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## COLLEGE

**Bonnie Prince Charlie: Charles Edward Stuart and the Jacobite Movement, 1720-2020**
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In an age of crisis and change, of sustainability, environmental and biological threat, the concerns of eighteenth-century European royalty can seem impossibly remote. The conquests of Frederick the Great, the court culture of Joseph II, Whig anxieties over the conduct of the youthful George III, the brutalities of Peter and the appetites of Catherine the Great, are alike limited in their box office appeal. Yet these were all central in their day. 2020 it may be, but we are not blessed with 20:20 vision in hindsight.

This year is the 300th anniversary of the birth of Prince Charles Edward Stuart (1720-88), who never reigned-far less ruled-and even whose claim to the British thrones was-unlike his father, James 'III and VIII''s-barely recognized. It was James whom Charles sought to restore to his thrones, not himself: by the time James died in 1766 that was in any case an impossibility. Yet this princeling, who spent his early life agitating and begging across Europe for military aid and political support, and his later years in alcoholism and domestic abuse, remains a figure of fame and fascination, one many find it hard to do justice to, a myth more than a man. For the caricaturist-and this used to include some historians who should know better-this friend of Montesquieu who was supported by Voltaire is an out of touch representative of Catholic absolutism, whose futile attempt to disturb Augustan Britain ended in well-merited disaster. For others, Charles is a romantic hero who almost changed history. Who was Bonnie Prince Charlie? is one question I shall ask in the ensuing lecture.

The answer will be dependent on a second question. Who were the Jacobites, and what did they want? For as is the case with-for example- Henry VIII or Elizabeth-the famous royal figures of the past are usually famous for their association with geopolitical or cultural and religious changes which still resonate today. But no Reformation, Armada or Shakespeare stands to Charles Edward's credit, even by association, nor can he aspire to the voluptuous grandeur and tyranny of his Tudor forebears. Yet perhaps the mythology of the man and his cause tells us more than we think about ourselves and our past. At one spot-Glenfinnan-on 19 August 1745, Charles Edward and his supporters raised the Royal Standard of his father amid shouts of 'Long live King James VIII. Prosperity to Scotland and no Union!' from a small following which grew from 400 to 1100 with the arrival of a battalion under Donald Cameron of Lochiel later in the day. That event, and the Rising it made possible which ended at Culloden, underpin a great deal of what Great Britain was to become, as well as raising the questions which once-and now again-threaten its coherence as a political unit. In 2018, almost 500 000 people visited this remote spot at the head of Loch Shiel, where a monument of a Scots Highlander stands on a tower designed by James Gillespie Graham in 1815, as an act of tribute and gratitude to the men of 1745 and the role their descendants had played in British victory in the Napoleonic Wars. The Jacobite express steam train from Fort William to Mallaig runs over the viaduct opposite, which is also the route for the Hogwarts Express in the Harry Potter films. The Scottish Highlands are still a locale for magic and romance. Diana Gabaldon's *Outlander* books on the Jacobite era may not match J.K. Rowling, but their tale of the times of Charlie's Rising has sold almost 30 million copies.

*Who were the Jacobites, and what did they want?* The Jacobite claim arose from the exclusion of the senior Stuart heir from the British thrones in 1688-89. James II and VII had almost been excluded

from the throne before he ascended it on account of his Catholicism. While his daughters were Anglicans, the unexpected birth of a son on 10 June 1688 by his second wife Mary of Modena led to fears of a Catholic dynasty, and seven grandees (the Earls of Danby, Devonshire and Shrewsbury, Viscount Lumley, the Bishop of London, Edward Russell and Henry Sydney, both of the last of whom were later rewarded with titles) contacted James's nephew and son-in-law, William of Orange, who invaded on 5 November. James fled and was subsequently excluded from the English crown under the fiction that he had abdicated, and William and Mary were declared joint sovereigns. In Scotland, the Claim of Right in 1689 went further in stating that James had forfeited his office by his conduct, a more radical reading that some argue can be traced back to the Declaration of Arbroath in 1320.

