THE ORIGINS
AND DEVELOPMENT OF
THE SCOTTISH
HAND
KNITTING
INDUSTRY

HELEN Y. BENNET

PhD University of Edinburgh

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DECLARATION

This thesis is my own composition, and the product of my own research.

Helen Bennett
27 March 1981
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ABSTRACT

The study traces the emergence of handknitting as an industry in Scotland, and follows its course in different areas of the country.

A survey of the available evidence - material, documentary, iconographic, and linguistic - suggests that knitting is a recent innovation: it appears that in Northern Europe, Scotland included, neither the making nor the wearing of knitted clothes was common before the end of the Middle Ages, and considerably later in some parts.

With the aid of burgh and craft records, and the registers of testaments, the work of the bonnetmakers, the first identifiable knitters in Scotland, is investigated, especially in the main centres - Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Kilmarnock and Stewarton. In general, the bonnet-makers are revealed as modest craftsmen producing a variety of low quality knitted woollen garments, mainly for the home market; the exceptions are Edinburgh and, to a lesser extent, Ayrshire, from where there are indications of the export of coarse hose during the seventeenth century.

Thereafter the trade is shown to have become concentrated in Ayrshire. Here, during the latter part of the nineteenth century, the making of bonnets by machine methods gradually superseded the old craft of producing bonnets by hand.

Outside the ranks of the bonnetmakers, handknitting an an industry can be traced from the seventeenth century
on. But whereas in North-East Scotland a stocking trade, based on Aberdeen, flourished until the late eighteenth century (the beginning of the main development of frame-knitting in Scotland), elsewhere it came late: this is especially so in parts of North and West Scotland where it appears that knitting was not greatly used until it was introduced as a subsistence activity in the nineteenth century.

Finally the special case of Shetland is examined. In these islands, despite the recent advance of mechanisation, handknitting as an industry has maintained a continuous existence from the beginning of the seventeenth century to the present day.
Knitting is so commonplace a domestic activity that it might reasonably be supposed to have been carried on in Scotland since time immemorial. It may seem surprising, therefore, that popular tradition has placed its adoption in comparatively recent times. The stocking-knitting industry which flourished in Aberdeenshire in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, for example, was reputed to have originated through the unlikely agency of Cromwell's troops. Similarly, there is a common belief that the coloured pattern knitting of Fair Isle was learnt by the islanders from the Spanish crew of El Gran Grifon, flagship of Don Juan Gomez de Medina, wrecked there in 1588; indeed W.R. Scott, reporting to the Board of Agriculture for Scotland in 1914, pointed to this event as the birth of the hosiery industry in Scotland.

There have been others who were of the opinion that knitting was practised in Scotland at an earlier date. Savary des Bruslons, writing early in the eighteenth century, found that there had been a guild of knitters - Les Maîtres Bonnetiers au tricot - established in the suburbs of Paris by 1527, yet he supposed that the art had arrived there from Scotland. From the text, this

3 J. Savary des Bruslons, Dictionnaire Universel de Commerce, s.v. bonneterie, bonnetier.
conjecture seems to have been based on nothing more substantial than the adoption by the Incorporation of Hosiers in Paris of St Fiacre, whom he believed to have been the son of a Scottish king, as their patron saint. Even so, Savary's view may perhaps have influenced David Bremner. In his 1869 account of the history and current state of the industries of Scotland, Bremner stated that knitted woollen caps began to be worn in Scotland and England in the middle of the fifteenth century, and noted that by 1552 knitting was used in England for a variety of garments, and not just caps, but he added:

The manufacture of woollen hose and caps by the knitting process is supposed to have been first practised in Scotland; at least it is certain that it was done in Scotland before it was in England.

Unfortunately he did not enlarge on this point, and but for a brief reference to handknitting as a domestic craft, and a short passage on Aberdeenshire stockings, his section on knitwear is devoted to an account of the invention of the stocking frame and the development, from the late eighteenth century on, of the frame-based hosiery trade of the Scottish Borders.

Over a century later, and despite current interest in textile history, we still lack an account of the

1 St Fiacre is now generally thought of, however, as having been an Irish prince: see S. Baring-Gould, Lives of the Saints, ix (Edinburgh, 1914), 384-6.
2 D. Bremner, The Industries of Scotland, 173.
establishment of handknitting in Scotland - a strange omission in view of the country's strong reputation for handknitted goods, be it kilt hose and stockings, Sanquhar gloves, Fair Isle jumpers, or Shetland lace shawls. Furthermore, although the frame- or machine-made sector of the Scottish hosiery industry is currently being examined in detail¹, the history of the handknitted sector (with the one exception of the Aberdeenshire trade²) has scarcely received serious attention. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to examine the evidence for the antiquity of the wearing and making of knitted garments in Scotland, and to establish a framework for the emergence of the industry in different parts of the country.

¹ Dr Barnes has prepared an, as yet, unpublished survey of the evidence for the early history of frame-knitting in Scotland, and Dr Gulvin is currently working on a study of frame-knitting in Scotland as a whole.
² See ch. VI
CHAPTER I

THE EVIDENCE FOR THE ORIGINS OF KNITTING IN EUROPE

At first sight knitting appears a most elementary textile technique, the making of a fabric requiring no more resources than two or more needles and the requisite amount of yarn. It is ideally suited to the domestic manufacture of clothing as the yarn is transformed directly into the required item, without the intermediate help of weaver and finisher necessary for garments made from woven cloth. Again unlike woven textiles, the equipment is simple and easily improvised, for the needles are merely slim pointed rods of wood, metal, bone or any other smooth rigid material available. Because the equipment is light and portable, and the technique, once learnt, is easily performed, knitting has not only been carried out in leisure moments by the hearth but also in conjunction with other tasks. In many country districts of Europe in the past, for example, travelling, carrying loads, or watching beasts would usually have been accompanied by the knitting of stockings, gloves, and other small items. The results might be for direct use by the family, or for sale or exchange to supplement its income, and as such knitting was often an integral part of the rural domestic economy.

Given such simplicity of materials, equipment and technique, it might be supposed that knitting is amongst the oldest methods of textile making. In practice, however, its
tracable history is relatively short. Whereas the oldest woven cloth to survive dates from perhaps 6000 BC, the appearance of knitting cannot be said to predate the last two millennia, and the earliest tangible evidence may not be older than the tenth century AD; in north-west Europe it appears to have a history of little more than 500 years. Before the arrival of knitting coverings for hands and feet, like other garments, were cut from cloth. Alternatively, they were made by complex looping or braiding techniques; these methods gave a more close-fitting and flexible result than cutting and sewing, but were often extremely laborious to carry out. In short, there is a good case for regarding knitting, despite its apparent simplicity, as a highly sophisticated technique attained only after thousands of years of experience in textile working.

Definition

Knitting can be defined as the making of a textile fabric 'by the intermeshing of loops of yarn', or, in more detail, 'by forming a series of loops upon one needle and looping a further series through these on a second'. It may be worked backwards and forwards on two needles, creating a flat fabric, or in rounds using three or more needles to

3 Chambers Encyclopaedia (Oxford etc., 1967), viii, s.v. knitting.
Knitting: the basic method of working
make items shaped in three dimensions. Whichever method is used, work progresses by making a loop in the yarn at the working edge of the fabric and drawing it through the stitch (loop) vertically below it in the previous row, which is thus locked into place.

A number of variations of stitch have been devised which, together with the introduction of yarns of different qualities and colours, gives a large number of possible patterns and surface textures. Although thought of as characteristically close-textured and elastic, the finished fabric may equally well be filmy and open, resembling lace. At the opposite extreme, a dense, firm textile can be made for example, by working together two or more thicknesses of yarn, as in Fair Isle knitting. Usually carried out on needles, knitting can also be done on spools or other simple structures. In these cases the loops are held on legs instead of needles, and are manoeuvred with the aid of a hook; a simple version is French knitting, using a cotton reel set with pins, which is still taught to children. The leg and hook principle is also that used in the mechanisation of knitting, which began with the invention of the knitting frame by the Rev. William Lee at the end of the sixteenth century. It is handknitting with the aid of needles, however, which mainly concerns us here.

1 See, for example, Mary Thomas, Mary Thomas's Knitting Book.
2 Ibid., 114-30.
Despite the diversity of the effects and finishes which can be obtained by knitting, its essential characteristic is that it is performed with a single element — a continuous yarn — and one which, because the work proceeds by only a small loop of yarn being drawn through the existing work, can theoretically be endless. It is this factor (shared with crochet) which distinguishes it from other single element textile-manufacturing techniques. There are a number of such techniques in which the fabric is built up by the creation of rows of loops: the results can have a very similar surface appearance to knitting but they are, none the less, technically quite distinct because the end of the working thread, and hence the working thread in its entirety, has to pass through the appropriate existing loop (or loops). The length of yarn that can conveniently be used at one time is therefore limited, and it is necessary to interrupt the work at intervals to join on a new length. Some of these single element techniques, based on limited lengths of yarn, were used extensively in the past for items such as socks and mittens which have recently more usually been made by knitting, and there is reason to believe that they may be very ancient indeed, perhaps even pre-dating weaving — a point which will be considered in more detail below.

Another, unrelated, method of making small flexible garments which has also, on occasions, been confused with knitting is sprang. It is defined as 'a method of making a fabric by manipulating the parallel threads of a warp that is fixed at both ends... (by the) interlinking, interlacing, or intertwining of adjacent threads'. As pointed out by Collingwood, the resulting fabric generally has a diagonal mesh with great elasticity, and is a much quicker way of making a flexible garment than single element methods which involve the manipulation of the thread end (although there are limitations in the shaping of the fabric). Like knitting, sprang can take on a variety of appearances - lace-like and open, or closely-made and firm - and it has been used for head and leg coverings, bags, and so on, over a wide geographical area and lengthy timespan. Particularly where the texture is close, the surface of sprang can look very like knitting, and some fine patterned Coptic pieces were originally assumed to have been knitted. The distinction between knitting and other apparently similar - but structurally

2 Ibid., 33.
3 Summaries are given in Collingwood, op. cit., 35-44, and Oldanske Tekstiler, 44-80, 455-7.

The earliest discoveries - a hair net, and a cap dating from c. 1400 BC - are from the Danish Iron Age, but sprang is also known from classical Greece, Coptic Egypt, and pre-ceramic Peru. The technique has survived to modern times, or nearly so, in southern and eastern Europe, Scandinavia, North Africa, Persia, and North America.
different - textiles is important, as it is the failure to identify accurately the methods by which surviving ancient textiles have been made which has caused much of the uncertainty which has existed about the early history of knitting.

The earliest evidence.

An interest in the history of textile techniques is, on the whole, a modern preoccupation: where earlier writers did consider the origins of knitting they were generally of the opinion that it must have been one of man's first textile accomplishments. The matter was discussed, for example, by Felkin, the Nottinghamshire historian of the hosiery and allied lace industries, writing in the 1860s. He noted the lack of specific evidence for its invention, but concluded that stories of the seamless shirt of Christ, and Homer's account of the web which Penelope wove by day and unmade by night, were more comprehensible if it was assumed that knitting was known to the ancient civilisations. He was puzzled, however, by the complete lack of references to knitting in England before the late Middle Ages.

By the end of the nineteenth century ancient textile artifacts, although rarely accurately recorded and studied, were being made available by archaeological excavations. This was particularly so in the Near East where the dry climate is favourable to the preservation of organic material. From the burial grounds and town sites of Egypt came

1 Felkin, op.cit., 10-19.
socks and other items which had the appearance of having been knitted; they date mainly from the fourth to sixth centuries AD, and for much of this century were usually held to be among the earliest representatives of the technique. These Coptic pieces have since been acquired by various museum and private collections in Europe and America, and particularly well known are a group, described by Kendrick in 1921, in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. All the pieces in this group are of wool, and most are from Bahnasa, Lower Egypt, and ascribed to the fourth or fifth centuries AD: they consist of two pairs of socks, in red and purple respectively, a single sock in brown with the foot divided to accommodate the toe strap of a sandal, a sock for a child, striped red and yellow, and two miniature pieces—a bag worked in horizontal stripes of purple, green and red, and a cap for a doll. In 1945 the publication of the Yale University excavations on the site of the city of Dura Europos claimed earlier evidence still. Three pieces described as knitting are recorded from the city which was destroyed by fire in 256 AD, thus giving a terminus ante quem: all three are of wool, including one, elaborately patterned, which contains six colours of yarn.

1 There are other writers such as James Norbury (e.g., "A Note on Knitting and Knitted Fabrics", in C. Singer, E. J. Holmyard et al., A History of Technology, iii (Oxford, 1957), 181-6) and H. B. Beeche ([The Sacred History of Knitting] (Oxford, 1967), 181-6) who have claimed a much greater antiquity for knitting, back to several hundred, or even several thousand, years BC, but neither thesis is viable in the light of currently available evidence.


but unlike the Egyptian pieces these are fragmentary and of uncertain use.

The peculiarity of these finds from the Near East is that they are in 'crossed Eastern stitch' or 'crossed stocking stitch' in which, unlike conventional knitting, the stitch is twisted so that the loop is closed at the base rather than open as it would normally be. A method of knitting to produce a fabric of this appearance is described by Mary Thomas. She had seen berets knitted in this manner, with the aid of hooked needles, in the Basque districts of France and Spain, and this led her to assume that the earliest knitting needles were of the hooked variety.

Although all these pieces appear to have been knitted, from time to time doubt has been cast on the method by which they were actually made. As early as the 1890s Luise Schinnerer published an analysis of a Coptic sock which, she discovered, had been made not by knitting but by a complex looping technique worked with the aid of a sewing needle; late in the 1940s technical studies by Regina von Bültzingslöwen of a number of pieces, including the Victoria and Albert Museum group, produced similar conclusions.

These findings, however, seem to have had little influence as the Coptic items continued to be referred to as knitting.

1 Mary Thomas, op.cit., 15-17, 54-5.
2 L. Schinnerer, Antike Handarbeiten (Vienna, n.d.).
The method of working a Coptic sock: a form of nålbinding
(diagram by Dorothy Burnham, from *Textile History*, iii, 123)
A further article was published in 1972 by Dorothy Burnham:
the article deals with her analysis of a group of socks of
the fourth to fifth centuries from Fayum, now in the Royal
Ontario Museum, Canada, which are again similar to those
in the Victoria and Albert Museum and elsewhere, and provides
a conclusive argument that they could not have been made by
knitting. The socks are apparently in crossed astern stitch
but Mrs Burnham was puzzled by the form of the start and
the finish of the work, which are not as would be expected
in knitted pieces, and by the behaviour of the fabric
which, where worn into holes, had not, as would normally
be the case, run into 'ladders'. Practical experiments
failed to produce these features by any known form of
knitting, but it was discovered that replicas of the socks,
accurate in all details, could be produced with a limited
length of wool threaded through a large-eyed needle. The
work was begun not at the ankle but at the toe, the fabric
being built up in rows of interconnected loops. The amount
of wool that could conveniently be used at one time was
limited to a needleful, perhaps two or three yards, and it
was discovered that new lengths had been joined to the
working thread by rolling together the old end and the new,
creating a join which is scarcely perceptible unless the
new thread is of a different colour - one reason, perhaps,
why the method of construction has not been more generally

1 Dorothy Burnham, 'Coptic Knitting - An Ancient Technique',
Recognised, Mrs Burnham has suggested that all pieces in the so-called crossed stocking stitch should now be regarded as suspect and in need of re-examination, particularly the patterned pieces from Nura Europos which, she feels, could equally well have been made by this method. In the light of Mrs Burnham's work, suspicion must also fall on a very fine piece, geometrically patterned in maroon on a gold silk ground, found at Fostat (old Cairo) and dated from the seventh to ninth centuries.

As noted by Dorothy Burnham, variants of this sewing technique have a long history and wide geographical distribution, from Russia to New Guinea and pre-Columbian Peru. At its simplest a textile is built up by working a single loop through a single loop; more complex versions involve sewing the thread through numbers of adjacent loops creating a firm, thick fabric. In Scandinavia, where the tradition can be traced from the first century AD to the present day, these variants are known generically as nalbinding (Norwegian), nalebinding (Danish), nalinne or vantsöna (Swedish). In English-language publications, however, reflecting, perhaps, the lack of such a continuous tradition in English-speaking areas, there is no standard description, and different names have been used - needle knitting, loop stitch, single-needle knitting, knotless

1 Mary Thomas, op. cit., 91.
2 Kulturhistorisk Leksikon for Nordisk Middelalder fra VIKINGETID til REFORMATIONSTID (Copenhagen, 1956 ff), s.v. nalbinding.
netting, looped needle-netting, cross-knit looping. None of these names has proved entirely satisfactory and, in the absence of international agreement, the use of the established Nordic term - of which I shall use the Norwegian form - seems preferable.

The history of nålbinding has been particularly well-documented in Scandinavia, studies having been made by, amongst others, Margrethe Hald and Odd Nordland. The earliest known example is a woollen mitten from Asle, Sweden, dated by pollen analysis to the beginning of the first millennium AD, made in a variant in which each stitch encompasses five inter-worked loops. From the medieval period there are finds from throughout the Nordic area, including mittens from Sweden (Lund), Norway (Oslo), and Iceland (Arnheidarstöðum) - the technique having apparently been taken there by tenth century settlers - a striped stocking leg from Finland (Kaukola), and socks from Sweden (Uppsala and Söderköping) which bear a considerable resemblance to the Coptic socks mentioned earlier. The majority of finds are in wool. The exception is the earliest example from Denmark (Mammen), a superb piece of goldwork of probable Oriental origin, part of a tenth-century head-dress.

Garments in nålbinding from a medieval context have also been found elsewhere in Europe. Those recorded so far date mainly from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and

have been recovered from princely and priestly graves from France, Germany, Italy, Switzerland and Spain. There are bishops' gloves from the church of St. Sernin, Toulouse, Holy Trinity, Florence, and the cathedral at Speier, and a further pair, ascribed to Louis of Anjou (died 1297) at Brignolles; at Belsburg, in the Swiss Jura a pair of pontifical stockings have been preserved. Particularly decorative are a pair of gloves from the grave of Pierre du Courpalay, at St Germain des Prés, which have an open-work diaper pattern; a similar small linen glove was recovered from the royal tombs at Burgos in northern Spain, probably from the mid-fourteenth century grave of Maria of Aragon. Unlike the Scandinavian pieces these are of silk or linen rather than wool and, as befits the status of their owners, generally of very fine workmanship. It seems likely that they represent the best of garments in nalbinding in more general use in these countries but, if this is the case, the more utilitarian items have disappeared without trace. There are, however, socks or light shoes in wool, of twelfth-century date, excavated at Beloozero in Russia, and a fourteenth-century mitten, also of wool, from Novgorod.

