of Theology degree from the University of Oxford in 1999.

136 For support of this assertion, see McMillan (1950), p. 40. Other symbolic interpretations are that they may stand for the two tablets of the Mosaic Law, or possibly that they may signify the OT and NT. But they were not designed specifically to be symbolic.

137 McMillan (1950), p. 43.

138 E-mail from Prof. H. A. Kerrigan, QC (13 Aug. 2011). See also Faculty of Advocates (2008), pp. 33–34. (PDF file kindly supplied by Judith Pearson, University of Aberdeen, 18 Aug. 2011).

139 W. McMillan (1950), pp. 36–39.

The Scarf

The scarf, which came into use in the late medieval period, has been defined as ‘a broad band of silk or stuff, doubled and serrated or scalloped at the ends.’¹⁴⁰ At one time it was invariably black,¹⁴¹ but this is no longer the case. As Graham Duncan comments, ‘Plain black preaching scarves have virtually disappeared from use nowadays.’¹⁴² They tend now to be ornamented,¹⁴³ and may be coloured, as black scarves rather lose their effect when worn over a black cassock and gown in the Reformed tradition.¹⁴⁴ No such difficulty arises for Anglicans who wear the black scarf over a white surplice.

The origins and development of the scarf remain in some dispute, but have been variously ‘explained’ as:

(a) a derivation from the medieval canon’s cope, curtailed in shape until it assumed a scarf-like form;¹⁴⁵ however, this is almost certainly wrong. McMillan may be repeating that error when he suggests that the scarf is ‘a remnant of the black cope which was worn at one time by all Clerks in Holy Orders.’¹⁴⁶ It is just possible that the scarf’s source could be the garment termed *cappa nigra*, referred to by Dearmer.¹⁴⁷

(b) a development of the almuce/ames (from the Latin *almutia*), which Hamilton describes as a fur garment worn by the clergy in the Middle Ages, to afford some protection against the cold in unheated churches. This garment had pendant ends in front, which assumed a scarf-like form through time.¹⁴⁸ This suggested derivation (probably suggested by Clark (1894), pp. 25–26) has been described as ‘quite persuasive.’¹⁴⁹ The use of the amuce/ames came to be discontinued in the Established Church (of England) under Elizabeth I, when it became customary to use a tippet or scarf.¹⁵⁰

(c) a relic of the academic hood, descended from the liripipe,¹⁵¹ and which became known as the tippet.¹⁵²

140 Hamilton (1946), p. 32. I am unsure as to what to make of Maxwell’s assertion (1948), p. 152, that the scarf should be 30 to 36 inches in width! My personal (but unsubstantiated) theory is that the scarf should be as wide as the bands are long, i.e. 7½ inches.

141 Hamilton, *ibid.*, p. 32.

142 Duncan, (2006), p. 935.

143 Hamilton (1946), p. 33; McMillan (1950), pp. 38–39.

144 Hamilton (1946), p. 35; McMillan (1950), p. 38.

145 Hamilton (1946), p. 32; cf McMillan (1950), p. 36. The accuracy of these claims is, of course, challenged.

146 McMillan (1950), p. 36. But his use of the word ‘cope’ is probably inept too.

147 Dearmer (1902), p. 133.

148 Hamilton (1946), p. 32; cf McMillan (1950), p. 36. See also Clark (1894), pp. 25–26; Mickelthwaite (1897), p. 59; Dearmer (1902), pp. 127–28; Cross, ed. (1958), p. 38.

149 I am grateful to Dr N. Groves for pointing this out to me. In this respect he seems to be echoing Professor Clark’s own comments, even though the latter does concede that the Scarf is difficult to explain (1894), p. 26.

150 Cope, ‘Vestments’, in Davies, ed., (1972), p. 378.

151 Hamilton (1946), p. 33; cf McMillan (1950), p. 36, and Duncan (2006), pp. 934–35; Gribben (2008–09), Sections 2.11 and 3.6 and n. 12. (Cope, ‘Vestments’, Davies, ed. (1972), p. 378.)