Although the Williamite succession was declared a Glorious (that is, bloodless) Revolution by John Hampden in 1689 and is still commonly known by that name today, it was anything but in Scotland and Ireland, where major battles were fought at the Boyne and Aughrim. The last part of the British Isles held for James-the Bass Rock off the Lothian coast- did not surrender until 1694. The Jacobites subsequently launched a large number of official or unofficial attempts at a restoration: the 1696 Assassination Plot, the 1708, 1715, 1719 and 1745 Risings, the Atterbury and Elibank Plots of 1722 and 1752, and the final 1759 attempt which foundered at Quiberon Bay. As late as the American and French revolutions, elements reached out to Charles Edward in the nascent United States and in 1795 his brother Henry was proposed as a possible candidate for King of Ireland by the French Directory. The Jacobites frequently received direct French help, and in 1719 Spanish troops. Russia, Sweden and Prussia were also at times favourably disposed to them. The exclusion of all Catholic heirs in England by the Act of Settlement in 1701 (into which Scotland was incorporated by the Union of 1707) led to the heirs of Sophia of Hanover succeeding to the British thrones as well as the Hanoverian Electorate, and given Hanover's role in the politics of central Europe, countries engaged with the Jacobites who might not have done so otherwise. It was troublesome to have Great Britain united with Hanover, and although this German element in the British multi-kingdom monarchy has disappeared from our history and historical memory, it was very useful in that history, not least at Waterloo, where the Hanoverian Army formed an important part of Wellington's direct command. It was only an accident of Salic Law that prevented Victoria succeeding to the now Kingdom of Hanover in 1837, and thus Hanover-though ruled by Ernest Augustus, fifth son of William IV under the British Royal Arms-left the British polity. Had Hanover remained British, the history of modern Germany would hardly have seemed possible, for Bismarck's Prussia would have faced both the British and Austrian empires in its struggle to unite Germany.

The exclusion of the Stuarts was not simply the replacement of one dynasty by another. James and his son were not only the senior heirs of the Scottish royal line and recognized as kings in Ireland, where the *Lia Fáil*, identified with the Scottish Stone of Destiny, had been in legend used in the crowning of the High Kings of Ireland at Tara. The Stuarts were also the senior heirs of the House of Tudor (by the marriage of James IV to Henry VII's daughter), Plantagenet (via Joan, John's daughter and wife of Alexander II) and Wessex (by the marriage of Maél Coluim mac Donnchada (Ceann Mór) III of Scotland to St Margaret, granddaughter of Edmund Ironside, whose brother Edgar had been elected the last Saxon king by the Witanegemot in 1066). It was thus important to the new regime to challenge their legitimacy. James's son James, Prince of Wales, was named 'the Pretended Prince of Wales' in a desperate-though, at the time, widely believed- attempt to cast doubt on that legitimacy. The terms Old and Young Pretender for James and Charles arise from this, and therefore-though still widely used-are terms of bias. The best compromise is to name James's son James 'III and VIII' in inverted commas as his claim was widely recognized in Europe, while leaving Charles as Prince, since his claim was not.

More changed than the wearer of the crown in 1688-89. The doctrine of absolute Parliamentary sovereignty was born in England, although it had to await its final development as the doctrine of the Crown in Parliament to the 1720 Declaratory Act and its formalization as part of the British constitution to the nineteenth century. The new polity which emerged centralized rapidly: the Council of Wales and the Marches was finally abolished in 1694, the Union with Scotland was agreed in 1706-7 and legislation to render the Irish Parliament subsidiary followed shortly afterwards, although this was to be a bone of contention until its final abolition in 1800. Scotland and Ireland were both marginalized and the national debt and modern bond markets were created in London on the Dutch model to serve as an engine for the capitalization of war with France. This was a new vision of the state, the influence of which can still be felt in the Brexit arguments of the last four years, with their stress on the absolute quality of parliamentary sovereignty. It replaced the looser multi-kingdom monarchy of the Stuarts with a powerful and purposeful state. Jacobitism opposed this state, but it was a divided opposition.