In addition to garments, the technique has also been

1 J. Braun, Die Liturgische Gewandung im Occident und Orient (1907), 369-71.
2 Ibid., fig. 191.
3 Ibid., fig. 173.
4 J. Gomez-Moreno, El Panteon Real de Las Huelgas de Burgos (Madrid, 1946), 35-5.
used in Scandinavia to make strainers, generally of cow hair, for milk. The strainers themselves all date from recent centuries but the wooden straining boards and cups with which they were used survive, virtually unchanged in form, back at least as far as the Iron Age\(^1\). This stability of pattern for items which fulfil a basic and unchanging need has led Odd Nordland to speculate that the use of these sieves, and hence the technique by which they were made, may be more ancient still, perhaps as old as the Neolithic when the art of cattle keeping was introduced. Although knlbing cannot as yet be traced back beyond the first century A.D. the \(\textit{isle mitten}\) is an accomplished work suggesting a well-established tradition, and Nordland notes that simpler looping techniques can be followed back to the Bronze Age in Scandinavia and are common to many primitive peoples elsewhere. He has suggested that these techniques, which utilise only short lengths of yarn, may have been developed at a time when the art of spinning was in a primitive state capable of producing only limited lengths of thread, and they therefore pre-date even weaving.

Nordland’s theory, although appealing, is largely based upon speculation, and the antiquity of knlbing must remain an open question. Its antiquity as compared with knitting in Scandinavia, however, is beyond doubt.

Although lacking the dry climate which has proved favourable

1 Nordland, \textit{op.cit.}
to the preservation of textile fibres in the Near East, the area has, none the less, produced an extensive range of textiles from archaeological sources which have been the subject of thorough scholarly attention: whereas nálabinding can be followed back to the first century AD, and by inference beyond, there is not a trace of knitting before the end of the Middle Ages. Denmark has an exceptional series of garments recovered from peat bogs, dating from the medieval period back to the Bronze Age. These have been examined in great detail by Dr Hald and include small garments of sprang, of nálabinding, and of simpler forms of looping, but none of knitting.

It has sometimes been claimed, by James Norbury for example, that knitting was known in tenth-century Scandinavia, but this cannot be verified. If the technique was known this would surely have been reflected in the finds from the great cosmopolitan trading centre of Birka, in eastern Sweden, the excavated graves of which produced rich and varied goods - Arab silver, Rhenish glass and Frankish weapons; the textiles were of comparable range and quality, including expertly-made wool cloth of possible Frisian origin, Byzantine silks, goldwork and embroidery. Similarly, the lavish ninth-century ship burial of a woman, possibly Queen Asa, discovered at Oseberg, Norway,

1 Hald, op. cit.
3 A. Geijer, Birka III: Die Textilfunde aus den Gräbern (Uppsala, 1938).
might also have been expected to produce positive evidence.

The Queen and her attendant had been provided with rich garments, bedding, and even a tapestry, for their use in the afterlife, together with the necessary equipment for textile-making, a sprang frame included\(^1\). In neither case was there any sign of knitting or knitting needles. Both the Birka and Oseberg sites did, however, include examples of tablet weaving, narrow decorative bands woven without the aid of a loom: in some forms of this work the ground, although woven, has a texture similar to stocking stitch and this may perhaps have misled Mr Norbury.

Also found at Birka was looped work in gold or silver wire, sometimes worked through cloth as surface decoration, and sometimes made over a mould to form hollow, three-dimensional ornaments; detailed study by Dr Geijer suggested that these had been made by needle or tweezers, or a combination of the two\(^2\). Dr Geijer's findings are mentioned here as they may throw some light on other examples of looped metalwork, sometimes referred to as trichinopoly work, which have been cited as evidence that knitting was practised in northern Europe, and Britain in particular, in the eighth to tenth centuries AD\(^3\). The work takes the

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1 A. Grieger et al., Osebergfundet (Oslo, 1917-28). The sprang frame and the tablets are dealt with in Volume II, with the woodwork. The proposed volume on the textiles was never published, although study has continued, and I am grateful to my colleague First Curator Aagot Ross, of the Norsk Folkemuseum, for confirming that there are no examples of knitting among the Birka finds.


form of tubes of wire loops. These were apparently made in the round, but were then often pressed flat to form a flexible strap; alternatively, they were cut open and used as applied decoration - as, for example, on the Ardagh chalice, which is thought to have been made in Ireland about 800 AD. I have examined two examples of these flexible bands from Scotland: the pieces, from Croy and Ballinaby respectively, were both found in Viking graves, and are now in the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland. Superficially the bands have a striking similarity to stocking stitch knitted in the round. When viewed under a microscope, however, they prove, like the decoration on the Ardagh chalice, to have a curious structure, with each row of loops passing through the previous two rows. It is difficult to imagine how this could be achieved with conventional knitting. A ninth-century ceremonial scourge from the Trewhiddle hoard, found in England, has a similar structure: when the hoard was published in 1961, the authors found that 'this type of chain was popular in the Byzantine world and must ultimately derive from Mediterranean Greece of the first millennium BC'.

Although this metalwork seems to have had a broad geographical and temporal span, no one has produced a satisfactory explanation of the method of its making, and it is a most

inadequate basis for positing the existence of knitting. Even if, as is by no means certain, the tubes were made with the aid of something analogous to a knitting spool, it has yet to be shown that the work was indigenous to Britain at the end of the first millennium AD (rather than, say, imported from the eastern Mediterranean in 'rope' form and re-used), let alone that the technique was then applied to the manufacture of textiles.

To return to the subject of surviving textiles, further archaeological finds are known from Greenland. These can be regarded as coming within the Nordic sphere as Greenland was settled by immigrants from Norway, via Iceland, in the tenth century, and remained dependent on supplies from these sources thereafter. Excavations early this century in the medieval churchyard at Herjolfsnes uncovered bodies, and the garments in which they had been buried, preserved by the intense cold. The clothing found indicated that even in this isolated area there was a knowledge of fourteenth and fifteenth century fashion developments in Europe. Consequently it might be expected that if knitted garments were known in Scandinavia at the time the knowledge would have reached Greenland, but, significantly, all the garments found, stockings included, had been cut from woollen cloth.

1 I am grateful to K.B.K. Stevenson for discussing this point with me.
2 P. Nørlund, 'Buried Norsemen at Herjolfsnes: An Archaeological and Historical Study', *neddeleser om Grønland*, lxxvii (1924), 1-270.
Despite the comparative wealth of textile material from Scandinavia, it is not until the sixteenth century that there are examples of knitting. From Sweden there is an elaborately-patterned silk glove, thought to be of German manufacture, associated with Sten Svantesson Sture, who was assassinated in 1565; in addition, there are knitted woollen stockings, of uncertain date, excavated in Stockholm from a derelict ship in a dock sealed with rubbish in 1640. Rather earlier is a felted woollen cap, in the style of the first half of the sixteenth century, found in a well in the castle of Steinvikholm, near Trondheim, Norway. From both Norway and Sweden there are knitted patterned silk jackets or shirts, comparable with examples from elsewhere in Europe, exhibiting a high degree of technical skill, which appear to have been copied in wool and become part of peasant dress in the eighteenth century; the silk originals, however, do not pre-date the seventeenth century, and are considered to be imports.

It would, perhaps, be dangerous to rely on negative material evidence as an indication that knitting is a recent arrival in Scandinavia, were it not that the thesis is confirmed by both linguistic and documentary evidence. The modern term for knitting - sticka (Sweden) or strikke

(Norway, Denmark), related to the German strieken - has only recently come into use in that sense (although it was current in the Middle Ages as an embroidery term)\(^1\). Previously the expression used was binde or binding: this term originally covered the looping techniques now known as nalbinding, and it seems that the prefix nal (needle) was added after the Middle Ages to distinguish them from the newer technique of knitting. In Denmark and Norway the introduction of the practice of knitting may partially have been the work of Christian IV who encouraged the teaching of it in his orphanages: it is recorded that in 1632, for example, there were sixteen girls knitting stockings in his orphanage in Copenhagen\(^2\). Knitted garments were probably coming into Denmark regularly by 1560\(^3\), but there is no evidence for the manufacture of knitted goods there until about 1630, at which time they were being exported from southern Jutland; elsewhere in the country it is doubtful if the practice of knitting became common before the end of the seventeenth century\(^4\). In Finland knitting needles are not thought to have been introduced until the seventeenth century\(^5\). The first likely documentary reference to knitted garments in Sweden is the record of a pair of silk stockings bought in 1562 for the fashion-

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1 Kulturhistorisk Lexikon, s.v. sticka.
2 Engelstad, op. cit., 43.
3 intzell, op. cit., 27.
4 H.P. Hansen, Spind or Bind (Copenhagen 1947), 238.
5 Vilppula a.k.a. J. Jaukone, Folk Costumes and Textiles ("National Museum of Finland, n.d.").
conscious Erik XIV, which were so expensive that they cost more than the salary of his valet for the year - suggesting something new, rare, and probably imported. According to tradition the technique was introduced to the Halland area of Sweden by a Dutchwoman, Brigitta von Cracow, who moved there in 1654; whether or not the tradition is correct it seems unlikely that there was a native industry before the middle of the seventeenth century.

The balance of evidence, therefore, suggests that knitting was not introduced to Scandinavia until the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; the exceptions are the Faeroes and Iceland for both of which areas there is evidence for a flourishing knitting industry by the end of the sixteenth century, if not before, although it is not known when or from where it was introduced. It also appears that the older and more laborious technique of nålbinding was not ousted immediately but was retained in some areas for certain specific purposes. Arbman and Strömberg, when considering the Æsle mitten in 1934, noted that mittens comparable in shape and construction, but often ornamented with embroidery, had commonly been made in Sweden until recently. In Denmark the technique lasted into the present century, although Dr Hald found that in 1942 it was only just remembered. Nordland, writing in

1 Hintzell, op. cit., 22.
3 Hoffmann, The Loom, 211, 225, 365; E. Gudjónsson, Notes on Knitting in Iceland.
4 H. Arbman and E. Strömberg, 'Aslevanten', Fataburen (1934), 67–82.
5 H. Hald, op. cit., 462.
1961, found that it was still known in Norway during the Second World War when it was used for the manufacture of caps and comforters for the troops, and that in one area of Finland (Kaukola) it was still preferred for the making of mittens and the feet of stockings. The variants of nalbinding which have survived longest appear to be the more complex methods which create a firm, thick fabric, and there is much to recommend Nordland's suggestion that they were retained in preference to knitting for the making of foot and hand protectors against the adverse Scandinavian climate because they offered greater thickness and warmth combined with flexibility and strength.

Having examined material which can be said, with some certainty, not to be knitting it remains to be established which are the earliest pieces accepted as having been made in this manner. Again the Near East is the source. Lehmann and von Bültzingslöwen describe four pieces which appear to be technically related: one is part of a cap from the Iklé collection, now in Basle, and the other three are fragments in the Institute of Art at Detroit. All are in stocking stitch in blue and white cotton, with bands of geometric patterns, and cufic lettering which is ornamental rather than legible. The source is the excavations at Fostat (Old Cairo) but with no more

1 Nordland, op. cit., 25, 56.
precise date than the Fatimid period (AD 952-1149). Another group, with the same provenance, and also in blue and white cotton, are now in the Textile Museum, Washington, and have been identified as the remnants of stockings or socks; there are similar fragments in the Metropolitan Museum, New York, and one from Fatimid Egypt, but the exact source unknown, in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The Textile Museum socks have been studied by Louisa Bellinger who suggests they were imported to Egypt, probably from India. Her main argument for this thesis is that because the socks were made from the toe upwards, rather than from the ankle downwards as is normal with knitting, they must have been made by people new to the technique. Since, however, it has been shown that the earlier Coptic socks, which were needle-made rather than knitted, were begun from the toe, it seems equally possible that these later pieces could also have been made in Egypt, the new technique of knitting being worked according to the old method.

It happens that some of the earliest examples of knitting surviving from outside Egypt also have Islamic connections. From the royal tombs at Burgos, in northern Spain, there are two silk cushion covers, made in stocking stitch, of exceptionally fine workmanship. The first is from the grave of Fernando de la Cerda (heir of Alfonso X of Castile), who died in 1275. The design is in white on

1 Bellinger, op. cit.  
2 There is a further piece from Fostat in the Victoria and Albert Museum (T87-1937), but of wool, with a geometric pattern in six colours.  
3 Bellinger, op. cit.  
4 Gómez-Moreno, op. cit., 85.
Silk cushion cover from the grave of Fernando de la Cerda (d. 1275), Burgos, Spain
Silk cushion cover from one of the royal graves at Burgos, mid thirteenth century or earlier
a tan ground: on one side there is a pattern of diapers, each filled with an eagle or *fleur de lys*, and on the other hexagons and squares filled with a castle, a rosette, or a swastika: round the edge is worked an inscription, a repetition of the Arabic word for blessing. The cushion has heraldic significance - for the motifs refer to the arms of both his father (Castile) and his mother (Aragon) - which implies that the work was done especially for the court. This, combined with the Arabic inscription, suggests it was *mudejar* work, that is, made by Muslims living in the Christian area of Spain. The pattern of the second cushion is divided into squares, arranged in horizontal bands of red and white and green and white, each filled with a motif - on one side a rosette, an eight-pointed star, or a group of four doves, and on the other lions *passant*, *fleurs de lys*, crosses and eagles. In this case the motifs do not appear to have heraldic significance, and unfortunately there is some doubt as to which grave the cushion belongs - whether that of Mafalda, small daughter of Alfonso VIII, or of another Ferdinand, bastard son of Alfonso X, who died in the middle of the thirteenth century. Whichever is the more accurate the cushions are indicative that by the third quarter of the thirteenth century, knitted goods were available in northern Spain and were very likely made there. It is, perhaps, significant though that among the considerable number of garments and other textile articles recovered

from the royal tombs the two cushions are the only examples of knitting. The garments are generally cut from cloth—excepting the small glove, mentioned above, in nalbinding. The inference may be that outside the Islamic area knitted garments and furnishings were still rarities.

Elsewhere in Europe the number of knitted items which can be ascribed to the Middle Ages is small, although new examples are gradually coming to light. Lehmann and von Bültzingslöwen describe a silk girdle of tubular construction from the grave of Duchess Matilda, c. 1000 AD, at Worms: this could have been made by the spool method but when examined, thirty years ago, was considered too damaged to allow conclusions to be reached. The same authors also mention a multi-coloured patterned silk purse of possible late fourteenth-century date, in the cathedral at Sens.

The majority of examples, however, are gloves from ecclesiastical contexts, these garments having been elevated to the status of vestments by the twelfth century. Braun lists those known in 1907: the earliest is a glove in St Vitus, Prague, knitted in stocking stitch with bands of patterning at the wrist, which despite a thirteenth-century enamelled plaque sewn to the back of the hand, is thought to have been made a hundred years later. Since Braun's time other, and possibly earlier, examples have become known: Turnau,

1 Lehmann and von Bültzingslöwen, op. cit., section V, 40.
2 Ibid., section VII (Feb. 1955), 35.
without giving details, mentions a fourteenth-century pair in the treasury of Hradcany Castle, Prague\(^1\), and Rowe describes the remnants of knitted gloves from the tomb of a bishop in St Denis, Paris, which although excavated under highly unsatisfactory conditions, are ascribed to the thirteenth century\(^2\). From the same period are the remnants of a glove from the tomb of Bishop Siegfried von Westerburg, buried in Bonn in 1297\(^3\); despite being fragmentary it can be seen to have been knitted in the round and ornamented with motifs - rosettes and eagles - reminiscent of those on the cushion from the grave of Fernando de la Cerda. A slightly later pair, from Utrecht, from the grave of Bishop Guy van Avesnes (died 1317)\(^4\) are made in a similar manner and are patterned with a dove motif comparable with that on the second of the Burgos cushions.

Several other examples, originally thought to be of early date must now be discounted. It appears that the Spanish altar glove of the eleventh century, described by Norbury, is actually one of a sixteenth-century pair in the Victoria and Albert Museum\(^5\). The remains of knitted silk gloves, and perhaps stockings, from a bishop's tomb at Fortrose, in Scotland, are now thought to belong to the sixteenth century\(^6\), as are an elaborately-patterned pair in red silk.

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4 Utrecht Central Museum, inventory no.5342.
5 Norbury, 'A Note on Knitting...', plate 9a, cf Levey, *op. cit.*, plate 2.
6 A.S. Henshall et al., 'Early Textiles Found in Scotland II', *PAS*, lxxxvii (1954-6), 39.
at New College, Oxford, which were traditionally associated with William of Wykeham (died 1404). Although isolated pieces of knitting from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries are scattered across Europe, there is as yet no evidence as to where they were made. The majority are of silk and of accomplished workmanship, suggesting a well-established tradition, but there is no indication that they were manufactured in the countries in which they were found. Given the highly specialised nature of the pieces it seems at least possible that they were made in a specific centre (or centres) and exported to other areas of Europe: in view of the similarity between the patterning of some of the gloves and the Burgos cushions it is tempting to suppose that such a centre might have been located in Spain, but there is evidence neither for nor against this supposition. More lowly examples of knitting, if indeed they existed, have not survived from this period. Probably the earliest known are the woollen caps, stockings, waistcoats and sleeves from London: in the main these have been recovered accidentally during excavations associated with building work, and are not from dated contexts, but the style of the caps suggests that most of the material dates from the late fifteenth century on. Recent archaeological excavations on the Baynards Castle site in London have produced more accurately-dated material in the

1 Braun, op. cit., 379-80.
2 The material is in a number of museums, notably the Museum of London, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the Strangers Hall Museum, Norwich.
form of fragments of knitting, perhaps a sleeve, from a dock sealed with rubbish in 1499; interestingly, there was no sign of knitting among the textiles recovered from another dock on the same site, which was sealed in 1350. In view, therefore, of the paucity of material evidence, it is necessary to examine other sources for indications of the beginnings of the practice of knitting in Europe.

Despite the comparative rarity of examples of medieval knitting, there are iconographic clues that the technique may have been practised in at least some areas of Europe by the end of the fourteenth century. A panel painting of the Holy Family, showing the Virgin knitting, dated 1348 and attributed to the studio of Ambrogio Lorenzetti, is in the Abegg collection at Berne. A more famous instance is the altarpiece, now in Hamburg, attributed to Master Bertram and thought to have been painted for the convent of Buxtehude in North Germany about 1395: on this the Virgin is clearly depicted knitting a shirt on four needles. It might be argued that this is not necessarily indicative that knitting was known in North Germany at the time, as Master Bertram might have acquired the idea from elsewhere - on pilgrimage to Rome or Compostella, for example. But in choosing to show the Virgin in this way the artist presumably intended a

1 Excavation no. DC 72: 3111.
2 I am grateful to Miss Elizabeth Crowfoot for her advice on this point.
4 Illustrated in, for example, Textile History, iii (1972), cover.
reference to the seamless shirt of Christ, a point which would have been lost on the viewers (the nuns?) unless they were familiar with knitting and knew it as a means of making a seamless garment.