152 This term is as obscure as the Latin *liripipium*. (Cope, ‘Vestments’ in Davies, ed. (1972), p. 378.)

The scarf remained in use in Scotland until the Reformation,¹⁵³ and was worn over the cassock or surplice on all occasions,¹⁵⁴ but was thereafter denounced as a popish garment,¹⁵⁵ and defended in equal measure.¹⁵⁶

The scarf or tippet (along with the gown) was the subject of much ado after Knox's departure from Scotland in 1556,¹⁵⁷ which must have contributed to its disuse in Scotland,¹⁵⁸ and was not readopted until the 1890s (under the influence of the Oxford movement in England and probably also of the Church Service Society north of the border) as a proclamation of rightful ordination.¹⁵⁹ Its form and its usage have been confused in Scotland (as they also were in England) in the nineteenth century,¹⁶⁰ due to the scarf's similarities to the stole. Characteristics of one have frequently been misapplied to the other. The stole has a separate history, and serves a different purpose altogether.

The cold Scottish winter climate in which the effects of biting North East winds can be particularly severe would suggest that the wearing of a scarf be considered a matter of common sense. Knox (Fig. 2) is certainly said to have worn one at St Andrews towards the end of his life, when he was becoming increasingly frail. According to one contemporary eye-witness account, he went about 'with a furring of martens about his neck' and with a staff in one hand, whilst being supported on the other by his servant.¹⁶¹

Revival, rejection, and closing observations

The Reformation was a process, not an event, and although August 1560 marks the formal triumph of Protestantism in Scotland,¹⁶² the work of the Reformers was never done. It became a cherished principle that the *ecclesia reformata* was also the *ecclesia reformanda*, meaning that the Church's task of Reformation was an ongoing and continuing imperative.

Nevertheless, a very thin line separates Reformers from wreckers—and to the casual and uncritical observer, there is often no difference at all. Perhaps this was most evident in

153 Hamilton (1946), p. 33; McMillan (1950), p. 37; Maxwell (1948), pp. 150–53, Maxwell (1955), p. 51.

154 Hamilton (1946), p. 33.

155 Whitley (1960), p. 25.

156 Hamilton, *ibid.* The use of the tippet is recommended in the Anglican canons of 1603 as being 'decent'.

157 Whitley (1960), p. 113.

158 By the time of the Revolution the scarf had gone completely (McMillan, (1950), p. 37).

159 Hamilton (1946), pp. 28, 34, 36; McMillan (1950), p. 38. Suggestions (possibly following Clark (1894), p. 26) that the scarf was seen as a mark of ecclesiastical dignity for certain classes of clergy, e.g. for royal and noble chaplains or prebendaries and canons who adopted it in the late seventeenth century, may be true south of the Border (and are certainly supported by the 74th Canon of the Church of England (1603) (wrongly cited as the 85th Canon by Hamilton (1946), p. 33)), but I cannot find any evidence to support the suggestion that the scarf was so interpreted in Scotland. The Scottish Kirk has traditionally insisted on the principle of the parity of its ordained clergy. Taken to its logical conclusion, the scarf should be worn either by all its ordained clergy or by none.

160 Hamilton (1946), p. 27. Clark (1894), p. 26, had noted this confusion much earlier!

161 See Whitley (1960), p. 214. See also McMillan (1950), p. 37, who cites other examples. Dr Groves asks whether Knox would have worn the scarf in Church for worship. I think he did. See Maxwell (1948), p. 150. McMillan (1950), p. 37, also notes that Knox had no objection to the 'tippet of sables'. It would seem that he did regard it as more than merely a convenient article to help keep him warm in a cold church. However, whether he regarded it as a symbol of lawful ordination (as the silk scarf is now interpreted by the Kirk) must remain a matter of conjecture.

