

found religious life empowering. Gray criticizes Elizabeth Rapley for concluding that the *filles seculieres*, the subject of her study, were women engaged in a “professional life, consecrated to social action,” and that their work was “meritorious and satisfying.” Gray continues, “Research emphasizing the positive dimensions of the religious life seemed to advance an interpretation of the historical nun as a nascent feminist, engaged in a full-fledged ‘modern’ occupation” (86). Rapley does not assert that early modern women religious were feminists; rather, her point is that life in religious communities offered women opportunities that were beyond those of domestic life. Rapley discusses women who pursued vocations in teaching, nursing, and what we would call social work. Rapley does not argue that these were “modern occupations” but that they were meaningful vocations for women who were motivated by spiritual goals, and occasionally by temporal ones as well.

In the first part of her book, Gray describes the private world of the convent, its spiritual mission in the private world, and its economic mission in the public world. In the second part of her book, Gray focuses on the Congrégation’s superiors, in three chapters about becoming a superior, the burden of authority, and the mysticism of Barbier. Gray does not explain her book’s organization, and it is not clear to her reader why her study spans the 103 years that it does, or why she discusses the superiors in reverse chronological order.

Gray includes two excellent appendices in her book, one that lists each professed nun in the community and another that lists each superior. The appendices include the list of parents and place of family origin. Gray does a great service to other historians and students of the period by providing such comprehensive information.

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***Scottish Presbyterians and the Act of Union 1707.* By Jeffrey Stephen.** Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007. vii + 279 pp. \$80.00 cloth.

In the wake of the Revolution and the accession of William III, the Scottish Convention of Estates abolished episcopacy on July 22, 1689, and within less than a year most ejected Presbyterian ministers were restored to their former parishes, thereby setting the stage for one of the more anomalous

arrangements of church and state in Europe: with the Act of Union in 1707, two national churches with radically different polities agreed to coexist under the single Parliament of Great Britain in Whitehall. In this important book, Jeffrey Stephen offers the first full-length study of the precise relation of the Presbyterian Church to the Act of Union and the events surrounding it. The book presents a detailed, and at times hourly, account of the debates within the Presbyterian Church over the terms of the union and examines both the highest judicatories of the church and the popular religious response in the presbyteries and shires. Stephen utilizes all the pertinent manuscript sources, especially unpublished correspondence, and he offers a fresh and compelling interpretation of the pamphlet literature and church records. The bibliographic breadth and the judicious analysis make this book the definitive study of the topic.

The opening chapters set forth the debate over an incorporating union at the highest levels of government and church courts (chapters 1–3). After the Revolution Settlement, Presbyterians sought to nurture a common, national presbyterian identity and build a reformed church that would shape and unify moral life. The Presbyterian Church looked to the Scottish Parliament for support in areas such as the security of Presbyterian polity, national fasts, and education; suppression of popery; discipline for profaneness; and supplying vacant churches. The ideal had much in common with parallel developments in England outlined by Tony Claydon in his study *William III and the Godly Revolution* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996). As the possibility for an incorporating union with England emerged, naturally the church was profoundly concerned about how its interests could be adequately served by an English parliament.

The specific interests of the church were, if possible, even more complex than issues of national sovereignty and parliamentary representation. Much of the real work leading up to the union was conducted by a commission that in turn was under the General Assembly of the national church, and the commission delegated significant work to a series of committees. The commission and committees, composed of ministers and ruling elders, debated key issues involving the security of the Presbyterian Church in relation to the union. These matters centered on a cluster of concerns, for example, the coronation oath of the sovereign (swearing to maintain the rights of the English church, but not those of the Church of Scotland) and the abjuration oath of ministers. Of particular concern was the question of the succession to the crown: many Presbyterians believed that a union would serve as the main bulwark of security against a Jacobite attempt to restore a Catholic prince. In other words, Scotland's ongoing independence seemed to leave it vulnerable to the Stuart claimant (a vulnerability that was proved in the event, even *with* the union). Other critical issues included the

implications of the English Test and Corporation acts for Scotsmen, and the threat of the English bishops in the House of Lords relative to the Scottish Church and its interests. Stephen's handling of these and related issues illumines in fresh ways the complex and subtle differences between the Anglican acceptance of bishops in positions of civil authority and the Presbyterian denial of civil authority and office holding for clergy and shows how incredibly difficult it was to craft a policy that would guarantee security for the church.