Documentary sources are surprisingly silent about the practice of knitting until the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when a series of guild statutes attests the existence of knitting as a craft in Europe north of the Alps. By the end of the sixteenth century there were guilds in Bohemia, Silesia and Alsace; earlier, knitting was an organised craft in Strasbourg (1535) and Troyes (1505), and, according to Savary des Bruslons, a guild of knitters - Les Maitres Bonnetiers au tricot who made caps and stockings - were established in the St Marcel suburb of Paris in 1527. In England the making of caps, amongst other garments, was sufficiently important to warrant eight Acts of Parliament between 1482 and 1570. Particularly interesting are those of 1565 and 1570 which not only deal with the maintenance of standards of manufacture and dyeing, but attempt to protect the craft by enforcing the wearing of caps 'of wool, knit, thicked and dressed in England'. It is true that the earlier acts do not mention specifically that the caps were knitted but the existence, for example,

3 22 Ed. IV cap. 5; 4 Hen. VII cap. 9; 3 Hen. VIII cap. 15; 21 Hen VIII cap. 9; 7 Ed. VI cap. 8; 1 Mar. I cap. 11; 8 Eliz. I cap. 11; 13 Eliz. I cap. 9.
of 'Marjoria Claton, cappeknytter' in Ripon in 1465 confirms that some, if not all, of them were made in this way; similarly, entries in the Coventry Leet Book show that the cappers there, who had become an organised body before the end of the fifteenth century, were making knitted woollen caps. Further, the knitting of woollen stockings seems to have been well-established in England by the early 1500s.

The evidence from England, however, is exceptional, and for the Continent it is extremely difficult to fill the lacuna between the guild statutes of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the hints offered by the pictorial sources of the fourteenth century. Documentary references at first look promising but in practice are not capable of unequivocal interpretation. Particularly tantalising is a mention in the accounts of the Duke of Burgundy for 1366 of 42 francs paid to Thierry Le Hittainier of Châlons, Champagne, for caps, hoods and hose 'tout fait a l'aiguille' (literally 'all made with the needle'). The description is unusual and seems intended to indicate a distinction between, for example, these particular pairs of hose and the ones normally made for the Duke which were cut from cloth, but the term is too

1 Acts of the Chapter of the Collegiate Church of SS Peter and Alfreton, 1452-1506 (Surtees Society, 1874), 120.
2 Coventry Leet Book or Mayor's Register 1420-1555 (Early English Society, 1907), e.g. 707.
vague for knitting to be assumed; furthermore, is 'Le mittainnier' simply a surname or rather an indication of occupation, thus linking him with the merchants connected with the Paris guild of knitters, mentioned above, who according to Diderot were originally called 'Aulmuciers-mittoniers' ('Cappers-mittoners')? Another example appears in Jean de Brie's Le Bon Berger of 1379 where mittens are described as to be made either from yarn 'à l'aiguille... comme l'on fait les aumuces (caps)' or cut from cloth: unfortunately the work is extant in manuscripts no earlier than the sixteenth century so the reference cannot definitely be said to belong to the original version.

The fundamental problem in attempting to look for documentary evidence is that the words currently denoting 'knitting' or 'knitted' in European languages cannot be traced in these usages back into the Middle Ages, and even in medieval Latin there is no attested specific word to convey this concept. Disappointingly, in view of the early finds of knitting from Spain, and of the tradition that the elaborate knitted silk garments of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were produced in Italy, neither country has developed a distinctive term for the technique. In

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1 D.Diderot et al., Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des Sciences, des Arts, et des Métiers (Paris 1751), s.v. Bonneterie.
2 A. Tobler and E. Lommatsch, Altfranzösisches Wörterbuch (Wiesbaden 1925ff) s.v. lacer.
3 I am indebted to my husband P. E. Bennett, for this information, and also for advice on the contents of the next two paragraphs.
Italy knitting is covered by the omnibus phrase lavora di maglia (literally, 'making mesh' or 'chain-work') and its origin is undated. In Castilian the term is hacer calceta or hacer media a punto (literally, 'to make stockings') and in this form the concept cannot be traced back earlier than Calazar (died 1675) who described a stocking (media) as 'a garment of stitchwork which covers the legs'; in the astorgas dialect 'to make stockings' is given as calzar (from 1131) or calcater, giving modern calcetiar, but there is nothing to link this specifically with knitting rather than, say, sewing from cloth or even nailing.

North of the Alps the linguistic evidence is scarcely more helpful. The earliest recorded usage of the French tricoter in the modern sense is generally held to appear in Cotgrave (1611), who gives triquotter as 'to knit, as in stockings'; the word appears well before this but with a variety of meanings, including to split hairs, debase (coinage), dance or beat. Palsgrave's English-French dictionary of 1530 does not use tricoter but gives the equivalent of 'I knyt bonettes or hosen' as 'Je lasse'; unfortunately, medieval lacer is not specific and covers

1. Battisti and Alessio, Dizionario etimologico Italiano (Firenze 1952) s.v. maglia.
2. Corminolas, Dizionario etimologico de la Lengua Castellana (Berne 1954).
3. Ibid., s.v. calza.
4. Ibid., s.v. calza.
5. Cotgrave, Dictionarie of the Frenshshe and Inglishshe Tongue (1611).
various forms of interlacing or network. A similar difficulty arises in both English and German in that the word which now has a specific textile meaning originally had more general connotations. German strickwerk appears in the specific sense back to 1616 but in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries stricken covers 'network'. The confusions that may arise in English are illustrated by Palsgrave who gives a variety of other usages for 'to knyt' including to fasten, bind, imprison, or finish.

If the linguistic evidence allows any conclusion it is that specific words for knitting did not emerge in northern Europe until the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Since this coincides with the appearance of guild statutes governing the production of knitted goods the implication is that for the first time knitting had become a significant industry in this area, or parts of it, and knitted garments were superseding those made by older methods. There are indications from England and elsewhere that knitting was established as a craft in the fifteenth century, but the evidence is sparse and inconclusive: it may be that the nascent industry produced mainly humble woollen items not worn by the leaders of society, hence the difficulty in tracing them in documentary sources. The origins of the medieval silk pieces remains a total mystery:

1 Tobler and Lomsatzsch, op.cit., s.v. lacier.
2 J. and W. Grimm et al., Deutsches Wörterbuch (Leipzig, 1854-1954), s.v. strick-.
3 Palsgrave, op.cit., s.v. knyt.
it is tempting to wonder whether convents (as at Buxtehude?) might have been producing the knitted gloves as vestments, but this can be nothing more than speculation. In the future detailed studies of the history of knitting at present lacking for many countries of Europe, may produce a different picture, but on current knowledge there is no basis on which to postulate the practice of knitting in northern Europe before 1350.
CHAPTER II

KNITTED GARMENTS IN SCOTLAND BEFORE 1700

As has been seen, knitting, in terms of textile history, is a recent invention. The technique is traceable little earlier than the present millennium, and the goods made in this manner appear to have been rare or luxury items in Europe north of the Alps, at least until the late Middle Ages. Thereafter the gradual establishment of native hosiery industries, reflected in parliamentary and craft guild legislation, ensured that knitted goods became more common. As a result, by the end of the seventeenth century knitted headgear and foot- and hand-coverings (and some main garments too) were in general, if by no means universal, use in North-West Europe. Not all knitting was done by hand on pins. Attempts during the seventeenth century to establish frameknitting industries based on William Lee's invention seem to have failed on the Continent,¹ but were more successful in England - first in Nottingham and London, and later elsewhere in the country: it has been estimated that by 1664, when the trade was incorporated, there were nearly 650 frames in England (and perhaps 10 in Dublin), about 60% of which were making fine gauge fancy goods such as silk stockings, and pieces for waistcoats and breeches².

For Scotland too there are indications of knitting

industries in several areas before 1700. In the early
seventeenth century, for example, a visitor to Shetland
commented that the women were 'given to knittinge mittens
and stockings which the Hollanders and English doe buy for
raritie'. On the mainland, Richard Frank noted the knitt-
ing of bonnets in Kilmarnock, Ayrshire, in 1656, and
there is evidence for the large-scale production of woollen
hosiery in Aberdeenshire by the 1680s, if not before. From
1661 onwards there was legislation to promote and protect
the native production of, particularly, fine silk and
worsted stockings, followed by an attempt in the 1680s to
establish frame-knitting in East Lothian. The point at
which knitted garments appeared in Scotland, however, and
the extent of their use over the whole country, have yet
to be determined.

The material evidence for clothing in Scotland before
1700 consists mainly of textile fragments of wool, silk,
and, more rarely, vegetable fibres; there are relatively
few complete items or recognisable garments, and most of
these date from the seventeenth century. The material is
sparse: when, in the 1950s, Miss Henshall examined the
early textiles found in Scotland, those which could be

1 R. James, 'Description of Shetland, Orkney and the High-
lands of Scotland', Orkney Misc., i (1953), 50.
2 P. Hume Brown, Early Travellers in Scotland, 190.
3 I. Barnes, 'The Aberdeen Stocking Trade', Textile History,
viii (1977), 77-98; I. F. Grant, 'An Old Scottish Handi-
craft Industry', SIR, xviii (1921), 277-89.
5 The Records of a Scottish Cloth Manufactury at New Mills,
Haddingtonshire 1681-1703 (SHE).
6 A. S. Henshall, 'Early Textiles Found in Scotland: I Locally
Made', PSAS, lxxxvi (1951-2), 1-29; 'Early Textiles Found
in Scotland: II Medieval Imports', PSAS, lxxxix (1954-6),
22-39.
dated before 1600 were limited to 24 individual pieces, or small groups, of probable local manufacture, and specimens from three tombs—those of King Robert the Bruce and two sixteenth-century bishops. The survival of the material had depended, for the most part, on exceptional circumstances such as immersion in a peat bog, burial in a grave or tomb, or contact with metal; the woollen shirt from Rogart, Sutherland, alone had been preserved above ground as an item of interest.

Despite their lack of numbers, these textile fragments do offer the advantage of a wide geographical and social spread, including as they do pieces from the length of Scotland, and the plain woollen cloths of ordinary use as well as the imported luxury fabrics which were incorporated in the grave cloths of the leaders of society. They also exhibit a variety of textile-manufacturing techniques: in addition to loom-woven cloths in basic weaves, there are examples of sprang, tablet weaving, and (among the imported items) embroidery, and silks with complex woven patterns. None the less, Miss Henshall was unable to discover any example of knitting earlier than the sixteenth century. Strangely perhaps, in view of the evidence from Scandinavia, there is little evidence for a tradition of **knitting** in Scotland: only one example is known, and this post-dates 1700.

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1 Henshall, 'Early Textiles I', 27-8.
During the last decade, the medieval material from Scotland has been considerably augmented by textiles found as a result of archaeological excavations in urban and other habitation sites. Samples of cloth have been recovered from Aberdeen (thirteenth and fourteenth centuries), Threave Castle, Kirkcudbrightshire (fifteenth century), Elgin (sixteenth century), and, most notably, Perth, where the High Street site alone has produced nearly 400 textile and textile-related samples dating mainly from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Finds from the Aberdeen and Perth sites imply a considerable degree of prosperity as they include samples of fine imported silks, as well as loom-woven woollen cloths in varying qualities, and examples of felt, tablet weaving, netting, and so on. Neither these nor the other sites, however, have produced any example of knitting. The one exception is a knitted fragment in coarse brown wool, from a habitation site on Papa Stour, Shetland, which has produced finds dating from the Viking period to the seventeenth century. The piece has tentatively been placed in the late Middle Ages, but unfortunately, as is often the case with sites occupied over a long period, the stratigraphy is extremely complex, and the piece could well be later.

1 As yet unpublished reports on these textiles have been prepared by the author and deposited in the files of NNAS as follows: Aberdeen, July 1978, August 1978; Elgin, August 1977; Threave Castle, August 1977; a detailed report on the Perth material is in preparation.

2 The site is being excavated under the direction of Dr Barbara Crawford of the University of St Andrews, and the piece is currently being studied in NNAS.
Excluding the dubiously-dated piece above, the earliest example of knitting surviving from Scotland, like many of the early finds elsewhere in Europe, is of silk and from an ecclesiastical setting. It consists of two small fragments of fine, even, stocking stitch worked in cream two-ply silk, recovered from the tomb of a bishop in Fortrose Cathedral, Easter Ross; it is not certain whether the tomb, which was opened at the end of the eighteenth century, was that of Bishop Fraser (died 1507) or Bishop Cairncross (died 1545). An account of the opening mentions that the body was clothed in vestments of silk, and adds that 'the legs were inserted in a long pair of silk stockings similar in fabric to the gloves which were on the hands'. The fragments of knitting appear to be the remnants of these gloves and stockings.

Other knitted silk garments from before 1700 - a pair of stockings and a shirt - are known from Scotland, but date from the seventeenth century; like the Fortrose gloves they must be considered to be imports. The pair of stockings, of cream silk in fine stocking stitch, but with clocks (pattern at the ankle) in the form of a crown and rosette worked in purl, form part of the hose of a habit of the Order of the Thistle preserved at Drummond Castle, Perthshire. The outfit can be dated with some certainty to the revival of the Order by James VII and II in 1687.

1 Henshall, 'Early Textiles II', 26-8, 32-4, 39.
2 HSAS, i (1851-4), 283.
Silk shirt, seventeenth century
(by courtesy of Lord Ancaster)
stockings, however, are frameknitted, not handknitted on pins, and are unlikely to have been made in Scotland: it is true that by this time knitting frames were not unknown in this country, but they were so few that it is much more probable that the stockings came from England, particularly from the framework knitters of London who were experienced in the production of high-quality silk fancy goods.

The silk shirt, the only knitted main garment known from Scotland at this period, is more difficult to place. It is preserved, like the silk stockings, in the family collection of the Earl of Ancaster at Drummond Castle. The body of the shirt, now a faded blue-green, has been knitted in the round by hand, and the long sleeves have been made separately and sewn on at the shoulder; the yoke, cuffs, and welt are ornamented with a diaper pattern, and the body with eight-pointed stars. In style and workmanship it is comparable with the silk undershirt, preserved in the Museum of London, thought to have been worn by Charles I on the day of his execution. Although the type is widely known, and there are examples of well-executed patterned jackets, shirts and waistcoats, knitted in one or more colours and sometimes embroidered as well, preserved in a number of museums in Europe, their place of making has never been

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1 For the evidence for the early history of frameknitting in Scotland, see ch. VI; both the stockings and the silk shirt described in the following paragraph have been examined by courtesy of Lord Ancaster.
satisfactorily established\textsuperscript{1}.

There are no surviving examples of garments knitted in wool known from Scotland before the late sixteenth century, but there are a number from the following century, all found in peat. The first is a bonnet which was discovered with the remains of a raggedly-dressed man on Dava Moor, Moray, in 1927\textsuperscript{2}. The bonnet is flat-crowned, with a broad brim of double thickness through which two side flaps of woollen cloth have been knotted. Miss Henshall noted its resemblance to sixteenth-century caps in England, but placed it in the seventeenth to allow for a slower movement of fashion in northern Britain. Since, however, a virtually identical cap is shown in a 1580 engraving of John Knox which appears to have been taken from an original portrait of him by Vanson\textsuperscript{3}, the type may reasonably be supposed to have been current in Scotland during the last twenty years of the sixteenth century.

Like the caps from London, which it greatly resembles, the Dava Moor bonnet has been knitted in the round from coarse wool; the potential of knitting for creating complex shapes has been fully utilised to create the three-dimensional garment direct from the yarn, but the elastic properties of the technique have been ignored. Rather, use has


\textsuperscript{2} Henshall, 'Early Textiles I', 21-4.

\textsuperscript{3} D. Thomson, Painting in Scotland 1570-1760, 26.
Woollen bonnet from Dava Moor, Moray, late sixteenth century
(NMAS: NA 477)
Portrait of John Knox, from Beza's *Icones* (SNPG)
been made of the capacity of wool fibres to shrink and felt together in the presence of heat, friction and moisture, for the bonnet has been heavily fulled to produce a thickened and stiff weatherproof fabric. Finally, the felted outer surface has been raised, and then sheared so completely that the stitches have again been revealed. In effect, the finishing of the knitted fabric has been treated much like that of a woven cloth. The bonnet can be shown to be part of a continuing tradition, as there are a number of later examples, of varying pattern but identical technique, which have also survived. Two green bonnets, with larger crowns but again knitted in the round and then milled, from Tarvie, Ross, can be placed in the seventeenth century; another, originally blue with a red knotted decoration on the headband, from a burial on Arnish Moor, Lewis, dates from about 1715, and there are others from the eighteenth century and later preserved in Scottish museums.

In essence the processes used in finishing the bonnets are those which have traditionally been used for knitted garments elsewhere - except that the fulling has rarely been taken to such extremes. The section on bonneterie

1 Henshall, 'Early Textiles I', 24-25.
Woollen bonnet from Arnish Moor, Lewis, c. 1715 (NMAS)
(hosiery) in Diderot's *Encyclopédie*, for example, which is largely based on the account by Savary des Bruslons of 1723, describes similar methods. The garments were first fulled, the work in this case being done by hand in sinks provided with an inclined board set with teeth against which the articles could be pounded; after drying over a prepared shape, and the repair of any defects, the surface was dressed by brushing with teazles and shearing the nap, and, finally, pressing with hot metal. To go back to the sixteenth century, there is evidence of the same methods being used in the finishing of knitted caps in England: the regulations of the Coventry Cappers in the 1520s refer to thickening and pressing knitted caps, and in 1512 they were specifically forbidden to 'flok, myle or presse' their caps, presumably because this was the province of the fuller. In South-West Scotland bonnets continued to be made by hand until almost within living memory (and are still manufactured there by machine methods), and in one factory in Stewarton balaclavas are still finished by the hand processes formerly used for bonnets, only the shearing of the nap being omitted. The machineknitted balaclavas are waulked mechanically in a mill containing soap and water for about twenty-five minutes, with a pause half way through to stretch them into shape; after drying they are brushed and

1 D. Diderot *et al.*, *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire Raisonné des Sciences, des Arts et des Métiers* (Paris, 1751), s.v. bonneterie.
3 *Coventry Leet Book*, 670-3.
4 Ibid., 633.
steamed over a block, and a final finish is given by stretching them over a pedal-controlled wooden shape set on a special stool, and brushing with teazles.  