162 Cant (1946), p. 43.



National Gallery of Scotland

FIG. 3 'An Ordination of Elders' by J. H. Lorimer, RSA (1856–1936), showing a double decker pulpit, with a precentor's desk as used in the nineteenth century. Note the bell-sleeved [d2] style Geneva Gown (as described by Harrison (1845), p. 26), worn over cassock and bands, and the lack of an academic hood, which may or may not be significant.

the fact that many of the followers of the Reformers took them to extremes, by behaving with a zeal that no self-respecting leader of the Reformation would ever own. Knox deplored the vandalism of what he called 'the rascal multitude';¹⁶³ he was not the only leader who sought to distance himself from some of the excessive actions of his 'supporters'. The vandalism of artefacts and the theft of church property also appalled Calvin.¹⁶⁴

The idealism of the Reformers who drew up a detailed scheme for the education of the populace in the *First Book of Discipline* was never fulfilled. At best it was a counsel of perfection; at worst, it was a completely unrealistic manifesto.¹⁶⁵ The commitment to an educated ministry remained; but even among some academics, education was more important than degrees.¹⁶⁶ The universities went into decline. Nevertheless, throughout the turbulence of the seventeenth century (and particularly after 1638, when many ministers

¹⁶³ Whyte, in Forrester and Murray, eds. (1996), p. 161. For further details of their orgy of destruction, see Dawson, in Forrester and Gay, eds. (2009), p. 137ff, esp. 139.

¹⁶⁴ Fergusson (2009), p. 29.

¹⁶⁵ Cant (1946), p. 43ff, and esp. 45.

¹⁶⁶ Cant (1946), p. 54ff.

appeared at the General Assembly in Glasgow ‘in ordinary clothes and armed¹⁶⁷) when Church and Crown were frequently in conflict, robes were rarely worn by the clergy ‘unless they were professors of divinity or persons remarkable for age and gravity’.¹⁶⁸ Attempts were made periodically by the Church to restore some formality into the dress of its ministers, by reintroducing first the gown, and later, the hood. These met with considerable resistance; and certain pronouncements by the Church’s courts were observed only in the breach.

Since 1688 the General Assembly has issued no directions on ministerial attire.¹⁶⁹ However, that was not the case with the Provincial Synods; and in 1696, the Synod of Dumfries enacted that ‘This Synod, considering that it is a thing very decent and suitable, so it hath been the practice of ministers in the Kirk formerly to wear black gowns in the pulpit, do therefore, by this Act, recommend it to all their brethren within their bounds to keep up that laudable custom, and to study gravity in their apparel and deportment every manner of way.’¹⁷⁰ Yet it is recorded that one hundred years after the passing of that Act, when Dr John Wightman (1762–1847),¹⁷¹ parish minister at Kirkmahoe (just outside Dumfries), began early in his ministry to wear a gown in the pulpit,¹⁷² there was a rebellion in the community led by the precentor,¹⁷³ and many left the church, refusing to sit or to sing under a man ‘clothed with such a Babylonish garment.’¹⁷⁴

A similar occurrence took place in the same area a few years later, involving the Minister of the Relief Church in Dumfries.¹⁷⁵ But the gown and bands were generally accepted as normal (but not universal) clerical attire within the Church of Scotland in the nineteenth century. That is clear from J. H. Lorimer’s painting ‘An Ordination of Elders’, which shows an elderly minister so attired, with his hands raised in blessing.¹⁷⁶ (See Fig. 3.) However, G. W. Sprott notes that in his time (1882) there were still a number of parishes where the reintroduction of gown and bands would have caused a storm.¹⁷⁷

The reason the hood was not also adopted so quickly is that the universities did not prescribe them.