English Jacobites had an assortment of grievances, including rule by Dutch and German foreigners, the dilution of crown-centred Anglicanism by the Lutheran Georges, the national debt, stock and bond markets and the rise of urban mercantile values, the consequent waning power of the landed interest, and the frequency of Continental conflicts and British protection of Hanover's interests. Scottish and Irish Jacobites were more focused. The Jacobites of Scotland saw restoring James to the thrones of England, Scotland and Ireland as a return to a set of very different political arrangements, restoring the three kingdom monarchy model of the 1660-88 period, with its royal capitals at London, Edinburgh and Dublin. That would entail the restoration of the Scottish Estates (Parliament) and the end of the Union of 1707 between England and Scotland, together with the restoration of the Episcopal Church as a counterbalance to perceived Presbyterian fanaticism. In Ireland, the increased sovereignty of the Irish Parliament to the point of autonomy and the restoration of Catholic rights and landownership were central. In support of achieving these goals, thousands of Scots and especially Irish troops entered the service of Continental armies, especially in France. The first major figure of modern Irish nationalism, Daniel O'Connell (1775-1847), had an uncle who was a general in the French service: in the 1820s, the connexions between Irish nationalism and Jacobitism were plain for all to see, and they persisted-though less visibly-into the modern era. At one time or another , the Jacobites could call on tens of thousands of men who were not just supporters, but willing to risk their lives as traitors in the eyes of their own government: my Jacobite Officer database lists over 3000 commissioned officers in the Jacobite armies alone, leaving aside those who served as exiled Jacobites in the armies of foreign powers: http://bit.ly/OJAdb

Initially established in Saint-Germain-en-Laye in Louis XIV's old palace, rendered redundant by the building of Versailles, the Jacobite court was displaced by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 and eventually found its way to the Palazzo del Re in Rome in 1719. Here, Charles Edward Stuart was born on 31 December 1720 (New Style)  to James 'III and VIII' and Maria Clementina Sobieska, the daughter of the eldest son of John III Sobieski of Poland and Lithuania, still famous for his part in the victory over the Ottoman Empire at Vienna in 1683. This exiled king's eldest son grew up as the great hope of the Jacobite movement. James was seen as a man of integrity, but more effective as an administrator than a leader and lacking the quality to inspire. By 1744, ten years after Charles had first seen military action, Louis XV's France, embarrassed by its position in the War of the Austrian Succession was ready to launch an invasion on his behalf: but the build up of forces was slow, British intelligence alert, and the French Court was divided, with its diplomats leaking details of the venture to their British counterparts. Furious when it was abandoned, Charles decided to launch a Rising himself, even though the vast majority of his supporters regarded French troops as critical to success.

The 1745 Rising has traditionally been seen as a purely private enterprise devised by Charles with financial and other support from exiled Jacobites, but it is more likely to have been a deniable special operation of the French government, not least as Charles enlisted a few hundred Irish troops in the service of the French Crown to sail with his force on the 64-gun *Elisabeth*, which he could hardly have done without tacit approval. The *Elisabeth* and the *Du Teillay*, a 16-gun privateer, set sail on 5 July 1745 to restore Charles's father and destroy the post-1707 British state in its current form. Four days later, the scale of this task was clear when the Royal Navy's *Lion*, an ancient 60-gun fourth rate, damaged the *Elisabeth* so badly she had to return to port with all Charles's surviving soldiers and his 20 artillery pieces. On 23 July, the *Du Teillay* made landfall at Eriskay with Charles and a handful of men, including his Lieutenant General, the Marquess of Tullibardine and legitimate Duke of Atholl and Colonel John Sullivan, his quartermaster-general and a French regular. Sullivan and Sir John MacDonald, a cavalry officer in the French service, were the only effective soldiers Charles had. But in three weeks of wheedling, charisma, promises and hope Charles gathered 1100-1200 men at Glenfinnan to raise the Royal standard.