To return to the subject of knitted woollen garments found in Scotland, examples of stockings have also been found, but have proved more difficult to date. Miss Henshall described fragments of knitting, possibly part of a stocking, from Culrain, Ross, and another from Dunrossness, Shetland, but found nothing to indicate their period of manufacture. A handsome pair of green ribbed stockings, worked in two-ply wool, was among the items recovered when the clothed body of a man was found in peat at Cambusnethan, Lanarkshire, in 1932. At the time, the burial was thought to belong to the late seventeenth century, but the cut of the clothes, particularly the coat with its tapered waist, elaborately-seamed back, and brass buttons, is much more typical of the nineteenth century, and the stockings are most unlikely to have been made before 1800. But another pair of stockings recovered from peat, part of the burial found at Gunnister, Shetland, can with confidence be placed in the 1690s, and indeed the whole find is so exceptional as to be worth examining in detail.

The fully-clothed body of a man was discovered by

1 Information derived from a visit to Robert Sim and Co., Riverside, Stewarton, 1976.
3 L. McL. Mann, 'Notes on the Discovery of a Body in a Peat Moss at Cambusnethan', Trans Glasgow Arch. Soc., ns ix part 1 (1937), 44-55; the finds are preserved in Glasgow City Museum.
Woollen glove from Gunnister, Shetland, late seventeenth century
(NMAS:NA 1044)
One of a pair of woollen stockings from Gunnister, Shetland, late seventeenth century
(NMAS: NA1043)
Woollen caps from Gunnister, Shetland, late seventeenth century
(NMAS: NA 1041-2)
Woollen purse from Gunnister, Shetland, late seventeenth century
(NMAS: NA 1045)
peat cutters at Gunnister, Shetland, in 1951. His main garments, all cut from woollen cloth, were in the style of the late seventeenth century, and carefully buried with him were his small personal effects, including a purse containing Swedish and Dutch coins, the latest dated 1690. There was no indication that the man had been done any violence, and it has been suggested that he was a traveller who had perhaps been caught in a storm in this remote place and died of exposure. It is presumed that the body was later found and buried on the spot because it was too difficult to transport it to a churchyard. The Continental coins are not necessarily an indication of a foreigner as they were common currency in Scotland at the time.

The man's shirt, coat and breeches were all of cloth woven from undyed yarn, but his other garments had been expertly knitted by hand. The gauntlet gloves are of stock- ing stitch and carefully shaped, each finger knitted in the round, with pattern lines down the backs of the hands in imitation of the stitching on leather gloves. A fragment with a diamond pattern was found with them, but its purpose is uncertain. The stockings, although much worn and repaired when buried, were originally as well shaped as the gloves: they fitted close to the leg and were decorated with a pattern in moss stitch at the ankle. In addition, there are two caps, both knitted in the round; one is

brimless with a looped pile on the inside, presumably for warmth, while the other has a brim with a pattern formed by alternately increasing and decreasing. Both caps have been made large and then shrunk to compact and felt the fabric (although not so markedly as the bonnets mentioned earlier), creating a thoroughly weatherproof finish.

Inside the brimmed cap the felted surface has been retained, but the exterior has been shaved to reveal the stitches, presumably to produce a water-repellent surface. Even the purse mentioned is knitted: the other items have been made from yarns in the natural colours of the fleece, but in this case a little dyed yarn has been worked in and there are rows of a simple pattern in red and white; this is the earliest piece of coloured pattern knitting known from Scotland.

The knitted garments from Gunnister show a high degree of development: the work is extremely competent, with an excellent understanding of shaping and patterning, and use of the properties of the wool. These clothes must have been warm and close-fitting yet pliable and, particularly in the case of the gloves and stockings, much more satisfactory than their cloth equivalents. There is no way of being certain that they were made in Shetland, but since during the seventeenth century, as mentioned previously, the Shetlanders conducted a thriving trade in selling stockings to the visiting Dutch herring fishers, among others, it is at least a reasonable possibility. It is

1 For a discussion of the Shetland hosiery trade see ch. VII.
Cloth stockings from Arnish Moor, Lewis, c. 1715
(NMAS)
interesting to note, however, that in a burial of similar date found in peat at Barrock, Caithness, all the garments, bonnet and hose included, were cut from cloth and sewn, not knitted. Similarly, the body found on Arnish Moor, Lewis, noted above, although buried with a knitted bonnet was also wearing cloth stockings.

The Gunnister find gives a clue as to the possible quality and variety of knitted garments known in Shetland by 1700; furthermore, the few pieces of silk knitting from the mainland indicate that in Scotland, as elsewhere in Europe, high quality, if almost certainly imported, knitwear was available at the upper levels of society, at least by the sixteenth century. Even so, the number of surviving specimens of knitting dateable before 1700 is too small to allow conclusions to be drawn for the country as a whole, and further evidence must be sought from contemporary sources.

It might be supposed that pictorial sources, notably portraits, which begin to survive in quantity in Scotland from the last decades of the sixteenth century, would yield useful evidence concerning knitted garments. In practice, however, while they are a guide to trends in fashion, the identification of specific techniques is difficult. Knitting at this period seems to have been most used for accessories rather than main garments, and these

1 Henshall, 'Earley Textiles I', 25-7.
2 Bennett, 'Arnish Moor', 176.
are rarely painted in sufficient detail to allow the
method of making to be known with any certainty. To take
the example of stockings - knitted hose must have offered
a closer and more wrinkle-free fit than their cloth equi-
valents, but a stocking shown fitting close to the leg
cannot be assumed to be knitted, since the artist may have
chosen to improve or idealise the appearance of the sitter.

Nor is the use of documentary evidence to trace a
textile technique without pitfalls. In a household account
or wardrobe inventory, for example, a garment often has
only the briefest description attached to it, which may or
may not include a reference to its method of manufacture.
Even if this is given, there is the possibility that the
technique has been mis-named or misunderstood, or covered
by an unspecific or omnibus term such as 'wrought'. As in
England, the word knit had a well-established general usage
in Scotland covering to tie, bind, knot, make fast, mend
and so on - hence, for example, the wrapping cloths listed
in the wardrobe of the young James VI (1579) as 'claithis
to knit clais in'\textsuperscript{2}. The use of the word in its specific
textile sense seems to have come late, not apparently until
towards the end of the sixteenth century: the earliest
reference I have been able to trace, the context of which
indicates the strict textile meaning, is from 1583 when
'iii payr of fyne knyt stockings' were listed among goods

\textsuperscript{1} DO\textsuperscript{\textsc{st}}, s.v. knit, knitting.
\textsuperscript{2} \textit{Wardrobe Inventories}, 282.
lost to pirates¹. Yet, as the Fortrose find indicates, knitted goods were certainly known in Scotland well before this, so presumably alternative descriptions were in use. One such alternative, commonly used later, was the description 'prick' derived from the pricks or pins on which knitwear was made: in 1707, for instance, the Convention of Royal Burghs ruled that 'for the better improvement of stocking manufactures it is thought fitt that hereafter all prick stockings may be made of three plyed wosten'². A confusing usage, still well-known today in North-East Scotland, is the extension of 'weave' to cover knitting, giving, for example, 'weivin weer' (knitting needle) and 'wyver' (knitter)³. A further complication is that the term was also used on occasion to distinguish frame-made from handknitted stockings - hence Thomas Morer's description (1689) of Highlanders' tartan stockings 'not knit or weaved but sow'd together'⁴.

For some knitted garments evidence is remarkably sparse. Although a fine knitted silk shirt or jacket would have been a costly item, beyond the reach of the bulk of the population, the number surviving in Europe suggests that they must have been relatively common in the seventeenth century, and the Drummond Castle example is unlikely to have been unique in Scotland. Despite this, a search of

¹ Northern Notes and Queries, 1 (1888), 77.
² SND, s.v. prick.
³ Ibid., s.v. weave, weaver.
⁴ Hume Brown, op.cit., 270.
inventories and accounts relating to the supplying and making of clothes has revealed nothing to match this description; only the occasional reference to a 'silk waistcoat', as, for example, among items sent from London to Alexander, 6th Earl of Eglinton, in 1645, even suggests a garment of this sort.

Knitted gloves are little less elusive and difficult to trace among personal possessions. By the second half of the seventeenth century gloves appear in quantity in the wardrobes of well-to-do Scots, but the majority of these seem to have been of leather of different kinds. Earlier, gloves are mentioned less frequently, although portraits show that by the last quarter of the sixteenth century they had become an important decorative accessory, sometimes heavily embroidered, trimmed with fringes, and perhaps lined with a contrasting colour. It is only occasionally that documents provide indications of the materials of which these items were made: the inventory made on the death of Lady Anna Montgomery in 1632, for example, mentions a pair of mittens to match a riding coat and hood of scarlet cloth trimmed with silver lace, and the list of the clothes of Mary, Queen of Scots, remaining in Edinburgh Castle in 1578 includes a mitton of white taffeta sewn with 'red crammosie silk'; exceptionally, however, this last inventory also lists six pairs of gloves of Guernsey worsted, and

1 HMC Report, x pt 1, 54.
2 HMC Report, xiv pt 3, 235.
these, surely, are most likely to have been knitted.1

Difficult as knitted gloves are to track down among personal possessions, other sources indicate that they must have been quite readily available in some quarters. As has been seen, fine silk gloves were not unknown in Scotland during the early 1500s, and an entry in the import section of the 1612 book of rates for gloves 'of silk knit' suggests they were coming into the country regularly early the next century2; rather later, for a brief period during the 1680s, knitted silk gloves were actually produced in Scotland - at New Mills3. As for less fine gloves - knitted mittens, presumably of wool, have already been mentioned as Shetland products before 1620, and an entry in the minutes of Edinburgh burgh council for 18 September 1562 implies that knitted gloves were already being made on the mainland several decades earlier: the Bonnetmakers of Edinburgh had complained that other crafts were stealing their apprentices and the council responded by agreeing to uphold their liberties, but with the caveat:

in case it plesit the gudeness of God to gyf the gyft to strangeraris or utheris resortand to this toun to labour and invent upoun prikis ane mair perfyte and fyner fassoun of hois, slevis, gluffis and siclike as they thameselfis, servandis nor prentisses could not do nor hes nocht done at any time befor this, that in sic caissis the saidis personis sail not be stoppit.4

In short, it appears that by the middle of the sixteenth

1 Wardrobe Inventories, 241, 236.
2 Daliburton's Ledger, 310.
3 New Mills Cloth Manufactory, 78, 105.
4 Edin. Recs, iii, 148; Edinburgh City Archives, Council Registers, iv, 42v-43r.
century, at least in Edinburgh, bonnetmakers were making not only headgear but gloves and other small garments (albeit not of sufficient quality to please the burgh council) by means of knitting.

Although the evidence for the use of some knitted garments in Scotland before 1700 is hard to come by, that for others is fortunately more plentiful, and it is possible to examine both bonnets and stockings (dealt with first) in some detail.

About the middle of the fourteenth century a new style of men's clothing began to be worn in Europe, and the gown or tunic was replaced by a short, close-fitting coat or doublet. In various guises this remained fashionable for over three centuries until, in turn, it was supplanted by a knee-length coat. The change in the upper garment affected the clothing of the lower part of the body, for much, and eventually the whole, of the leg was consequently revealed. In response, the long cloth hose or stockings which had formerly been worn began to be sewn together, creating a garment which was, in effect, a pair of tights (but still referred to as hose), and covered the whole of the figure from the hips down. By the early 1500s the section covering the trunk was often differentiated from that covering the legs by being made in a contrasting

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1 A detailed study of the history stockings in Europe is to be found in Om Strømper (Valby 1953); see particularly H. Hald, 'Fra bar fød til strømpe', and E. Andersen, 'Strømpen i den europæiske modedragt'.

colour or material: it could be ornamented with puffs of fabric drawn through slashes in the main fabric and, later, heavily padded, eventually becoming a separate garment. The combined hose continued to be worn until about 1600, and sometimes beyond, but from about 1570 breeches and stockings were increasingly separate entities. Throughout the period women wore short stockings, again often referred to as hose, gartered at the knee.

Within this pattern, knitted stockings seem to have made a very late appearance. At least among the wealthy and fashionable, both men's long hose and the shorter ones worn by women, were normally cut from woven cloth - of fine wool, or rich materials such as patterned silk or velvet - until well into the sixteenth century. In England, for example, knitted stockings are occasionally mentioned from the 1530s on, but such references are comparatively rare until the last two or three decades of the century. There is a record from December 1532 of 7s. 6d. having been paid for 'a payer of nyte hosen' for Henry VIII, but his other hose appear generally to have been of cloth, substantiating Dr Howell's comment (History of the World) that 'Henry VIII, that magnificent and expensive prince, wore ordinarily cloth hose, except there came from Spain, by great chance, a pair of silk stockings'. According to the same author, Edward VI received a pair of long Spanish silk stockings from Sir

1 The Privy Purse Expenses of King Henry VIII 1529-32, ed. N. Harris Nicholas (London 1827), 279, quoted in Levey, op.cit., 190.
Thomas Gresham 'and the present was then taken much notice of', and 'Queen Elisabeth, in the third year of her reign, was presented with a pair of black silk knit stockings by her silk woman, Mrs Montague, and thenceforth she never wore cloth ones any more'. By 1583 the adoption of fine knitted stockings by the *haut monde* was still sufficiently recent an innovation for Stubbes to complain:

> then have they nether-stocks in these gay hosen (not of cloth though ever so fine, for that is thought too base, but of jarnsey worsted, silk thread and the like) so curiously knit with open seam down the leg, with quirks and clocks above the ankles, and sometimes haply interlaced with gold or silver thread, as is beautiful to behold.

A distinction must, however, be made between the fine stockings of fashionable wear and coarser products, since there is good evidence not only for the wearing of knitted woollen stockings by the less wealthy, but of their production in England from the early years of the century. The idea, derived from a misunderstanding of Stow, that woollen stockings were first made in England in 1564, has long since been disproved, and, on examination, Stow's account proves to be concerned with *worsted* stockings, the implication being that *fine* stockings had not formerly been made in the country.

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1 Quoted in *Wells*, *op.cit.*, 15.
In Scotland, except for parts of the Highlands where it seems the inhabitants habitually went bare-legged\(^1\), there is plentiful evidence for the wearing of cloth hose, by rich and poor alike, for much of the sixteenth century. The 1539 inventory of James V's wardrobe, for instance, describes no less than 22 pairs of hose, all clearly made from woven materials: five were of black cloth, four purple, and thirteen of velvets of different colours, many enriched with cutwork and trimmings. One particularly elaborate pair is listed as 'ane pair of hois of crammesy velvet champit like dammes cuttit out on claiith of gold the champ of it of silver'\(^2\). As might be expected, the accounts of the Lord Treasurer include numerous entries concerning the buying and giving out of cloth to make both men's and women's hose: to take just two examples from 1551, a length of 'stemmyng of Myllane' (a fine woollen cloth) was bought to be made into two pairs of hose for David, son of the Earl of Arran, along with lengths of taffeta and 'Inglis black' to line and edge them, and half an ell of 'braid reid' was purchased to make hose for the governor's daughter\(^3\). Mentions of hose at a more humble level suggest

\(^1\) To John Major (A History of Greater Britain \([S H S]\), 49), early in the sixteenth century, the habit of going bare from the thighs down was one of the distinguishing features of the 'Wild Scots'; a similar picture is given by, amongst others, Lindsay of Pitscottie (1573) and Nicolay d'Arfeville (1581/1547), (F.F. McClintock, Old Irish and Highland Dress, 113, 115-6).

\(^2\) As Extracts from Wardrobe Inventories, 43-5.

\(^3\) T.A., 36-8.
simpler garments, but still often recognisably of cloth.
A length of white cloth suitable for making hose ('hosing'),
and a made-up pair, were among the goods listed as stolen
from one Marcus Abernethy in Elgin in 1543¹, while in 1561
Edinburgh burgh council authorised the treasurer to
provide material for outfits for various officers in prepa-
ration for the arrival of the queen, including 'also
mcke black stemmyng as will be everyone of thame ane pair
of hois'². Again in Elgin, in 1573 Thomas Smith, merchant,
agreed to give John Jameson, his servant, a pair of new
short hose of white cloth as part of his fee³. The
Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue interprets short
hose as knee breeches, but since the servant was also to
receive 'brekis', as well as coat, shirt and shoes, short
hose in this case were surely stockings to complete the
outfit. In 1575 Scottish ministers were warned against the
use of bright colours and luxurious fabrics in their dress:
it might have been expected that if, as in England, fine
knitted stockings were coming into general use, the evils
of wearing them would have been mentioned, but, interest-
ingly enough, strictures about legwear are limited to 'all
kynd of superfluiditie of cloath in makeing of hose'⁴.

Throughout the sixteenth century, and later, the word
hose continued in use in Scotland as a general term to

¹ Elgin Recs., i, 75-6.
² ibid., iii, 121.
³ ibid., i, 136.
⁴ Book of the Universall Kirk of Scotland (Laithland Club),
i, 335.
describe both 'tights' and shorter leg coverings. By the middle of the century, however, as elsewhere, a distinction was beginning to be made between the upper and lower sections of men's hose. To return to the Lord Treasurer's accounts for 1551, for example, there is an entry for black velvet to make hose for the governor, with 'stemmyng of myllane to be schankis to the samin'\textsuperscript{1}. From this date 'breikis' and 'schankis' are increasingly differentiated. About the same time, the term stockings also comes into use, but it seems to be the equivalent of 'shanks' and there is no reason to suppose that it necessarily implies knitted garments. An early instance is the 'almany stokkis' (German stockings) mentioned among goods imported in 1564 by 'Peris \&e Peris', captain of the Neptune of Dieppe, accused of piracy\textsuperscript{2}: the description shows clearly that they were not knitted but of satin and taffeta, in the elaborate puffed and slashed style favoured in Germany at the time\textsuperscript{3}.