167 Maxwell (1955), p. 81.

168 Quoted Maxwell (1955), p. 131.

169 Sprott (1882), *ibid.*, p. 244. The Assembly of 1575, however, did legislate against the use of velvet for the manufacture of the ‘preaching gown’ (Sprott, p. 246).

170 Quoted Sprott (1882), p. 245.

171 He was ordained and inducted to his charge in 1797, but did not receive his DD from the University of Glasgow until 1837 (Scott, ed. (1917), Vol. II, p. 283).

172 This fact is confirmed by McMillan (1949), p. 30.

173 *i.e.* the leader of the congregation’s praise.

174 Quoted Sprott (1882), p. 245. According to Maxwell (1955), the revival of the practice of wearing ministerial robes began towards the end of the eighteenth century, but then only in church (p. 130).

175 For details, see McDowall (1867, 4th edn, 1986), p. 762, and McElvie et al., eds., (1873), pp. 143–45. The Relief Church was a denomination founded in 1761 by Thomas Gillespie (1708–74) who had been deposed from the ministry of the Kirk in 1752. He founded the Presbytery of the Relief, a tolerant and liberal group ‘to provide relief for ministers and congregations that wished to leave the Church of Scotland.’ The Relief Church had a total of 136 congregations when it merged in 1847 with the United Secession Church to form the United Presbyterian Church. See ‘United Presbyterian Church (Scotland)’ in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. x, p. 269.

176 The picture can also be found in M. Patrick (1949), plate opposite p. 161.

177 Sprott (1882), p. 246.



FIG. 4



FIG. 5

FIG. 4 The author in traditional clerical dress. The Geneva Gown with split sleeves is worn over cassock and bands. Note the (silk) scarf adorned with the St. Andrew's cross.

FIG. 5 Hood of a Master of Theology (MTh) (Oxon).

The Geneva gown

Professor James Cooper held (in opposition to Sprott (1882), p. 246) that this type of gown was the true Geneva gown. Its use has been popularised by successive Moderators of the General Assembly, and is said to bear a better resemblance to the older 'cloak' of Presbyterianism than any other type of gown (McMillan (1949), p. 31). It is often described by clerical tailors and robemakers as the 'Scottish style' gown, and has similarities with the 'Organist's gown', the sleeves of which allow for greater freedom of movement by the arms.



FIG. 6



FIG. 7

FIG. 6 The author wearing his doctoral gown and hood (DMin, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary) together with bands and scarf. The lightweight gown which is worn closed dispenses with the need for a cassock.

FIG. 7 DMin hood, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. Note also the doctoral bars on the gown.

Photographs courtesy of Mr Archie Mitchell, M.A.

The turning point appears to have been the Universities (Scotland) Act, 1858. This was ‘An Act to make Provision for the better Governance and Discipline of the Universities of *Scotland*, and improving and regulating the Course of Study therein; and for the Union of the Two Universities and Colleges of *Aberdeen*.’¹⁷⁸ Its main purpose was to define the offices of Chancellor and Principal, to determine the rights and privileges of professors, and to set up University Courts, *Senatus Academici*, and General Councils. It also made provisions for the regulation of degrees, but did not make any specific recommendations for the restoration of reintroduction of academic dress. However, James Scotland claims that the Act helped to reintroduce the practice of graduation, even though, as late as 1876, a Commission reported that in Glasgow, ‘only one arts student in six or seven ever proceeded to take a degree.’¹⁷⁹ This continued a two-hundred-year-old tradition (at least at Aberdeen), which considered that graduation was optional—and which viewed it as expensive and unnecessary.¹⁸⁰ If James Scotland is right in his assessment of the 1858 Act in reversing that trend, it would seem natural to suppose that the reintroduction of academic hoods as well as caps and gowns at graduation ceremonies was another consequence. The University of St Andrews seems to have led the way, by reintroducing a scheme of academic dress around 1865–66,¹⁸¹ and others quickly followed. The hostility to taking degrees in Divinity, particularly prevalent amongst Presbyterian Seceders,¹⁸² whose theological colleges or ‘halls’ never awarded degrees,¹⁸³ took an unconscionable time to die. The last Scottish university to reintroduce degrees in Divinity was Edinburgh, which did so in 1864.¹⁸⁴ These developments coincided with a period of liturgical revival in the Church of Scotland, which culminated in the founding of the Church Service Society in 1865. One of the Society’s early publications was the *Euchologion*, or *Book of Common Order* (1867), which provided dignified Orders of Worship for various occasions, and proved to be highly influential. One cannot discount the influence of this Society for fostering a renewed interest in the appropriate forms of dress for those exercising ministerial functions.