Charles's army would eventually reach 12-14 000 men, something like a quarter of the size of the British Army at the time. His forces were victorious outside Fort William on 14 August, defeated the 1st Foot on the 16th and after entering Edinburgh a month later when the gate was providentially left open (the Jacobite Lord Provost, Archibald Stewart (the clue may be in the name), would later escape with a Not Proven verdict) overcame the British Army in Scotland under General Cope at Prestonpans. On 14 October, Charles issued a Declaration ending the Union and declaring the British Parliament 'unlawful', but despite speculation in government circles that he would recall the Scots Estates and wait for French troops (France had now sent an ambassador, the Marquis d'Eguilles, though his exact diplomatic credentials were a touch vague), the decision to march south-strategically correct, given the military and fiscal forces opposing him-was taken by a single vote. In the end, that conditional commitment underpinned the decision taken against Charles's wishes to retreat from Derby undefeated on 5 December after French troops had landed in Scotland, and the road to Culloden-though interspersed with further victories at Inverurie and Falkirk-had now begun. To summarize all the 'what ifs' that have surrounded the question of the Jacobite retreat, if they advanced their chances of success were small; as soon as they retreated, they were non-existent. England was not a militarized society, and although Charles fared no worse in recruiting Englishmen (about 1000) than his great-uncle Charles II had done in taking a Scots army to Worcester in 1651, it was not enough on either occasion. Not since the thirteenth century had a Scottish army penetrated to London, though now the way lay open, and the ramshackle force at Finchley was all that stood between Charles's army and the capital. They would almost certainly have entered it at least. As it was, the Jacobite Army, with many of its men absent or exhausted, and fighting on ground not of its choosing in the wake of an unsuccessful night attack, was defeated at Culloden four months later.

There were fewer than 14000 men in total on the field that cold wet April day on the edge of Europe, but Culloden is still one of the decisive battles of the world. If the Jacobites had won the campaign-and here it is true victory at Culloden alone would have made little difference-the maximalist case is that a restored Stuart would once again have adopted-as Charles I, Charles II and James II and VII all had-terms of cohabitation rather than confrontation with France. In such a case, the war of 1756-63 would not have occurred, the American Revolution would have run the risk of French power in North America and might not have occurred or succeeded, the financial crisis faced by France would have been averted, the Revolution of 1789 would not have taken place, and the son of a commander in the Corsican resistance to France would not have become its Emperor in 1804 and changed the face of Europe.

Fanciful at its extremes as this case may be, the actual effects of the battle and its result were real enough. This was a battle for an end to the Anglo-Scottish Union and the restoration of a fully multi-kingdom monarchy, and that alone makes it relevant today. But at the time, the integration of Scotland's military resources into Great Britain's imperial forces was far more relevant. The brutal aftermath of Culloden was succeeded by a prolonged presence of the British Army in Scotland, which went on for over a decade, with 10-12 000 men deployed at over 400 garrison points and outposts across the country, not just in the 'Highlands'. In the end, a course suggested by Colonel James Wolfe (commander at Perth and elsewhere) and others was adopted to end the associated problems of low-level resistance. In June 1751, Wolfe recommended the incorporation of disaffected Scots into the British army in these famous terms: it would be 'no great mischief if they fall. How can you better employ a secret enemy than by making his end conducive to the common good?'. William, 2nd Viscount Barrington, the Secretary at War, supported this idea, and Thomas Pelham-Holles, Duke of Newcastle, Prime Minister 1754-56 and 1757-62, passed on this suggestion to William Pitt, who in turn persuaded George II to approve the extensive recruitment of ex-Jacobites in the wake of the British defeat at Monongehala in 1755. In Canada, they were critical in securing victory at Quebec, and the roll call of Scottish commanders that followed, from Abercrombie to Clyde, Cochrane, Moore and many more, were central in days gone by to the military mythos of the British Empire. The global nature of Jacobitism can be evidenced elsewhere: General Thomas Arthur, comte de Lally, was the Irish Brigade Jacobite (ADC to Charles Edward in 1745) who commanded French forces in India, and was made a scapegoat for their defeat at the same time as Field Marshal James Keith died at Hochkirch in the service of Frederick the Great and became a Prussian folk hero. His body was buried on the field with honour on the orders of Field Marshal Graf von Lacy, his Austrian counterpart and himself a Jacobite exile and the son of an Irish Russian Field Marshal. The military capacity and experience of the leading adherents of the Jacobite cause was formidable, and in different theatres played out in different ways: in Chile, Bernardo O'Higgins, son of the Irish governor Ambrose, welcomed Chile's new admiral Thomas Cochrane to Valparaiso on St Andrew's Day 1819 with Royal Stewart tartan. No treason was intended-though Cochrane's feat of being buried in Westminster Abbey after having commanded the Chilean, Brazilian and Greek navies and entering into a standoff with the Royal Navy in the third of those campaigns-was to be a remarkable one. As late as World War II, the officers' mess in at least one Scottish regiment toasted the king over the water at dinner. The Gorgon shield commissioned by the Duke of Perth was backed in jaguar skin, possibly from Jacobites in south America, while in West Africa a carved ostrich egg proclaimed hopes for the restoration of the Stuarts common among the pirates of the West Indies and Madagascar, many of whom were holders or ex holders of letters of marque from James: Stuart privateers or British pirates. All this tells a story. And this was not the only story told.