Although the term 'knyt stockings' is rare in the late sixteenth century there are, none the less, references which imply that they were beginning to be worn by the more well-to-do. It might be expected that if the fashionable were taking to knitted stockings, then such garments would have found a place in the wardrobe of Mary, Queen of Scots: it happens that the 1578 inventory of her clothes in

\textsuperscript{1} TA, x, 17.
\textsuperscript{2} NPG, i, 308.
\textsuperscript{3} C. Köhler, \textit{A History of Costume} (London 1928), 24.
Edinburgh Castle includes 'ten pair of wolvin hois of gold, silver and silk' and 'three pair of wolvin hois of worsett of Garnsey'. The term 'wolvin' is not specific, but the description is strongly reminiscent of the luxurious knitted stockings worn in England of which Stubbes complained five years later. After this, hose which are described not in terms of a named cloth, but of the fibre or thread - silk, worsted and so on - gradually become more common in clothing accounts and these, by implication, were surely knitted. To take a few random examples - the accounts for the clothing of Donald Campbell, natural son of the Thane of Cawdor, mention 'silk schankis' (1590), and a black worsted pair for mourning (1592), and the inventory of the goods of Bailie Mackorran, shot in the Edinburgh High School riot in 1595, includes worsted stockings, both black and 'tanny'. In 1603 a lady of the Eglinton family, attending court in London, paid 36s. sterling for 'ane pair of silk schankis' as a present for one of Lord Harrington's men when he chose her as his valentine, and a lengthy account for the goods supplied to the Earl of Angus by James Rae, merchant in Edinburgh, 1627-8, includes worsted hose for his children, other pairs described as red or yellow, and a pair of 'oring silk hois' for the impressive sum of £23; the account also mentions

1 Wardrobe Inventories, 236.
2 The Book of the Thanes of Cawdor (Spalding Club), 197.
3 Ibid., 213.
4 Papers from the Collection of Sir William Fraser (SHS), 227.
5 E.C. Report, x pt i, 32.

In this and the following chapters unless otherwise stated, if indicates the pound Scots then used with figures derived from Scottish documents of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.
'gray Duncaster bois'. Five years later, Edinburgh town guard was described as being dressed for the visit of Charles I, in white satin doublets, velvet breeches, and silk stockings.

Despite the indications of knitted stockings coming into common use during the seventeenth century, references to cloth stockings do not disappear, rather, they continue to be remarkably common. The 1627-8 clothing account directed to the Earl of Angus, mentioned above, includes in addition to the silk and worsted hose an entry for stemming for the 'bairns schanks', and about 1652 the Cawdor accounts mention 'cloth to stockings for James'. That this use of cloth was not limited to children is apparent from other contemporary merchants' and tailors' accounts. In 1630, for example, the Laird of 'Elnwoid' had made an outfit consisting of cloak, doublet, breeches and 'stockis' (also referred to later in the account as 'schankis'), all of English cloth. In 1641 the Laird of Balnagowan's bill from James Lauder included 'clock, clais and schanks' of Spanish cloth; twenty years later Balnagowan was still buying cloth hose, for although he had paid £14 in 1661 for 'ane pair Issobella collort silk

1 In 1695 it was estimated that there were 120 workers in Doncaster engaged in the production of stockings (Wells, op. cit., 16).
2 Memorials of the Troubles in Scotland and in England 1624-45 (Spalding Club), i, 34.
3 Scott-Moncrieff, op. cit., 475.
4 The Book of the Thanes of Cawdor, 310.
5 Tailor's ms account book in the library of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland.
6 W. MacGill, Old Ross-shire and Scotland (Inverness 1909), 142.
stockings', in the 1660s Thomas Watson, his tailor in Edinburgh, made him 'holland stockings, serg stockings and grytt stockings... and two pair tops'. The last item probably refers to decorative cuffs worn so as to be seen emerging from the top of the boots, so the 'grytt' stockings at least, may have been a form of boot hose, that is, tough outer stockings worn to protect finer ones underneath from being chafed by the boots. Even so, it is tempting to wonder whether the laird still preferred his tailor-made hose to knitted stockings for all but high days and holidays. It also appears that in the middle of the century cloth stockings were still sometimes favoured for civil uniform: in 1642, for example, Elgin town council ordered that the four town officers be provided with suitable clothing, including 'ane pair of brekis and ane pair of schankis of blew grayis [sic] at 24s. the elne at the maist', and as late as 1689 Aberdeen town drummer's official suit included 'stockings of the same cloath' as his coat and breeches.

Even at the end of the seventeenth century there are indications that there were some areas of Scotland where the wearing of knitted stockings was the exception rather than the rule - and not only because of the practice, which amounted almost to a national trait among women and

1 Ibid., 143.
2 Ibid.
4 Elgin recs, i, 273.
5 Records of Old Aberdeen (Spalding Club), i, 152.
children, of going barefoot. In parts of the Highlands, the medieval joined cloth hose had not been entirely abandoned, but survived (and continued into the eighteenth century) in the form of trews. In 1641, for instance, Robert Gordon of Straloch described Highland men as wearing 'close Trowzes which cover the Thighs, Legs, and Feet'; he added 'the Trowzes are for winter use; at other times they content themselves with short Hose, which scarce reach the knees'. In 1689 these short hose were still being made of cloth, for, according to Thomas Morer, Highlanders 'make 'em generally of the same piece with their Pladds, not knit or weaved, but sow'd together, and they tie 'em below the knee with tufted garters'. Writing at the end of the century, Martin Martin retailed the amazement of an inhabitant of St Kilda visiting Glasgow where not the least of the wonders he saw was 'stockings made without first being cut, and afterwards sewn'. But from the comments of visitors, and from evidence in the form of the cloth hose from Barrock and Arnish Moor, it is apparent that in 1700 the use of cloth for stockings was by no means limited to the remote island of St Kilda, and that, particularly in the Western Isles and the North, the wearing of knitted stockings was not universal in Scotland. Interestingly, there is no unambiguous word for knitting in Gaelic:

1 S. Maxwell and R. Hutchison, Scottish Costume 1550-1850, 92.
2 McClintock, op. cit., 117-8.
3 Hume Brown, op. cit., 270.
4 Martin, A Description of the Western Isles of Scotland, 298.
verb *fìgh* and its derivatives are used, but they are also used to cover to plait, weave and so on\(^1\). Whereas in practice there are other words for weave, weaver, and so on, this is not true of knitting which relies on context for the meaning to be clear; furthermore, in the expression *fìgh an stocain* (to knit a stocking)\(^2\), *stocain* appears to have been derived from English. This suggests the possibility that both knitting and knitted stockings are comparatively recent innovations in Gaelic-speaking areas\(^3\).

As described above, there is surviving in Scotland a series of men's bonnets (caps), the earliest of which may date from about 1580\(^4\). Visitors to Scotland from the late sixteenth century onwards often commented on this form of headgear, which seemed to them to be a distinctive part of Scottish dress. Fynes Moryson, recalling a visit to Lowland Scotland in 1598, remembered 'the husbandmen in Scotland, the servants and almost all the Country did weare course cloth made at home, of gray or skie colour, and flat blew caps, very broad'\(^5\). Twenty years later, John Taylor,

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1 A Dictionary of the Gaelic Language (Highland Society of Scotland, 1828), s.v. *fìgh*.
2 C. Dwelly, The Illustrated Gaelic Dictionary (Edinburgh, 1930), s.v. *fìgh*.
3 I am grateful for the advice of Professor W. Gillies on this point.
4 The various styles of bonnet are considered in more detail in Bennett, 'The Scots Bonnet', from which some of the material in this section is derived.
5 F. Moryson, An Itinerary..., iii, 179.
the Later Poet, who had ventured into the Highlands during his visit, contrasted the vast retinues and lavish hospitality of the Scots gentleman with the simplicity of his dress - 'the beaver being his blue bonnet'\(^1\). According to John Ray, by 1662 blue and russet bonnets were worn only 'by the poorer sort', but later in the century (1689) Thomas Morer, chaplain to a Scots regiment, described them as being in general use among the Highlanders\(^2\).

Although by the seventeenth century the bonnet was coming to be regarded as particularly Scottish, its origins lie in a style common in European fashion as a whole. In the latter part of the fifteenth and well into the sixteenth century, men's dress included various forms of flat headgear which in both England and France were covered by the general term *bonnet* - although in England the term *cap* was eventually preferred. Different materials were used including, among the wealthy, silks and velvets, often richly trimmed\(^3\), but at a lower level many were knitted: a statute of Elizabeth I of England (1570), for example, stipulated that with the exception of gentlemen worth 20 marks a year or more:

> Every person above the age of seven years shall wear upon the Sabbath or Holyday (unless in time of their travel out of their towns, hamlets etc.) upon their head, a cap of wool knit, thicked and dressed in England, made within this realm, and only dressed and finished by some of the trade of cappers, upon pain to forfeit every day not wearing 3s. 4d.\(^4\)

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1 Hume Brown, op.cit., 127.  
2 Ibid., 231, 270.  
4 Statutes at Large, ii, 13 Eliz. c.39.
The measure was designed to protect the ailing cap knitting industry which was threatened by the increasing popularity of hats, but it appears to have had as little success as most sumptuary legislation, for when it was repealed 26 years later although caps had not disappeared, their use was rapidly descending the social scale.

In Scotland the word bonnet, although not unknown earlier, begins to appear regularly in documents from the last quarter of the fifteenth century onwards. In general terms it was applied to many different forms of headcovering: it included protective headgear - such as the 'steil bonnetis' which appear in a 1517 Berwickshire decree for spoliation, women's head-dresses - red satin for 'the Owenis bonet of tyre' is entered in the Lord Treasurer's accounts for 1474, and nightcaps - 'nyght bonnettis' described variously as trimmed with gold or silver lace, made of wool, or 'of silk knit', are listed in the 1612 book of rates. As in England and France, however, it was applied in a more specific sense to men's low, soft headgear as opposed to the stiffer and more upright hat (although the distinction between the two was often blurred and defies exact definition).

Bonnets in this specific sense appear at all levels of society. The Lord Treasurer's accounts, for example, show

1 Repealed by 39 Eliz. c.18.
2 Cunnington, English Costume in the Sixteenth Century, 47, 133; for further details of cap knitting in England see ch. I.
3 HMC Report, xiv, appendix pt 3, 82.
4 TA, i, 37.
5 Halyburton's Ledger, 29.
that 37 were bought for James IV between 1488 and 1490 alone, as well as others provided as part of liveries. A number of bonnets, some from 'John Robin bonet makar of Brugis' and others bought in Antwerp, figure in Andrew Halyburton's notebook among the diverse items he sent to Scotland at the end of the fifteenth century in return for wool, fish and skins sent out by his clients. Two black bonnets are marked against the Bishop of Aberdeen's account for May 1497, and several dozen assorted bonnets, described as black, 'tanny', red, and sometimes additionally as 'syngil', presumably intended for resale, were sent to Andrew Cullan, a prominent Aberdeen merchant, in 1499. At a more humble level, it was agreed in 1538 that 'ane marabas bonnet with ane quhyte fedder worth xvi s.' was to be provided for each of Edinburgh's common officers for the occasion of the Queen's entry into the city, while eight years earlier, one Johne Andersoun of Aberdeen was fined for having been found in the kirk 'with his bonet on his heid'. Common as bonnets appear to have been at this time, there is some doubt as to whether they were worn over the whole country. As McClintock found, the few accounts of Highland dress in the sixteenth century either make no mention of headgear, or comment on the bare heads of the Highlanders. By early the next century, however, when John

1 TA, i, 145-6, 195.
2 'Halyburton's Ledger, 45.
3 Ibid., 183.
4 Ibid., 180.
5 'Din. eccs, ii, 91.
6 Abdn Coun., i, 37.
7 N. F. McClintock, with J. T. Dunbar, Old Highland Dress and Tartans, 15.
Taylor saw Highlanders, gentry and servants alike, 'with blue caps on their heads' hunting at Braemar, and Richard James saw them dressed in slashed doublets, plaids, trews and 'blacke and greene and blue bonnets', they appear to have become a common, and thereafter standard, feature of Highland dress.

So far nothing has been said about the materials of which these bonnets were made. As in England, some were of rich materials, silks and velvets being mentioned regularly until about 1580. To take an extreme example, the 1542 inventory of James V's wardrobe lists 31 items under the heading of bonnets, most specified as velvet (although a few are of cloth), and nearly all heavily trimmed with gold buttons, gemstones and pearls in gold settings, and elaborate jewels; it is probably a bonnet of this type which is shown on the ducats of James V, known since the sixteenth century as 'bonnet pieces'. Not surprisingly, the use of these costly bonnets was limited to the well-to-do; furthermore, they appear to have gone out of fashion well before the end of the century. Hats, which had never been entirely abandoned during the reign of the bonnet, became increasingly popular in various forms during the second half of the century. By the 1590s bonnets had not only more or less disappeared from the dress of wealthy Scots, but the wearing

1 Hume Brown, *op. cit.*, 121.
2 James, *op. cit.*, 51.
3 Wardrobe Inventories, 67-70.
5 Bennett, 'The Scots Bonnet'.
of them, like plaids, was coming to be regarded as uncouth and improper among those with social pretensions.

As for the bonnets which were worn by the rest of the population, and, as has been shown, continued to be popular despite the change in fashion further up the social scale, details of material are not generally given, and description is usually limited to colour. This implies that, unless specially qualified, bonnets were of some standard material, presumably of wool. As in England, it seems likely that many, or even most, of these ordinary bonnets were knitted. Admittedly only four of the series of surviving examples can be dated before 1700, and one of these (from Barrock, Caithness) is of coarse cloth, but, as has been seen, the other three, like the later examples, are all made in the same manner, that is, knitted from coarse wool and heavily shrunk and felted. Furthermore, it is known that a tradition of bonnet knitting existed in Scotland: as shown above, the knitting of bonnets in South-West Scotland goes back at least to the middle of the seventeenth century, and the entry in Edinburgh council minutes for 18 September 1562 indicates that bonnet-makers there were knitters. The Bonnet-makers in Edinburgh had received their seal of cause in 1520, but elsewhere in Scotland they are recorded earlier still - by 1505 in Aberdeen and 1496 in Dundee. If all

1 Ibid.
2 Ibid., Recs., i, 198-201.
3 J. lain, Merchant and Craft Guilds, 56.
4 W. R.S., Campbell, A Short History of the Bonnetmaker Craft of Dundee, 4.
bonnetmakers were knitters, therefore, not only the wearing but the making of knitted bonnets in Scotland could be traced back to the late fifteenth century.

To sum up - it appears that the adoption of knitted garments in Scotland followed a similar pattern to that in England, with a distinction between the fine garments worn by the wealthy, and coarser products. The available evidence indicates that high quality items of silk or fine wool, although not unknown before, were not common until very late in the sixteenth century; even then, the frequency with which cloth stockings, for example, are mentioned among the well-to-do suggests that knitted goods of the requisite quality, all of which were presumably imported, may not always have been readily available. For coarser work, however, there are good indications, as in England, that it was not only being used but produced in the country earlier than might have been expected: knitted bonnets can be traced back to the sixteenth century at least, and the making of knitted hose was sufficiently well-established early in the seventeenth century for them to figure in exports in some quantity - which is all the more unexpected considering that, with the exception of coarse cloth, Scotland was mainly exporting primary products. As has been shown, one group of bonnetmakers was knitting a variety of items by 1562: it is the bonnetmakers, therefore, that

1 S.G.E. Lythe, The Economy of Scotland in its European Setting 1550-1625, 39 and n.50.
require further investigation, for if all craftsmen of that name were not simply makers of a specific type of headgear but knitters of garments in general, then the practice of knitting in Scotland pre-dates 1500. None the less, the prevalence of cloth stockings in some areas as late as 1700 suggests that the knowledge of knitting may not have been countrywide, and the possibility has to be considered that for a lengthy period the production of knitted garments may have been limited to, say, East, Central and South-West Scotland, and Shetland.
CHAPTER III

THE BONNETMAKERS OF EDINBURGH

In Scotland the adoption by men in the second half of the fifteenth century of the fashion for low, soft headgear, referred to as bonnets, was soon followed by a new craft - that of the bonnetmaker. The trade can be traced in a number of burghs in eastern and central Scotland. Earliest on record are the Bonnetmakers of Dundee who received a seal of cause from the burgh council on 31 July 1496¹; the craft in Edinburgh was recognised in the same manner in 1520², while in Aberdeen, bonnetmakers were listed in a burgh council statute governing the processions which marked holy days such as Corpus Christi, dated 30 January 1505³. There are likely to have been bonnetmakers in Perth by the middle of the sixteenth century as there is mention of the 'outlandis men of Sanct Jonistoun' trying to sell their bonnets in Edinburgh in 1558⁴. Further west, the Bonnetmakers of Stirling were received into the brotherhood of the Skinners in 1547⁵, and ten years before 'Jhone Broun bonetmakar' had figured in the burgh accounts of Ayr⁶; seals of cause were granted to the Bonnetmakers of Glasgow and Kilmarnock at the

¹ T. H. S. Campbell, A Short History of the Bonnetmaker Craft of Dundee, 4.
² Edin. Recs., i, 198-201.
³ L. Bain, Merchant and Craft Guilds, 56.
⁵ Stirling Recs., i, 47.
⁶ Ayr Recs., 14.
comparatively late dates of 1597\(^1\) and 1647\(^2\) respectively, but it is clear that in both places the trade was already well established.

Bonnets took a variety of forms - from examples in silk or velvet, sometimes trimmed with jewels, worn by the wealthy, to those of coarse wool, most of which seem to have been knitted, worn by the bulk of the population\(^3\). After the passing of the original fashion, this latter humble kind of bonnet was retained, becoming virtually an element of national dress. It might be imagined that the trade of the bonnetmaker consisted of producing all headgear of that name, but there are indications to the contrary. An entry in Edinburgh council minutes for 18 September 1562, for instance, implies that the bonnet-makers there were those who 'labour and invent upoun prikis...hois, slevis, gluffis and siclike'\(^4\): in other words they were knitters, and, what is more, producing a variety of garments. The question therefore arises as to whether all bonnetmakers were not manufacturers of all bonnets, of whatever material, but rather makers of knitted garments among which coarse woollen bonnets perhaps predominated. Unfortunately, although a number of the bonnetmaker incorporations are still in existence, they have few records in their possession which pre-date

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1 M. Lindsay, History of the Incorporation of Bonnetmakers and Dyers of Glasgow 1597-1950, 85.
2 A. Mackay, The History of Kilmarnock, 43.
3 See ch. II.
4 Edin. Recs., iii, 148.
the middle of the seventeenth century and therefore little
to illuminate the origins of the trade. But, in the case
of Edinburgh, other sources - the burgh records, and later,
to some extent, the testaments of the bonnetmakers them-
selves - provide indirect evidence about the operation and
progress of the craft. It is therefore proposed to examine
what can be discovered about the early history of the
bonnetmaker craft in Edinburgh to provide a model against
which what is known of bonnetmakers elsewhere in Scotland
may be tested.

Bonnetmakers are first mentioned by name in
Edinburgh burgh records in connection with the granting of
their seal of cause in 1520. According to two authorities
this date could be pushed back to 1473: J.D. Marwick, in
his account of early guilds of merchants and craftsmen,
stated that the seal of cause granted to the Hatmakers in
that year included the Bonnetmakers, whilst Colston, in
his work on the incorporated trades of Edinburgh, concluded
that it 'should properly have been to the Bonnetmakers
seeing that the use of hats had not been introduced at that
period'. Their views, however, cannot be substantiated.