By 1882 the wearing of hoods by graduate ministers of the Kirk seems to have become more common. Sprott notes that ‘Some clergymen now wear not only gown and band, but the hood of their degree in church, and on other occasions on which they are called upon to do ministerial duty.’¹⁸⁵ He wrote that ‘This was long the English practice, but is now given up across the Borders by those who affect sacerdotal vestments. The hood is a purely academic badge.’¹⁸⁶

Perhaps the example of wearing the hood was set by the ‘higher’ or honorary doctors, i.e. those who had been awarded the degree of DD or LLD. Photographs from the nineteenth century tend to depict ‘the great and the good’, who rose to prominence in the life of the Church. Prime examples from the end of the nineteenth century are of former

178 Italics and capitals are original.

179 Scotland (1959), Vol. 1, p. 335.

180 Carter (2005), p. 42; cf. Scotland (1969), Vol. 1, p. 335.

181 Cant (1946), pp. 119ff. This, according to Cant, also coincided with the more regular granting of degrees.

182 Sprott (1882), p. 247–48.

183 I believe this was also the case with the English dissenting academies.

184 Scotland (1969), Vol. 1, p. 353. James Scotland is not quite correct here. St Andrews also reintroduced the BD in the same year (Cant (1946), p. 108).

185 Sprott (1882), pp. 247–48.

186 *Ibid.*, p. 248.

Moderators, who are shown wearing doctoral hoods; earlier photographs of these same clergymen at the time of their ordination tend to show them in gown and bands only. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the hood was viewed at first as something of a novelty which was much misunderstood by the ordinary people. James Simpson quotes the example of Dr Walter Ross Taylor (1838–1907) who was Moderator of the Free Church of Scotland's General Assembly in 1900. When he was awarded a DD by the University of Glasgow in 1891 a visitor to his Church at Kelvinside asked a member of the congregation if it was to be the good doctor who was conducting worship that day. When he appeared from the vestry to proceed towards the pulpit, his identity was confirmed with the stage whisper, 'Aye, aye, it's himself with his jeely bag on his back.'¹⁸⁷

Rejection

When, as a recent graduate in Arts, I began my Divinity studies in 1974 and embarked on the first of my three student attachments, with a view to proceeding to the ministry of the Church of Scotland, I was expected to wear at least a preaching gown when participating in public worship. For my first attachment, in deference to the fact that my supervising minister was not a graduate, I tactfully chose not to wear my MA hood over it. After all, 'a servant is not greater than his master' (St Matthew 10:24). However, I did wear it throughout the course of my next two attachments, as my supervisors were both graduates.¹⁸⁸ I continued to observe the same principle during my probationary period, when after being licensed as a Preacher of the Gospel, I served in Edinburgh. My practice then (which my supervisor encouraged) was to wear a cassock, gown and hood, and a black preaching scarf,¹⁸⁹ but not bands.