If the full incorporation of Scotland, particularly 'Highland' Scotland, into Britain's global military presence was the product of the British Army's presence in Scotland after Culloden, the projection of Romantic Scotland as the dominant global image of the country arose from the creation of a taxonomy of glory, an embrace of both an imagined and empirical Scottish past, which was developed in the Jacobite era and subsequently became a vision of that era transformed by visions of nostalgia, loss and transfiguration. From Alasdair MacMhaighstir Alasdair's (c1698-1770) elegy on MacDonald power in the modern era in *Birlinn Chlann Raghnaill* (Clanranald's Galley) and James Macpherson's (1736-96) Ossian, last of the bards of an heroic Gaelic Scotland, to Walter Scott's (1771-1832) *Redgauntlet* (1824) with its 'Cause' that is 'lost for ever', both Scotland's and that of the Stuarts, the Jacobite iconography of 'Highland' patriotism became the source material for Scotland's global brand. To a large extent this remains the case. Nor were these men innocent of this world themselves. Alasdair was a captain in 1745 and Prince Charles's Gaelic tutor; Macpherson's cousin Lachlan was a lieutenant in Cluny's regiment where more than a dozen of Macpherson's relatives also served; and Scott's own father rode away as a boy with Murray of Broughton's Hussars in 1745 before being brought back home. The *Montagnards*, the exiled

'Highland' soldiers of Scotland recorded at Avignon in 1716, became fused with the Swiss as fighters for freedom, and after the Revolution the Jacobin *Montagnards* of France took the high benches in the Assembly.

The Jacobite Court endured for most of the eighteenth century, increasingly subsiding into vestigial life in the 1770s and 80s. But in its heyday, it was a significant source of patronage, a focal point for European freemasonry and a centre for art trade, patronage and training. The Jacobite secretariat issues passports for British travellers to the Papal States irrespective of politics, but visitors were also checked out and given discreet introductions, as James Boswell was by Secretary Lumisden to the English Lord Chancellor's brother, the Jacobite Earl of Dunbar. Allan Ramsay, George III's court painter, met 'King' James in Rome in 1736 and attended three meetings of the Jacobite Lodge there. He was far from the only artist who benefited from the Court's patronage, collecting and use of the fine arts as a cover for espionage.

And in all this, who was Charles Stuart, who died in abandoned alcoholism in 1788? Charles was arrogant, haughty, courteous, strategically strong, tactically weak, charismatic in pursuit of success, prone to illness, violence and drunkenness in the face of failure; he was also deeply and widely loved as a young man, in his own day a celebrity, before his lifetime of disappointment. He is often accused of being indifferent to the fate of his men, but he never entertained the possibility of another Rising without foreign troops launched against England. He felt a burden of guilt for those who had followed him and suffered, no matter how tinctured by maudlin alcoholism. But the best service we can do to his memory in the year of the 300th anniversary of his birth is to reflect not on his later sorry career, but on the global and world historic influence and scale of the movement of which he was the leading representative, the failure of which confirmed Great Britain as the world's leading power for a century and a half, and changed how that world thought about Scotland for ever.

**Further reading:**

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