Hats, although overshadowed by the fashionable bonnets, are
not totally absent from late fifteenth-century Scottish
documents: the Lord Treasurer's accounts for 1488-90, for

1 Edin. Recs., i, 198-201.
2 J.D. Marwick, Observations on Early Guilds of Merchants
   and Craftsmen, 21.
3 J. Colston, The Incorporated Trades of Edinburgh, 137.
example, mention, in addition to many bonnets, fifteen hats, one of which was a 'bevir', bought for James IV\(^1\), and, similarly, hats were among the goods imported to Scotland through Andrew Halyburton\(^2\). Nor is there any evidence that hatmakers and bonnetmakers were ever associated. In Scotland the term hatter not only appears long before the description bonnetmaker\(^3\), but continues to be mentioned as something quite separate. It is true that after the 1470s the Hatmakers in Edinburgh are rarely mentioned as a corporate body - although in 1588 they were charged with associating with the unfree hatmakers of the Canongate\(^4\) - and in general they were not included in burgh business concerning the incorporated trades, but none the less, they can be shown to have maintained a separate existence from the Bonnetmakers. Thomas Gibson, admitted burgess in 1521, for example, is described as a hatmaker\(^5\), but his name does not appear in the second (1530) seal of cause of the Bonnetmakers which lists the members of that craft\(^6\); it is, of course, possible that he was dead, but, equally, men described as hatmakers continue to appear in the burgess roll after

\(^1\) TA, i, 145-6.
\(^2\) Halyburton's Ledger, 178, 235.
\(^3\) Unlike the description 'bonnetmaker', the term 'hatter' does appear in Scottish documents before 1400; see W. A. Craigie, 'Earliest records of the Scots tongue', SHR, 22 (1924-5), 66.
\(^4\) Edin. hcs., iv, 525.
\(^5\) Edin. burg., 204; all entry dates for burgesses in this chapter, unless otherwise stated, are taken from this volume.
\(^6\) Edin. hcs., ii, 22-4.
this date and there is no coincidence of names between them and those who are known to have been bonnetmakers. Eventually, on 26 June 1672, the hatmakers were incorporated with the waulkers of Edinburgh 'to support and prevent the utter decay and rowin of the said Incorporation of wackers and to advance and promote the encresce of the airt and trade of making Hatts within this Burgh which has been greatly hitherto slighted by want of any visible government'\(^1\). This 'want of any visible government' should not be taken too literally as in 1658 James Thomson, hatmaker, was imprisoned for refusing to produce the hatmakers' mortcloths, the very existence of which implies corporate organisation\(^2\). After 1672 the members of the united Incorporation were sometimes called waulkers and feltmakers and, since there are indications from the burgess roll that feltmaker and hatmaker were interchangeable terms\(^3\), it is likely that the basic manufacturing process used by the hatmakers was feltmaking. Feltmaking, by which a thick, firm fabric is produced direct from animal hair, without the usual intermediate processes of spinning and weaving, is an ancient craft and might be expected to have been established in Scotland well before knitting\(^4\).

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1 Edin. Recs. (1665-1680), 123.  
2 Edin. Recs. (1655-1665), 93.  
3 Edin. Burz. s.v. James Clelland, 14 August 1678, James Guthrie, 14 September 1670.  
4 For a summary of evidence concerning the early use of felt see M. E. Burkett, The Art of the Feltmaker (Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Cumbria, 1979).
Although the 1520 seal of cause does indeed appear to be the first recorded mention of bonnetmakers in Edinburgh, the numbers given, ten men and one woman 'for the laif of the craft of Bonetmakaris usand merket and fredome of the said burgh of Edinburgh', suggest the craft was not entirely new. Even so, they were not sufficiently numerous or powerful to constitute an incorporation in their own right, for they were joined to the Waulkers and Shearers who had been incorporated twenty years before\(^1\). By the terms of the agreement the Bonnetmakers were to help to maintain the Waulkers' and Shearers' chaplain and their altar to St Mark in the kirk of St Giles, and to pay their entry fees to them - the masters' 'upsett' was 30s. and the fee for an apprentice 6s. 6d.. According to the agreement, the Waulkers were to full the Craft's bonnets for the established price, and were not to waulk bonnets 'at thar sex myllis bot the man or wif be of the said craft, nor at na uther myll'. The Bonnetmakers, for their part, agreed to continue to mark their finished goods and to inspect those offered for sale on market days, and the price of any unsatisfactory work found was to go towards the upkeep of the altar. Finally, the two groups undertook to support each other and to settle disputes peaceably among themselves.

It seems that the 1520 arrangements did not work well in practice, for there were adjustments made and disputes

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\(^1\) Edin. Recs., i, 80-1.
relating to them for at least the next twenty-three years. On 31 March 1530 a further seal of cause was granted. By this time the Bonnetmakers, now with twenty-six named members, were claiming their own 'ouerman and ouersear of all the laif that thar werk be gude and sufficient stuf', to be elected yearly and obeyed by the whole Craft; furthermore, they asked that no one be allowed to practice bonnet-making in the burgh without first having been apprenticed to a member, that Monday and Wednesday be the only market days for bonnets, and that they were to have a voice in choosing the chaplain, and other equalities with the Waulkers and Shearers. Three months later it becomes apparent that another dispute was in progress: on 21 June 1530 the representatives of the Edinburgh crafts issued a decreet arbitral concerning the controversy between the Waulkers and Shearers and the Weavers, with whom they had formerly been incorporated, as to which of them should include the Bonnetmakers. On this occasion the status quo was confirmed: it was decided that the Weavers, as the most senior of the crafts, were to have their own deacon and go in procession between the Baxters and the Tailors, whereas the Waulkers, Shearers and Bonnetmakers were to march in a less prestigious position between the Fleshers and Barbers, but were still to have a separate deacon because they 'war incorporat unit and annext al togidr under ane oureman of befor of thair auin desiring'.

2 Ibid., 31-5.
Presumably the weavers were not satisfied as within a year a further decree of arbitral (19 May 1531) laid down that in all gatherings and processions the four should go together and their meeting place 'salbe callit the Wobstaris place and roume for evir'; additionally the waulkers, shearers and bonnetmakers were to pay the weavers 13s. 4d. yearly, or £10 'usual money' as a lump sum. The following May the three elected to pay the larger amount in lieu of the yearly payment, but even then the matter may not have been entirely settled as in March 1532-3 the burgh council ordered the bonnetmakers to pay half their extent to the waulkers and shearers, but the other half to the weavers 'till help and supple thame'.

In 1543 there is evidence of continuing friction between the bonnetmakers and the waulkers. The council minutes for 20 July record that the two had agreed to be equal, a decision ratified on 23 November the same year for utter extinction of pley and controuersie that hes bene amangis thame in tyme bypast: the two groups were to be equal in processions and to have a common box, kept by each side in alternate years and with four keys kept by representatives from both crafts, and their vestments and altar cloths were to bear both the shears, the mark of the waulkers and shearers, and the card (that is, a

1 Ibid., 48-9.
2 Ibid., 56-7.
3 Ibid., 60.
4 Ibid., 111-2.
5 Ibid., 113-4.
hand card for preparing wool for spinning), the symbol of
the Bonnetmakers. Although this is the last that is heard
of the dispute, it is likely that the Bonnetmakers were
soon sufficiently numerous or strong to have become, de
facto, independent, for they begin to be mentioned as a
separate incorporation. The 1558 muster roll, for instance,
which lists 717 'abill men of craftis', gives the Bonnet-
makers, represented by 14 masters and 39 servants,
separately from the Waulkers, who numbered 24 with another
19 'outwith the West Port'\(^1\). Two years earlier it was
recorded in the burgh council minutes that James Lawson,
bonnetmaker, 'desirit in place of dekin to hai\(\)f ane vot
with the crafts in respect of act of parliament maid that
in place of dekynnis suld be chose vesitouris, and that
as he allegit the said craft had ane dekyn and wot of
befoir'\(^2\). The same James Lawson reappears in 1559, with
the leaders of other crafts, again protesting against the
council's refusal to allow them to participate in the
election\(^3\), and by November 1560 he is described as deacon
of the Bonnetmakers, with another named as deacon of the
Waulkers\(^4\). Thereafter the Bonnetmakers were a separate
incorporation - until 1684 when, having fallen upon hard
times, they were united with the Dyers\(^5\).

Although the entries in the burgh records are

\(^1\) Edin. $\text{mcs.}$, iii, 24-5.
\(^2\) Edin. $\text{mcs.}$, ii, 242.
\(^3\) Edin. $\text{mcs.}$, iii, 24.
\(^4\) Ibid., 91.
\(^5\) Edin. $\text{mcs.}$ (1681-1689), 132.
concerned with the official organisation and regulation of the Edinburgh Bonnetmakers, some details can, none the less, be gleaned about the operation of the craft itself. It is apparent from the first (1520) seal of cause, at least by implication, that the Bonnetmakers were working with wool. Significantly, the agreement allied them with two other groups of textile workers (the Waulkers and Shearers) whose job it was to finish woollen cloth by milling, and by dressing the surface by raising and shearing the nap. If the Bonnetmakers were producing knitted woollen bonnets which, as has been seen, require similar finishing, then the agreement was, in all probability, simply an official recognition of an existing close practical relationship. As mentioned above, one of the clauses deals specifically with the Waulkers' undertaking to mill the Bonnetmakers' goods, a process appropriate to a newly knitted bonnet, but totally inappropriate to a garment made from a finished woollen cloth, and less still to the silks and velvets used in fashionable bonnets. There are, indeed, no indications that the Bonnetmakers ever used silk, whether in the form of cloth or yarn, and if the bonnets in luxury fabrics, worn by the wealthy, were made in Scotland, they must have been the work of another group - perhaps the tailors?

A further section of the 1520 seal of cause deals, indirectly, with the materials of which bonnets were made. The Bonnetmakers agreed to inspect the goods offered for

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1 See ch.II.
sale to 'serch and seik....gif thar be any bonnetis maid to sell of quhite or uthir colouris of wob yarne or wonius (sic) gottin yarne or woll'; this is clarified in the 1530 document, for one of the roles of the overman was to ensure that no bonnetmaker worked with 'unsufficient stuf' but only with 'thare awin propir gudis wrocht and spun within thare awin houssis'. In other words, as would be expected if the Bonnetmakers were knitters, they worked with yarn, not cloth; furthermore, part of their work was to prepare and spin up the yarn from the raw fleece - hence the card, mentioned in the 1543 agreement, which was their mark or symbol.

The injunction not to use ready-prepared and dyed yarn is puzzling, but can be paralleled elsewhere. An entry in the records of the Coventry Cappers for 1533 ruled that caps were not to be made of cloth yarn, and there are indications that their yarn was prepared especially for them. Similarly, a clause in the 1525 seal of cause of the Bonnetmakers of Dundee specifically forbade the use of dyed wool 'bot if he gar lit it himself'. It appears then, that the Bonnetmakers were expected to be spinners and, perhaps, dyers as well as knitters and that a principle which often governed craft guild legislation - that a man should not do more than one job, so as not to deprive another of work - was not being applied in this case. A possible explanation is that the measure was

1 Coventry Leet Book, 729.
2 E.g. ibid., 707.
3 Copy in the possession of the Dundee Incorporation of Bonnetmakers.
intended to protect existing interests, that is, of the weavers, by safeguarding their supply of yarn. In the sixteenth century, Scottish trade depended largely on exporting primary products, wool included, in return for a variety of manufactured goods, and the cloth industry was poorly developed and geared to low quality home consumption\(^1\); the cloth that was produced had a very poor reputation abroad\(^2\), and it was not until the end of the century that efforts began to be made to improve it, particularly by bringing in Flemish weavers, dyers and cloth finishers\(^3\). It is probable that at this stage (early sixteenth century), good quality dyed yarn, and even dyers themselves, were in short supply: in this connection it is interesting that there is mention in Andrew Halyburton's account book of bolts of cloth being sent to the Low Countries to be dyed, suggesting a dearth of skilled dyers in Scotland\(^4\). Since, as Dr Ryder has shown\(^5\), the majority of native sheep had pigmented fleeces at this period, and white wool would consequently have been less readily available, it is also possible that the measure was intended to ensure that the bonnetmakers did not use such white wool as there was, but rather the naturally pigmented wool which, being less easy to dye, would not be prime for weaving purposes.

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2 Halyburton's Ledger, xi-xii.
4 Halyburton's Ledger, 209.
The implication of both the 1520 and 1530 seals of cause is that in the early sixteenth century bonnets were the principal, if not the sole, product of the Edinburgh Bonnetmakers. By the middle of the century, however, their range had extended to include main garments. It is recorded in the burgh council minutes for 20 June 1563, for example, that a complaint had been lodged by Edward Hume and his neighbours inhabiting the area 'upon the north syde of the quenis hic streit....fornent the Croce' against James Lawson, deacon of the Bonnetmakers, who had 'causit his servandis to wark their wollin coittis and bonettis upoun the said stair in sycht of the hale nobelitie and strang-earis, being ane vile craft never occupeit in sic oppin places before'. Looking further, it seems that the real cause of complaint was not so much the making of the coats and bonnets in the open, but the nuisance value of 'the calc dust and flokis of the saidis coittis'. This suggests that these coats were being finished in the same way as the bonnets, that is, the outer surface was being raised and sheared, producing the 'flokis' which caused so much outrage; the chalk was presumably a thickening or whitening agent. That coats were also made by other bonnetmakers is clear from the records of the burgh court of the Canongate: these include an order, dated 29 July 1570, that Thomas Frissell, indweller in Leith, was to complete payment for

1 Edin. Recs., iii, 164-5.
'certane wovin coittis' made by David Easter (or Yester), a bonnetmaker in the Canongate. Another entry in the court records gives a clue as to the nature of these coats: on 29 June 1569, John Esoun, bonnetmaker, and Jonet Allane, his wife, were ordered to make and deliver a score of 'wylecoittis for bairnis' for which a customer had paid. As far as can be ascertained, a wyliecoat was a frock- or smock-like garment (or, occasionally, a petticoat or waistcoat) worn under the main garments for warmth. None has survived from this period in Scotland, but a small garment for a child, answering this description, has been recovered from the same context as fifteenth and sixteenth century knitted caps in London, and is now preserved in the Museum of London. The garment, which is unpatterned and designed for warmth rather than elegance, is knitted from coarse wool, now a shade of khaki, and might be described as a sleeveless, low-necked jerkin, with a slit at the front from neck to waist.

By the 1560s, as is indicated by the entry in the burgh council minutes for 16 September 1562, quoted above, the Edinburgh Bonnetmakers had added small garments such as hose, gloves and sleeves to their repertoire, as well as coats or wyliecoats. The Bonnetmakers had complained

1 Court Book of the Regality of Droughton and the Burgh of the Canongate, 248; hereafter Canongate Court Book.
2 Ibid., 48.
3 Information from files in the office of the DOST, University of Edinburgh.
4 Reference no.39,108/1.
that other crafts were stealing their apprentices and servants 'and caussis thame wyrk and labaur under thame the wark pertenyng to thair craft'. The council agreed to uphold their liberties - as, indeed, it did seven years later in forbidding John Duncan, a slater, to practise bonnetmaking\(^1\) - but with the proviso that if anyone else came to the burgh who could do the work in 'ane mair perfyte and fyner fassoun', that they should not be prevented. If the Bonnetmakers were manufacturing these items in a similar manner to their bonnets, that is, of coarse wool and perhaps quite heavily fulled, then it is understandable that the councillors who, as wealthier members of society, would have been looking for fine knitted garments, should have felt there was room for improvement.

Since there are no extant minutes of the Edinburgh Incorporation of Bonnetmakers until the eighteenth century, an earlier minute book, referred to by Colston\(^2\), having disappeared without trace, there is no internal evidence for the size and wealth of the Craft in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Some indications may, however, be derived from the burgh records.

Writing about Edinburgh as it was in the second half of the sixteenth century, Dr Lynch has pointed to the existence of a craft aristocracy\(^3\). Although there were

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\(^1\) Edinburgh City Archives: Council Registers, iv, 246r.
\(^2\) Colston, op.cit., 137-144.
craftsmen in humble and even poverty-stricken circumstances, there were also individuals who were very comfortably off, and on a par with all but the richest of merchants. Furthermore, some craft groups, such as the Tailors and Skinners, were notably more respectable and wealthy than others, and more influential in burgh affairs: it was from their ranks that the craft representatives on the council were generally drawn, the same men often rising to the prestige of guild membership. By contrast, the textile workers, no doubt reflecting the state of the cloth industry, occupied a very humble position in the craft hierarchy, and the Bonnetmakers were no exception. Apart from one possible (but dubious) case, there is no evidence of a bonnetmaker becoming a guild brother during the sixteenth century; similarly, the Bonnetmakers did not achieve a representative on the burgh council, and no improvement was made to their position by the 1583 decreet arbitral.

The taxation rolls for the period record the sums paid by the Edinburgh crafts, initially as groups and later as individuals, and consequently might be expected to provide an indication of the relative wealth of the Bonnetmakers: invariably, they come at the bottom of the

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1 Ibid., 39-40.
2 According to Edin. Burg., 342, John Mathie, bonnetmaker, became a guild brother on 5 May 1567. This, however, seems unlikely since there is no separate record of him having become a burgess and, when his son of the same name became a burgess (21 November 1582) in the right of his father, there was no reference to the elder John Mathie also being a guild brother. That this is a mistake is confirmed by the dean of guild's account for 5 May 1567 which record that John Mathie was made a burgess on this date (Edin. Accds., ii. 230). I am grateful to Dr Lynch for his reference.
scale. The stent of 28 September 1565, for example, gives a total for the crafts of £1347-4s., of which much the smallest part was the £40 joint contribution of the Weavers, Waulkers and Bonnetmakers\(^1\); the highest proportion, £307-8s., came from the Skinners and Furriers. Five years later, when the council asked the deacons of crafts what they would give to support the ministers, whereas the Skinners offered £20 and the Tailors £16, the Bonnetmakers, like the Weavers, offered only 20s.\(^2\). When new rates of taxation were fixed in 1574, the Weavers, Waulkers and Bonnetmakers were to pay £2-13-4 in every £100, less than any other group\(^3\), and of the craft total of £441-16-5 recorded for 15 March 1580-1, only £11-13-4 came from the three\(^4\). It may be that these low contributions reflect, to some extent, not only the lack of wealth but the small size of the craft. The 1558 muster roll, for example, cited above, indicates that whereas the Bonnetmakers were marginally larger as a group than the Waulkers, and about twice the number of the Weavers, they were only half the strength of the Tailors, and about one third that of the Hamermen; furthermore, with only 14 out of the 53 being masters, the ratio of servants to masters was exceptionally high. When, however, the later stents which list the craftsmen individually are examined, it can be seen that even on this basis the Bonnetmakers were regarded as being of little substance.