When I was ordained by the Presbytery of Kirkcaldy in August 1978, and admitted to my first Charge, the wearing of robes by all ministers and academic hoods by those who were graduates at public worship and on formal occasions when the Presbytery met for Ordinations, Inductions, or the Licensing of Students, was considered to be *de rigueur*.¹⁹⁰

When in 1987 I moved to St Mary's, Dumfries, in the Presbytery of Dumfries & Kirkcudbright, I began to be aware of changes in ministerial attitudes. At my service of Induction, the preacher, who was not a graduate, wore a curious unlined black hood, which was described by someone as 'the hood of knowledge', but was probably a Literate's hood.¹⁹¹ In

187 i.e. a bag through which fruit juice is strained when making jelly or jam. (Definition from *Chambers's 20th Century Dictionary*.) Quotation is from James A. Simpson (1986), p. 26.

188 This appears to have been normal practice by Divinity students for many years. See Lewis Cameron (1965), p. 94.

189 If McMillan is correct (1950), p. 39, I should not have worn a scarf during my period of probation. My defence is that the scarf I wore then was made of stuff rather than of silk (as permitted by Maxwell (1948), p. 152).

190 The Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion wrote in the 1954 edition of the *Ordinal and Service Book* that in connection with Services in Church Courts, 'Robes shall be worn by the officiating Ministers and by all other Ministers of the Presbytery. Probationers and Lay Readers at their Licensing shall wear a gown An Ordinand at his ordination shall wear cassock and gown, but without bands ... A Minister at his Induction shall wear his customary robes.' [Church of Scotland, (1954) unnumbered page, opposite p. 1]. These directions are omitted from the revised and expanded edition published in 1962. The Interim Edition of May 2001 which has superseded the 1962 book makes no mention about what dress is appropriate for such occasions.

191 Groves (2002), pp. 15–16. The Yahoo Academic Dress E-group also has some pertinent observations to make about the provenance and propriety of such hoods.

the course of my fifteen years there, I began to encounter colleagues who objected on principle to the wearing of any robes,¹⁹² and to others who were reasonably content to retain them, but without the hood to which they were entitled.

In 2002 when I went to Orkney, in response to a call from the Church and Parish of South Ronaldsay & Burray, a very different situation obtained. I found that the Presbytery of Orkney had ‘a very ersatz approach to robes’,¹⁹³ and that they were hardly ever worn. Most ministers rarely wore even clerical collars, and on formal occasions like Inductions it was impossible to tell which presbyters were ministers and which were elders—which I found somewhat disconcerting.

Since returning to the mainland in 2008 when I was called to Aberdeen, the trend towards informality at Presbytery has continued, though not in quite such an extreme form as in the Northern Isles. Robes are still worn at Inductions, but whereas at one time the Moderator of Presbytery would always be robed for ordinary meetings, that no longer happens.¹⁹⁴

A very strong spirit of anti-clericalism is growing within the Church of Scotland. Distinctions between clergy and laity are increasingly considered odious, but I feel that the tendency towards ‘over-identification’ is wrong and misguided, and is due to a misinterpretation of the concept of the priesthood (or ministry) of all believers. It was as long ago as 1941 that Gordon Rupp wrote, ‘Much nonsense has been written about the “Priesthood of all Believers”. It has even, with an inverted sacerdotalism, been treated as though it meant the ‘Laity of All the Priesthood’ and that ministers and laymen are all equal, especially the laymen.’¹⁹⁵

This pseudo-egalitarian argument is not new. It has been around since the time of the Reformation, but the gist of it is that the wearing of academic dress is elitist. Bruce Prewer, a Minister of the Uniting Church in Australia, seeks deliverance ‘from the conceit that looks for public praise and honours; from the vainglory that flaunts diplomas and degrees; and from the arrogance of religious and moral swagger’.¹⁹⁶ He speaks for many in the Reformed tradition today. While I certainly have no desire to parade any pretensions to scholarship, and would wish to be delivered from conceit, vainglory, and arrogance, I do still wish to demonstrate a commitment to my belief in the necessity of an educated clergy; and I do not feel that I should have to apologize for possessing academic qualifications that took me fourteen years to earn.