Throughout its deliberations, both the commission and its committees assumed a studied neutrality on the question of the union itself, even as they sought to secure the interests of the church. The work of the commission and its strategic political detachment finally persuaded the government to concede the Act of Security, an act that functioned successfully to stanch the worries of the church and at the same time reconcile the parties within it. But the commission continued its work after the act was passed and lobbied Parliament both directly and by means of burgh and shire representatives in the presbyteries. In a judicious and balanced summary, Stephen gently dissents from previous interpretations that pictured the commission's work as divided between pro-union and anti-union factions. He concludes as well that the contribution of William Carstares, an eminent Edinburgh minister, was not as pivotal in moderating the work of the commission as was heretofore thought.

The second half of the book turns to popular forms of church expression over the union and to the debate over possible alternatives to incorporation union (chapters 4–7). Stephen provides a fresh evaluation of the real strength of popular opposition that took the form of some eighty-eight addresses to Parliament, but he concludes that sentiment against the union was less than has been thought, and it was small relative to the entire population. Moreover, both the addresses of the presbyteries and those of the parishes do not represent the voice of a church in opposition to the union but rather the voice of opposition within the church. An area analysis of the geographic distribution of the addresses shows that opposition was largely confined to the presbyteries of Lanark and Hamilton. Fully 95 percent of all presbyteries chose not to express opposition to the union through addressing.

Stephen also studied the mob activity and rioting that protested the union—crowds that were leaderless, for the most part, and random, but involving several hundred people at Edinburgh and Glasgow in the fall of 1706. Such popular outbursts were actually quite rare, involved relatively few people, and were never encouraged by the church. Preaching against the union was not widespread, and again, an area analysis shows that even in the west where opposition to union was the strongest, ministers gave considerable support to union. The small minority of ministers who did preach against the union were

restrained in their rhetoric. The cumulative evidence that Stephen assembles corrects Daniel Defoe's frequently expressed view that there was a connection between the violence, the protests, and the Presbyterian pulpit. The book examines the ideas favoring a federal alternative to an incorporating union, particularly those of the Cameronians, but these views never attracted much support. Stephen also handily disproves any notion of a Cameronian-Jacobite alliance. In no Presbyterian group, of whatever radical stripe, was there any discernible connection between opposition to union and sympathy for Jacobitism.

Stephen concludes that the church was indeed secured and served well by the union, even though some of its deepest fears were eventually realized; within just a few years, Presbyterians had to endure the reintroduction of church patronage and the toleration of Episcopalians. The book examines virtually all of the evidence that bears on the question of union and provides a sober and convincing estimate of public opinion, both for and against the union. The church was not the center of opposition to union, and neither was it even indirectly the source of anti-union feeling. In the 1707 General Assembly that met after the union was secured, the subject of union with England was barely even mentioned, and when it was, the tone was characterized by good will, ministerial harmony, and reflections on all the advantages that the union would bring to the church.

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***Imperial Saint: The Cult of St. Catherine and the Dawn of Female Rule in Russia.*** By **Gary Marker**. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2007. xviii + 310 pp. \$42.00 cloth.

In three quarters of the eighteenth century, five women ruled Russia. The challenge to historians is to explain this short-term acceptance of feminine supremacy. Gary Marker has risen to this task with a masterly account of the creation and use of the public cult of St. Catherine of Alexandria for political purposes.

In particular, the prominent image of St. Catherine as a martyr from the worst years of Roman persecution of Christianity facilitated the ascent of Peter I's widow, Catherine, to the throne in 1725. Her success smoothed the way for the other four women (Anna Ivanovna, Anna Leopoldovna, Elizabeth, and Catherine II) to rule without much objection premised on gender considerations.

St. Catherine of Alexandria long enjoyed honor in both late medieval and renaissance Catholic Europe and, somewhat later, in the Russian East.