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1 Lynch, *op. cit.*, 424.
2 *Edin. Recs.*, iii, 278.
4 Lynch, *op. cit.*, 436.
In the roll of 28 June 1583 the bonnetmakers mentioned were all stented for 6s. 8d. or less (although 'Deme' Cuthbertson, the widow of another, is listed at 13s. 4d.), very low sums compared with the highest-rated hatmaker, for instance, or the substantial contributions of some other craftsmen. The same picture continues into the seventeenth century: in the 1634 stent no bonnetmaker paid more than £3 whereas 32% of the craftsmen paid £5 or more, and there are cases of tailors, and even a waulker, who paid £10 or over.

The initial impression we have of the bonnetmakers in the second half of the sixteenth century and beyond, is of a small, somewhat impoverished and insignificant group, a view which would be consistent with a craft which produced low quality knitted goods, mainly for local consumption. But closer examination of the available evidence produces some anomalies. Firstly, a comparison of the stents and the list of Edinburgh burgesses suggests that the former are not an accurate record of the number of bonnetmakers active at any one time; the burgess roll, of course, lists only dates of entry, but can be used in conjunction with the register of apprentices and other sources which help to indicate the length of an individual's working life. The 1583 stent roll, the first to list the bonnetmakers by name, gives seven burgesses and the widow of an eighth, and yet there are seven other bonnetmakers recorded as having been

1 Ibid., appendix IVc.
2 Information from Dr Walter Makey.
made burgesses in the previous twenty years or so, who do not appear\(^1\) of these, one, John Lathie, the younger, may not have had his own household and may therefore have been included in the contribution of his father of the same name, and it is possible that the other six were either dead, or too impoverished to be stented. But in later years the discrepancy is less easy to explain. The stent rolls of 1605 and 1614 mention only one bonnetmaker, Thomas Paterson (although he paid the comparatively substantial amounts of £3-15-0- and 48s.), and just seven names appear in the 1630 and 1634 rolls\(^2\), whereas the number of entries in the burgess roll and the register of apprentices (see diagrams) implies a much higher level of activity. To look at the 1634 stent in more detail: the most senior of the bonnetmakers listed was Alexander Somer, who had been made burgess in 1596, yet between that time and 1634 thirty-six others were entered in the burgess roll, only six of whom appear in the stent. Of the remaining thirty at least thirteen were certainly still active in 1634 as they are known to have taken apprentices in the years following, and indeed, two of them were sufficiently prominent to become deacons of the craft - David Wylie

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1 The burgesses not mentioned in the stent are as follows (the entry date in the burgess roll is given in brackets beside each name): John Brown (1562), Robert Lathie (1566), Thomas Nicoll (1562), Edward Wylie (1562), John Johnstoun (1562), David Yester (1579), John Lathie, younger (1582).

2 I am grateful to James Brown for access to his transcripts of the 1605, 1614, and 1630 stents.
Diagram 1. The Numbers of Bonnetmakers Entered as Edinburgh Burgesses 1560-1699 (derived from Edin.Burg.)
(1638-40) and Francis Ker (eight times deacon between 1638 and 1651).

One possible explanation as to why so few bonnetmaker burgesses appear in Edinburgh stents is that the majority were living outside the burgh boundary. The bonnetmakers listed in the seventeenth-century stents were mainly concentrated in the north-east quarter of Edinburgh, and other sources show that a number of bonnetmakers lived on the boundary between Edinburgh and the Canongate, that is, in and around Leith Wynd\(^1\). The testaments\(^2\) of Thomas Paterson and Agnes Davidson his wife (1616 and 1607)\(^3\), for example, record that they lived at the foot of Leith Wynd, while an entry in the register of apprentices for 1606, shows that Abel Symmer (or Summer) was a bonnetmaker in St Ninian's Row nearby\(^4\). Patrick Stirling was described in the testament of his wife, Geillis Kannald (1625)\(^5\), as an indweller in Leith Wynd, and an Edinburgh tax roll of 1635 records that John Wyllie occupied a ground-floor house on the west side of the same\(^6\). A little later, Robert Lauchlane (or Lainglands), was described in the 1640

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\(^1\) Leith Wynd, since removed, ran northwards from the point where the High Street and the Canongate meet, that is, roughly on a line between and parallel to modern Jeffrey Street and Cranston Street. I am grateful to Dr Walter Makey for his assistance on this point.

\(^2\) The testaments quoted in this chapter are from the register of testaments of the Commissariat of Edinburgh (SRO).

\(^3\) CC 8/8/49, 211v-214r, and 8/8/43, 160r-161v.

\(^4\) Edin. Apprentices, i, 179 s.v. James Symmer.

\(^5\) CC 8/8/52, f.206.

\(^6\) Information from Dr Walter Makey.
testament of his wife, Jonet Myllie\(^1\), as bonnetmaker in Leith Wynd, as was Alexander Craig in his testament dative of 16 January 1646\(^2\). Some bonnetmakers clearly lived on the Canongate side of the boundary. Perhaps the best example is Patrick Kannald: he is known to have had lands in the Canongate\(^3\), and his wife's testament, dated 1579\(^4\), not only described him as bonnetmaker burgess in the Canongate but mentioned that their dwelling house was on the east, that is the Canongate side, of Leith Wynd. The same man, however, had already been made a burgess of Edinburgh (1577) and can be shown to have continued to be active in the Edinburgh Incorporation of Bonnetmakers, since he appears twice as a master in the register of apprentices in the 1590s\(^5\), and he became deacon of the Incorporation in 1581 and 1606.

The connection between Edinburgh bonnetmaker burgesses and the Canongate is confirmed by the records of the latter burgh. Preserved among them there is a list of those in the Canongate who signed the Covenant in 1638\(^6\):

\(^1\) CC 8/8/59.
\(^2\) CC 8/8/61, 245r.
\(^3\) Book of Records of the Ancient Privileges of the Canongate (Sect.), 46; hereafter Canongate Privileges.
\(^4\) Jonet Myddilnest: CC 8/8/7, 167r-168r.
\(^5\) Edin. Apprentices, i, 50, 155, s.v. William Dick and John Robertson.
\(^6\) Canongate Privileges, 14-16. Those on the list who are identifiably Edinburgh burgesses are as follows (their date of entry in the burgess roll is given in brackets): Solomon Paterson (1639), David Weightoun (1643), Patrick Stirling (1614), Francis Ker (1633), David Myllie (1623), Alexander Paterson (1631), Thomas Craig (1616), Robert Langlands (1620), John Heriot (1636), John Bichet (1606 or 1633), William Dicken (1627), William Barclay (1637), Alexander Wyllie (1623), James Flowers (1627), Thomas Walker (1640).
no less than twenty-four bonnetmakers appear, including six out of the seven mentioned in the Edinburgh stent of 1634 (the seventh, Alexander Somer, may well have been dead by this time) and ten others who were either already Edinburgh burgesses or soon to become so. It appears then, that, although these men were Edinburgh burgesses, they were also active in the neighbouring burgh. It can also be shown that a good number of bonnetmakers were burgesses of both Edinburgh and the Canongate. Little remains of the roll of Canongate burgesses before 1622, but thereafter the admission of eighteen bonnetmakers is recorded, sixteen between 1623 and 1647, and another two in the 1670s; all eighteen were either already Edinburgh burgesses or became so later (provided, that is, that Alexander Kendla, made Canongate burgess on 19 August 1647 as prentice to John Wylie, was the same man as Alexander Mackinley made burgess of Edinburgh the year before by the same reasoning). Additionally, eleven other bonnetmakers are listed as the fathers, fathers-in-law, and masters in whose right these burgesses were made, and who, in consequence, must themselves have been Canongate burgesses; again, in every case, the man was also an Edinburgh burgess.

That so many bonnetmakers can be shown to have been burgesses of both burghs is surprising since, for other crafts, it seems to have been unusual. On 9 February 1659, for example, David Haistic, weaver, burgess in the Canongate, was entered as a burgess of Edinburgh 'at the earnest
supplication of the deaken and brethren of the weavers of this burgh, for his dexterity and skilfulness of the trade in Darnises and Hollands work\textsuperscript{1}, but the terms imply that this was an exceptional case; furthermore, as was usual, his burgess-ship was conditional on his residence within the burgh. By contrast, in the case of the Bonnet-makers not only were many Edinburgh burgesses active in the Canongate but, conversely, since most Canongate bonnetmaker burgesses appear to have been Edinburgh burgesses as well, the Edinburgh Incorporation was effectively controlling the craft in both burghs, and this at least as early as the beginning of the seventeenth century and hence well before 1636, when Edinburgh gained the superiority of the Canongate\textsuperscript{2}. This unusual situation must have had the cognizance of Edinburgh burgh council, whether official or tacit, but there is no record of any agreement. The burgh records for July 1577 include an order for 'the unfre bonnetmakkeris to be separatat fra the burgessis and fremen of the samyn, and to haif thair stand be thame selfis upone the north side of the Hie Street'\textsuperscript{3}. It is tempting to interpret this as an effort by the council to separate the Canongate bonnetmakers from those resident within the burgh, particularly since a few months later Patrick Kannald became an Edinburgh burgess, the first known case of a Canongate bonnetmaker being entered; this was

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{Edin.\,Burg.}, s.v. \textit{David Haistie}.
\item \textit{Edin.\,Recs.} (1626-1641), 180.
\item \textit{Edin.\,Recs.} iv, 59.
\end{enumerate}
followed in 1579 by the entry of David Yester who is also identifiable as a Canongate bonnetmaker. Perhaps some agreement was reached whereby Edinburgh burgh council was content for a proportion of the bonnetmakers to live outside the burgh - and therefore beyond their reach for the purposes of taxation - in return for the burges silver of the Canongate men and such control as could be exercised over them through the Edinburgh Incorporation of Bonnetmakers. In the absence of the Craft's minute book for the period, however, or of any other hard evidence, this can be nothing more than speculation.

It can now be appreciated that the bonnetmakers in Edinburgh were a considerably larger and more flourishing group in the first half of the seventeenth century than was initially apparent; there are also indications that not all members of the craft were as insignificant and impoverished as might be imagined from the evidence of the stents. Unfortunately, very few bonnetmaker testaments are recorded from the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries to provide evidence as to the wealth of individuals, but those that have come down to us exhibit widely differing degrees of prosperity. Some bonnetmakers do indeed appear to have lived in the most modest of circumstances: Thomas Broun, who became a burges in 1590, left an estate of less than £60 when he died ten years later.

1 Canongate Court Book, 225-6, 248, 261-2.
2 CC 8/2/35, 11 February 1601.
3 That is, until 1648 when it was decided that the bonnetmakers should be stented by the stentmasters of Edinburgh in respect of their trade as Edinburgh burges, not by those of the Canongate in respect of their lands in the latter burgh. (Edinburgh City Archives, Council Registers, xvii, 4 Sept. 1648; I am grateful to Dr Michael Lynch for bringing this to my notice.)
while the testament of John Mathie senior (20 January 1596-7) shows that his personal belongings were worth only a few pounds and his estate was £80 in deficit\(^1\). Others lived in only slightly more comfortable circumstances: Margaret Sched, the widow of John Johnstoun, bonnetmaker burgess, who, from references in her testament to the dyeing of wool, appears to have continued in the craft after her husband's death, left £164-13-4 in 1594\(^2\), and Janet Hyddilmest, the wife of Patrick Rannald, whose testament of 22 October 1579 also mentions the buying and dyeing of wool, left a similar amount\(^3\). For all this, there are also examples to be found of more substantial men: Matthew Davidson left nearly £400 when he died in 1606\(^4\), John Mathic junior, whose father had died in debt, left £520-13-4 in 1624\(^5\), while Thomas Paterson, son-in-law to Matthew Davidson, left an estate of over £6000 on his death in 1616\(^6\), an impressive sum which would have done credit to a successful merchant. This last case is worth examining in some detail, because although Thomas Paterson was exceptionally wealthy for a bonnetmaker, or indeed any other craftsman, some entries in his testament imply that there were other bonnetmakers who were also relatively successful and well-to-do.

2 CC 8/8/27, 118v-120r.
3 CC 8/8/7, 167r-168r.
4 CC 8/8/42, 102r-103r.
5 CC 8/8/52, 286v-287v.
6 CC 8/8/49, 211v-214r; see appendix 1 for a transcript.
Thomas Paterson became a burgess of Edinburgh on 3 July 1590, by right of his wife Agnes, daughter of Matthew Davidson. The couple clearly prospered for when Agnes died in 1607 her estate was worth nearly £1400\(^1\). At the time of his own death, Thomas was deacon of the Bonnetmakers, and had held the office on at least five previous occasions\(^2\), but despite this seniority in the Craft and his obvious wealth, he was never admitted to the burgh council, and there is no evidence that he became a member of the merchant guild. His testament mentions bonnetmaker products in some quantity: 600 pairs of 'buithois', worth £450, are listed as having been bought by William Paterson the younger, merchant, but not yet delivered and paid for, and his debtors included Robert Auchinleck in Tranent for bonnets worth £5-5s., and John Hilstoun, merchant, who owed £46 for hose. As might have been expected, he was in possession of the necessary raw material in the form of 120 stones of wool. A more surprising aspect of the testament is the large amount of ready money - £1,120 - Thomas Paterson had available, and the even more considerable amount owed to him: apart from the sums mentioned above he was owed over £2,400 as an individual, and another £1,012-1-8 as his share of money lent by a partnership to various merchants. Two of his partners prove to be other leading figures among the bonnetmakers - Alexander Somer,

\(^1\) CC 8/8/43, 160r-161v.
\(^2\) 1607-8, 1608-9, 1611-12, 1612-13, 1615-16, 1616.
his brother-in-law and seven times deacon of the craft between 1613 and 1632, and John Mathie the younger, mentioned above, who was deacon on five occasions between 1604 and 1618; the fourth partner was William Moysie, deacon of the waulkers. It is not stated in the testament on what terms the money was outstanding, that is, whether they were acting as bankers, or whether the money was owed for goods supplied, but in either case all four men had substantial capital. But what was the source of this unexpected prosperity?

As has been seen, by the 1560s Edinburgh bonnetmakers were knitting a variety of garments, including hose—hence the term 'bonnetmaker schankis'\(^1\), presumably indicating a coarse knitted woollen stocking. By the first half of the seventeenth century, if the testaments of the bonnetmakers are a guide, these knitted woollen hose or stockings had become their predominant product: most of the testaments mention hose in some quantity, and although bonnets appear to a lesser extent, there is no mention of the wylie-coats, sleeves, gloves and so on which were formerly made. The 1601 inventory of Thomas Broun's goods, for example, includes 200 pairs of 'wolvin hois', described as 'mair and less', worth £80\(^2\); Matthew Davidson (1606) had 84 pairs of 'buithois' worth £36\(^3\); John Mathie, one of the partners mentioned above, had 240 pairs of boot hose, worth 10s.

\(^1\) The term appears, for example, in an Edinburgh testament of 1593: CC 8/8/25, 263.
\(^2\) CC 8/8/35, 11 February 1601.
\(^3\) CC 8/8/42, 102r-103r.
each, in stock when he died in 1624\textsuperscript{1}, and the goods of Thomas Craig in 1645 included 70 pairs of undressed stockings for men, another 10 pairs finished, and 10 pairs of children's stockings, as well as a small quantity of men's and children's bonnets\textsuperscript{2}.

At the same time as hose were becoming preponderant among bonnetmaker products, a new item began to figure in Scottish exports, namely stockings. By the 1590s there are occasional references to them in the Exchequer Rolls - the account of John Gourlay, custumar of Edinburgh, for 1596-7, for example, includes £9-6s.-8d, raised on 6229 pairs of hose\textsuperscript{3} - but in the early 1600s, as far as can be ascertained from the somewhat fragmentary evidence available, these exports were regular and in some quantity. A list of Scots produce exported annually, about 1614, includes among 'the commodities that ar maid and wrocht in the countrie quhairby the peopill ar sett to labour' 21,514 pairs of prick hose to the value of £10,755\textsuperscript{4}; for 1611-12 the Leith port book alone lists 13,700 pairs described as hose or, more particularly, prick hose \textsuperscript{5}, and that for 1627-28 gives a slightly lower figure, mostly bound for Flanders and Campvere\textsuperscript{6}. There is every reason to believe that many, if not all, of these stockings being exported

\textsuperscript{1} CC 8/8/52, 286v-287v.
\textsuperscript{2} CC 8/8/61, 191v-192r.
\textsuperscript{3} Et, xxiii, 167; see also 184, 242, 333.
\textsuperscript{4} P. Hume Brown, Scotland in the Time of Queen Mary, 228.
\textsuperscript{5} SKO: E 71/29/6.
\textsuperscript{6} E 71/29/11.
through Leith were the products of Edinburgh and Canongate bonnetmakers. The stockings in the 1627-8 port book are all described as 'buthois' a term very familiar from the bonnetmakers' testaments, and, furthermore, the 1612 book of rates specifically mentions 'woollen hois made in Leith wynd... in the export list'. Leith Wynd, as has been shown, being the area where the Edinburgh bonnet-makers were concentrated.

In this light the prosperity of Thomas Paterson and his partners becomes explicable. The three bonnetmakers, as frequent holders of the office of deacon, must among them have virtually controlled the craft for much of the first quarter of the century. The implication is that they had become successful entrepreneurs, channelling the craft's coarse stockings (which, Lythe has suggested, were sufficiently low priced, because of the lower standard of living and prices of raw material in Scotland, to be attractive on the Continent), into the Dutch and Flemish markets. By way of confirmation, at least two of the merchants recorded in the 1611-12 Leith port book as exporters of stockings, John麦克Nesche and John Richesone, also appear as debtors in Thomas Paterson's will. The partnership may also have dealt in kindred products and been involved in the expanding export trade in coarse woollen cloth, for Thomas Paterson's inventory mentions

1 Malyburton's Ledger, 337.
his part ownership of 300 ells of Galloway kersey, stored in William Maysie's loft, the remaining shares belonging, by implication, to the other three partners. Thomas Paterson, by his wealth and prominence in the craft, was presumably the leader and, given the quantity of wool and completed goods mentioned in his testament, it is tempting to wonder whether his control of the craft was such that he had become what would later be described as a manufacturer, 'putting out' work to other bonnetmakers.