192 They can at least claim that they are returning to primitive practice: for the first five centuries of the Christian Era there was no distinction of dress between clergy and laity (Dickie and Pye (1980), p. 635, Holeton (2002), pp. 465–66).

193 Comment from a colleague who accompanied me to my Service of Induction.

194 Of course, since 1996 it is no longer required that the Moderator of Presbytery should be a Minister, following the amending of Act XXI (1944) to allow any member of Presbytery to be chosen for the office of Moderator. See D. F. M. Macdonald, ed. (1976), p. 147, and J. L. Weatherhead, ed. (1997), p. 97. There is nothing to prevent an Elder appointed as a Moderator from wearing academic dress if he or she is a graduate.

195 In Rupp (1941), pp. 26–27, cf *The Righteousness of God* (1953), p. 315, both quoted in John Vickers (n.d.), p. 11.

196 Prewer (1979, 1981), p. 100.

There is, however, a worthy custom that hoods are not worn over robes at Holy Communion, or at Funerals,¹⁹⁷ or on Good Friday, when colours are traditionally considered to be inappropriate.¹⁹⁸

Graham Duncan has noted an exception to the prohibition on hoods at funerals;¹⁹⁹ the only other reference I have noted in support of this departure from tradition concerns the funeral of the Revd Prof. D. M. Baillie in 1954, when the staff of the University of St Andrews wore their hoods as a mark of respect.²⁰⁰

If the hood is now obsolescent, it may be due to a variety of factors. One that certainly cannot be discounted is the advancing spirit of ‘modernization’ and secularization in education²⁰¹ and in politics,²⁰² which has been gathering strength since the mid 1960s. ‘Tradition’ is under siege, though curiously, every new Scottish university established since 1960 has prescribed a scheme of academical dress,²⁰³ but perhaps, in the ecclesiastical context, it is true to say as Erik Routley does, that there is no place for conservative values in a Church engaged on a pilgrimage.²⁰⁴

The publication of the *New English Bible* in 1961 was considered by many to be the first move away from archaic language in worship, and to a less formal manner of speech. The translators sought to employ a contemporary idiom, rather than to reproduce the traditional ‘biblical’ language.²⁰⁵ Erik Routley spoke in 1964 of the need for ‘a new vocabulary’ in worship,²⁰⁶ and in 1979 the compilers of a new *Book of Common Order* spoke of how ‘the

197 The ‘General Directions for Presbytery Services’ issued by the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa in 1984 so affirm. See Duncan (2006) 934. Maxwell states that hoods should not be worn at the ministration of the sacraments (1948), p. 152.

198 At a united Service for Good Friday, at which the guest preacher in the Church where I was Minister was the Very Revd Prof. James Whyte, I declined to wear my hood. Much to the discomfort of my neighbouring colleague, Professor Whyte agreed with me, so no hoods were worn!

199 The example he cites is of the funeral of the Revd S. B. Ngcobo, a former General Secretary of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa, who died in June 1994. He says that it is common in the black community for hoods to be worn by all graduates at the funeral of a graduate (2006), p. 935.

200 Memoir by Professor John Dow in Baillie (1955), p. 19. Dr Baillie (1887–1954) held the Chair of Systematic Theology at St Andrews from 1934 until his death.

201 Gowns are no longer worn in schools on a daily basis as they were when I attended Secondary School from 1965 to 1971.

202 One thinks of how many local authorities discarded official robes after the first major reorganization in the 1970s. The ‘Kirk of the Council’ has since lost much of its colourful ceremonial. To this one could add the fact that when the Scottish Parliament was re-established in 1999, the Presiding Officer was given no official robe, unlike the Speaker in the House of Commons.

203 See Groves, ed. (2011), 2 vols, vol. 1, pp. 59ff, 153ff, 173ff, 190ff, 202ff, 210, 335ff, 340ff, 349ff, 382ff, 385ff, 423ff. The ‘new’ institutions referred to are the Universities of Abertay (in Dundee), Dundee, Heriot-Watt (in Edinburgh), Napier (in Edinburgh), Highland and Islands, Caledonian (in Glasgow), Queen Margaret (in Edinburgh), Robert Gordon (in Aberdeen), Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, and the Universities of Stirling, Strathclyde, and West of Scotland (formerly Paisley).

204 Routley (1964), p. 155.

205 Preface to the *New English Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. v.

206 Routley (1964), pp. 159ff.

challenge of language' had 'thrust itself upon the Church increasingly in the last decade'²⁰⁷ and of how (with special reference to the Order for Holy Baptism), it seemed 'that the Church was perhaps unable to hear the word of God for the din of theological words.'²⁰⁸

It was inevitable that such ground-breaking changes in attitude, aimed at encouraging much greater informality in the language of worship would also be accompanied by a similar informality in dress at worship, both by its leaders and its participants. The clerical frock coat, which was once worn by all Conveners when giving in reports to the General Assembly, and was also worn for the conduct of worship by those who considered robes to be inappropriate,²⁰⁹ has now virtually disappeared, even from the most formal of occasions.

But while the substance of the faith will always be more important than the 'mere ceremonial' that often accompanies the practical expression of it, it is true, as Jeffrey Meyers has pointed out, that 'Many mistakenly think that avoiding formality and ceremony is an evidence of faith and humility.'²¹⁰ He goes on to quote C. S. Lewis as having said that 'The modern habit of doing ceremonial things unceremoniously is no proof of humility; rather it proves the worshipper's inability to forget himself in the rite, and his readiness to spoil for everyone else the proper place of ritual.'²¹¹

It was perhaps a realization of this truth that led the Kirk's Panel on Worship to report to the General Assembly of 1994 that while the issue of ministerial dress was not a matter of law within the church, 'the question of appropriateness should be honestly and comprehensively considered. Those who for personal reasons wish to refrain from wearing robes or a cassock have to reckon with how this is perceived by the congregation. It might feel slighted that the person who has been ordained to perform liturgical functions wishes at such moments just to be like one of them.'²¹² The issue, in the view of the Panel, 'has wider resonances than those which echo within the minister's own conscience.'²¹³

The practice of 'dressing down' for worship, which has resulted from a peculiar alliance of Evangelicals and Radicals, has led to the marginalization of traditionalists who wish to adhere to conservative liturgical practices. This lowering of sartorial standards (if that is indeed what it is) has frequently been deplored (most recently in the responses to a questionnaire issued by the General Assembly's Assembly Arrangements Committee),²¹⁴ but the protests of a vocal minority are not likely to carry much weight in the current climate.

Since 2003 the General Assembly has been reluctant to seek to legislate on matters that have previously been issues of tradition and custom, and has been aware that there is nothing in the law of the church that governs such matters.²¹⁵

Forces secular and spiritual look like consigning the use of the academic gown and hood in worship to the dustbin of ecclesiastical history. This one can only lament.

207 Church of Scotland (1979), p. viii.

208 Ibid., p. xii.

209 Dix notes an example of this practice in *The Shape of the Liturgy* (1945, 1970), p. 445. It was obsolescent even then.

210 Meyers (1997).

211 Quoted Meyers, *ibid.*, from Lewis (1961), p. 17.

212 Church of Scotland (1994), p. 290.

213 Ibid, p. 290.

214 *Reports* (2009), 6.1/25.

215 *Reports* (2003), 17/19.

In a Church where unreconstructed traditionalists are about as welcome as a gang of 'hoodies' rampaging through our city centres, it is all too easy to see how those who believe that the academic hood ought to remain an integral feature of Scottish ecclesiastical dress, and wish to continue wearing it when conducting public worship feel that they are becoming increasingly marginalized, and considered *personae non gratae*. But although the 'hooded crow' may well be an endangered species, thankfully it is not yet completely extinct.

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