Taking the numbers of apprentices registered, and of bonnetmakers becoming burgesses, as indicators of the relative health of the Craft (see diagrams), the prosperity of the bonnetmakers continued towards the middle of the century but then deteriorated rapidly. Whereas at the peak, in the 1630s, no less than thirty apprentices were booked during the decade, only three are recorded for the 1650s, and just five for the remainder of the century, none of these after 1676; similarly, the number of those going on to become freemen dwindled markedly, just one being recorded in the 1690s. This picture of decline is supported elsewhere in the burgh records. On 28 February 1655 the bonnetmakers petitioned the burgh council for some members of the Craft to be admitted burgesses either gratis or at a reduced charge, on the grounds that their calling had been brought 'to a verie low condition and

1 Just one a prentice bonnetmaker was recorded later, Daniel Sword, whose apprenticeship to John Gibson, bonnetmaker, was registered on 12 June 1700.
Diagram 2. The Numbers of Apprentice Bonnetmakers Registered in Edinburgh 1583-1699 (derived from Edin. Apprentices)
such paucitie of number that they cannot subsist as a bodie
without the additioun of some noe to be friemen and burge-
sists. The Canongate bonnetmakers, who, as has been seen,
were very closely associated with those in the neighbouring
burgh, were in similar difficulties: an act of Edinburgh
burgh council of 4 September 1648 relieved them of paying
stent, except on their land, because their numbers had been
reduced to six (three of whom were aged) and their trade
was gone; the act was renewed in 1689. No further details
are available so it must be assumed that both groups had
been adversely affected by the dislocation of burgh life
and trade resulting from the 'pestilence' and the troubles
of the 1640s and early 1650s.

As far as can be seen, the bonnetmakers of Edinburgh
never recovered. In 1684 they were incorporated with the
Lycers, it being commented that whereas formerly their
bonnets, stockings and nightcaps had 'given considerable
pryces abroad', they were now 'reduced to so mean a
conditione that they wer not in a capacity to defray their
publict burdings far lese to mentaine ther familys. By
1769, the date of the first surviving minutes of the In-
corporation, it appears that the activities of bonnetmakers
in the burgh had come to an end: there were no identifiable
bonnetmakers among the active members, and the business was
concerned entirely with dyeing.

3 Edin. Recs. (1681-1689), 132.
4 Minute Book 26 October 1769-29 June 1813, in the possess-
on of the Edinburgh Incorporation of Bonnetmakers.
This reverse in the bonnetmakers' fortunes, and the collapse of their trade in the second half of the century, is at variance with Professor Smout's comment on 'the continued prosperity of the older stocking industry at Leith' (by which, presumably, Leith wynd is meant, there being no discernible stocking manufacture in Leith itself). It is true that the port books for the last decades of the century continue to record tens of thousands of stockings being exported, but closer examination shows that there were two distinct categories involved. Taking as an example the port book which runs from 1 November 1680 to 1 August 1691, 1,626 pairs of stockings passed through Leith during that time, with Danzig and London as the main destinations. Of these, however, only 314 pairs are designated 'Leith wynd hosen', the remainder being termed stockings, or worsted stockings; nor is the distinction an accident of terminology, for the first category was charged duty at 6s. per dozen and the second at 4s. Ten years later, the book for 7 March 1690 to 1 November 1691 records a similar differentiation: of 34,656 pairs going to London, Campvere, Danzig, Stralsund and so on, only 2,609 are termed Leith wynd hose. As yet there is no evidence as to where the other stockings came from - since some are described as Aberdeen stockings they may not even have been made in the area of Edinburgh - but in

1 T.C. Smout, Scottish Trade on the Eve of Union, 236.
2 Fo 72/15/21.
3 Fo 72/15/46.
4 Ibid. e.g. 25 March, 22 October 1690.
any case the bonnetmakers had lost their market: their coarse, heavy stockings, whether for reasons of price or change of taste, were no longer attractive, and the stocking trade had passed into other hands.
CHAPTER IV

BONNETMAKERS OUTSIDE EDINBURGH: THE EARLY YEARS

An investigation of the early activities of bonnetmakers in Edinburgh (ch. III), who had appeared there by 1520, if not before, has shown that they were what might be called hosiers: the basic technique of their craft was knitting, and they made not only the native bonnet, but a variety of other knitted garments. Their raw material, wool, was generally bought from skinners, and then often dyed before being prepared and spun into yarn; the final product was finished in much the same way as woollen cloth, that is, by milling (waulking) to compact the fabric, and by raising and shearing the nap (dressing). The result must have been somewhat coarse and inelastic garments with few pretensions to elegance. It now remains to be established whether other bonnetmakers in Scotland were similarly employed.

As noted in the previous chapter, bonnetmakers can be traced in a number of places in Central, North-East, and South-West Scotland during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries – but in many cases they make no more than a fleeting appearance in the historical record. There is mention of a bonnetmaker in Ayr in 1536-7, for example, and, in the North-East, a testament registered on 11 May 1594 records the existence of one David Symmer 'bonatmaker

1 Ayr Burgh Accounts 1534-1624, ed. G.S. Pryde (SHS, 1937), 14.
citiner of Brechin: the testament mentions two others in the burgh in the same line of business, but neither for Brechin nor Ayr is there evidence for any corporate organisation of the craft, or of bonnetmakers in significant numbers. There is an indication of the presence of a group of bonnetmakers in both Perth and Stirling in the middle of the sixteenth century, but in both cases there is just the single reference and nothing more is heard of them thereafter. Scarcely more is known about bonnetmakers in Aberdeen. They are first mentioned in that burgh in a statute of 30 January 1505, governing the celebrations which marked important feastdays, which ordered that in processions of craftsmen the Hatmakers and the Bonnetmakers should walk together. The Craft may well have been small and new, as it was not called upon to provide a play, but by 1531 members were joining with the Weavers and Waulkers to perform the 'pageant' of St John. Unfortunately there is no record of the Bonnetmakers taking any further part in burgh affairs. It may be that their name disappeared simply because they had been amalgamated with another craft (although if this is the case no record of the event has yet been discovered). Even so, it seems unlikely that they were ever very numerous as they are equally elusive as individuals. In the burgess list, for instance, there is a

1 Brechin Commissary Court: Register of Testaments (SHO: CC 3/3/1, f. 117).
2 Edin. Recs, iii, 25-6.
3 Extracts from the Records of the Royal Burgh of Stirling, i, ed. K. Kenwick (Glasgow, 1887), 47.
4 E. Bain, Merchant and Craft Guilds..., 56.
5 Extracts from the Council Register of the Burgh of Aberdeen, i (Spalding Club, 1844), 450-1.
total absence of craftsmen described as bonnetmakers. To take another example, the Aberdeen burgh records include eleven surviving stents, five complete and six incomplete, covering the period from the late sixteenth century to 1639, and yet in only one case is there any mention of the craft. This exception is the roll for 9 May 1628, for poor relief and the ministers' stipend, which includes 'the twa bonatmakares' among the inhabitants of the Even Quarter: it seems that they were so insignificant that they did not even merit recording by name, and their assessment, at 12s. per head as compared with the average of £2-12s.-5d. for the stented population of 508, attests to their comparative poverty.

Since so little is known about the bonnetmakers in Aberdeen and the other places mentioned above, there is no opportunity to examine the operation of the craft in these cases. Attention will therefore be focused, in this and the following chapter, on the few places in Scotland in which bonnetmakers can be shown to have existed in some numbers over a considerable period of time, namely, Dundee, Glasgow, Kilmarnock and Stewarton.

In the East of Scotland, Dundee is the only place, other than Edinburgh, where bonnetmakers are known to have maintained a substantial and continuing presence. Indeed, the Craft still exists as one of the Nine Incorporated Trades of that city, although, again as in Edinburgh, it is

1 New Spalding Misc., I, 1-162.
2 I am grateful to Duncan McNiven for access to his transcripts and notes made during his preparation of Merchant and Trader in early Seventeenth-Century Aberdeen, (unpublished Aberdeen University M.Litt. thesis).
essentially a charitable and social organisation and has long since ceased to be concerned with the operation of bonnetmaking as such. In 1872 A. J. Warden published a short account of the history of the Incorporation as part of his study of the burgh laws of Dundee, but at the time there were no records earlier than 1660 available. As is explained in the Locked Book of the Incorporation, which starts on 11 August 1660, the members had begun the new book because of the 'want of their old and ancient books of their acts and register of their masters names' lost during the storming of Dundee by Monck's army in 1651. Consequently, it was believed that this book represented the earliest surviving recorded history of the Bonnetmakers. Since Warden's time, however, a few documents have come to light which relate to the earlier years of the Craft.

Prime among these re-discovered documents is the seal of cause granted to the bonnetmakers by the burgh council of Dundee on 31 July 1496. As far as is known, this is the earliest case of bonnetmakers in Scotland being thus officially recognised, and it is therefore all the more disappointing, at least from the viewpoint of the present study, that the charter reads much as it would for any other craft, with no special references to the nature of their work and products, or even to the current size of the Craft in Dundee. The seal of cause deals firstly with the

2 This book and the following documents are preserved among the records of the Incorporation of Bonnetmakers and Dyers of Dundee, hereafter referred to as Dundee MSS.
maintenance of an altar to St Bride in the Lady Church of Dundee, and of an attendant priest, each member either providing him with 'a dayis meet' or paying one penny weekly. Secondly, there are the arrangements for the government of the Craft by a deacon, who was to be elected yearly by the freemen burgesses; the deacon was to be obeyed by all members, and the penalty for disobedience was a fine of one pound of wax for the altar, in addition to being 'puncist be the dekyn and the maisteris of the craft efter the qualite and quantite of the falt'. The deacon and leading members were also to be responsible for the admission of new masters: a successful applicant had not only to be a freeman burgess with the ability to pay the entry fee of one merk and one pound of wax to the altar, but to be found 'worthy' and to have 'stuff and substance of his awin to laubour with'; similarly, they were to ensure that 'no woman sall occupy as formaister the craft forsad bot gyf [she] have ben a fremannis wyf and has substance of hir auin to laubour with'. Finally, there are regulations concerning apprentices: each was to have a term of no less than five years, and no master was to be allowed to employ more than one apprentice at a time.

There is a second seal of cause, dated 20 September 1525. Fundamentally, the contents are the same as those of the first - although the fees and penalties have been increased - but it is more helpful in that there is an additional clause concerning dyeing. Members of the Craft, men and women alike, were forbidden to work with dyed wool 'bot gif he gar lit [i.e. dyed] it hymself'. This is the
first clue that, as in Edinburgh, bonnetmakers were essentially workers in wool. The point can be confirmed by later evidence to be derived from the testaments of bonnet-makers and their wives: time and again wool, dyed and undyed, figures prominently in the inventories of their possessions. A typical example is the testament of Jonet Low, wife of Alexander Carnegie, bonnetmaker in the Hill of Dundee\(^1\): according to the inventory, the value of the couple's goods at the time she died (of the 'pest' in October 1608) was £74, a good proportion of which was accounted for by four stones of white wool (£32) and one stone of blue (£16); in addition, their debts, which totalled £48, included £21 to Andro Guthrie, 'litster' burgess of Dundee, and £10 to another dyer, in both cases for the dyeing of wool. Interestingly, a similar picture is given by the testament of David Symmer, bonnetmaker in Brechin\(^2\), mentioned above, as a large part of his £60-worth of possessions was again wool - two stones of black and four of white, together worth £36, and six quarters of blue worth £10. It appears that different grades of wool were used, as some testaments distinguish between fine and 'growff' (coarse)\(^3\), and in one case there is mention of white 'Suthland' wool\(^4\).

To return to the records in the possession of the Dundee Incorporation of Bonnetmakers, the next available document is a decree in their favour, against bonnetmakers

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1 Brechin Commissary Court, 1 August 1610 (CC 3/3/2, f.77).  
2 11 May 1594, (CC 3/3/1, f.117.)  
3 E.g. William Mucie, 21 April 1621 (CC 3/3/4, f.15).  
4 Cathrene Williamsone, 17 July 1611 (CC 3/3/2, 235v.).
in the Hill of Dundee, dated 31 June 1582. The seals of cause had guaranteed the Craft the monopoly of practising their trade within the burgh - and there is a record as early as November 1521 of the burgh council taking action against an unfreeman for making bonnets - but they had no force against those operating outside the burgh boundaries. A particular source of annoyance was the adjacent burgh of barony, 'the Hill', which came under the jurisdiction of the Constable of the Castle of Dundee, Sir James Scrimgeour, Viscount Dudhope. On this occasion the complaint of the Dundee Bonnetmakers against their rivals concerned 'the litting of fals coullers and in putting of the same in their bonatts', and, for once, they had been successful in obtaining a remedy: the decree, issued by the Court of the Constable, undertook that bonnetmakers within the barony who erred in this manner should be punished with a £10 fine for the first offence and banishment during the Constable's will for the second; in return, Patrick Mathesone, deacon of the Craft in Dundee, bound the Incorporation to maintain the standards of dyeing bonnet wool within the burgh. Seven years later, there is evidence of further friction with outsiders, in the form of a contract (27 October 1589) between the Bonnetmakers and the Waulkers: the agreement was directed against unfreemen 'on the hill of this burgh' and elsewhere, the Waulkers consenting to assist the Bonnetmakers by refusing to mill the bonnets of these non-members. Shortly after this the problem of the Hill men may have been

1 A. Maxwell, *Old Dundee... Prior to the Reformation* (Edinburgh and Dundee, 1891), 334.
resolved, as it is noted in the burgh records that 'bonet-makers, indwellers of the Hill...acted themselves, ilk one of them for thar awn parts, to content and pay to the treasurer the soum of five pounds for their simple burgess-ship'. To return for a moment to the subject of waulking, it appears that in the next century the Bonnetmakers began to mill their own bonnets, as their records include tacks and discharges of rent back to 1629 for the waulk mill of Balmossie.

Finally, there are the earliest surviving statutes of the Craft, drawn up by the deacon, Patrick Gairdin, and the masters of the Craft on 2 November 1590. The first act concerns profanation of the Sabbath and lays down penalties against servants found 'playing in the fields or passing tyme therein...in tyme of preatching or prayers'. The second is also concerned with lax behaviour, especially servants 'haunting...pleaces outwith their masteris [mailings] working thir work in the saidis pleaces' like 'comone sorners'. More interesting for present purposes is the last statute, which decrees that no master pay any worker more than four pence the piece for 'dighting and weaving' (that is, dressing and knitting\(^2\)) bonnets. This last may be compared with later information (1682-1737) in

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1 A. Maxwell, The History of Old Dundee (Edinburgh and Dundee, 1684), 237.
2 According to DCT, in addition to a variety of general meanings encompassing to equip, dress, array etc., dicht/dycht could also signify 'to prepare by a special process or treatment': one of the examples cited is its use for the dressing of waulked cloth (which, as has been noted above, was much like the dressing of milled knitted goods). As already noted (ch. II), the word weaving is still sometimes used in Scotland, particularly the Northeast, to denote knitting.
one of the Incorporation's books, concerning the terms of service of particular individuals. Among the earliest of these entries is one dated 13 November 1682 which notes that Andro Myll had agreed to serve David Quhyt for a year in return for a fee of £4 Scots, a pair of shoes, a pair of hose and a bonnet, and 'his task is an dosen gryt bonets working fyftine of the six pond sort and twentie two of the four pond sort. Ilk ane of these syes to be ane wiks work to him in tyme of ther working'. Eleven years later (6 November 1693), Andrew Myll reappears, this time working for Deacon Philip for a year for £10: his task is given as 16 great, 24 middling, or 32 little bonnets, the work so organised that 'he hath two days dighten and four days wifing'. All the contracts are on roughly similar lines, except that whereas the work of men is usually specified as 'wifing and dichting' that of women is generally described in terms of knitting and spinning. An entry for 26 March 1683, for instance, notes an agreement that Elspit hog work 'week about' for James Carnigy and James Gibson, her task per week to be 'sixtine gryt bonets working or spinning at eightine [ounces] the pic', with the stipulation 'if the bonet be less working the yarn is to be dilewrid back with the bonet, and if the bonet be mor then eightine [ounces] working she is to reseawe spun yarn to out wead it'. The distinction is made sufficiently often to suggest that while both sexes were knitters, spinning was the work of women.

1 Dundee Has: the entries occur in the back of an account book which covers the years 1706-1848.
2 In the original the word reads 'wnc' but the context leaves little doubt that 'ounces' is meant.
and dressing was the province of men. Whatever the truth of
the matter, however, there is enough detail in these entries,
and in the previously mentioned documents, to show that the
work of the bonnetmaker in Dundee was much like that of his
counterpart in Edinburgh, involving buying and processing
raw wool, knitting garments, and finishing them by milling
and dressing.

Whereas bonnetmakers organised in corporate groups
appear in the Last of Scotland from the late fifteenth
century onwards, they cannot be traced in the west until
about 1600. First on record on that side of the country are
Bonnetmakers of Glasgow, who received a seal of cause from
the burgh council on 29 October 1597. In this case at
least though, it was official recognition of an already
well-established craft body, for the charter records that
'they use to have ane dekyn and visitour of thair craft thir
many yeiris bigone'. This is corroborated by the Incorporat-
ion's minute books, one of which contains entries back to
1592, therefore actually pre-dating the seal of cause by
several years. The first entries are faded and damaged, but
that for 22 September 1593 is sufficiently intact to show
that there were already at least thirteen members, who

1 This document is among the records of the Incorporation of
Bonnetmakers and Dyers of Glasgow, referred to hereafter
as Glasgow MSS; the text of the seal of cause is printed
in W. Lindsay, History of the Incorporation of Bonnetmakers
and Dyers of Glasgow, 85-92.
2 Glasgow MSS: minute book 1 (17 August 1592 - 10 December
1617).
3 The entry is slightly ambiguous in that thirteen names
appear on one side of the page, seven of the names being
repeated on the other side with an office marked against
them. Although it is possible that there were actually
twenty members, it looks more as if the members were first
listed, and the names of office-bearers were written out
again after elections had been held. The comment 'deid'
against three of the names appears to have been added later.
elected among themselves seven officials - a deacon, assisted by four 'masters of craft' and two visitors. In the absence of any earlier evidence from the records of either the burgh or the Incorporation, the antiquity of the bonnetmakers as a group can be no more than a matter for speculation. What can be said is that there were bonnetmakers working in Glasgow by about 1580, for by that date they begin to appear in the burgess list: first on record is Patrick Nasmyth, who became a freeman burgess on 16 June 1579, and he was followed the next year by Thomas Nasmyth (1 November 1580); as the burgess list is extant only from 1573, there could well have been others earlier.

The seal of cause deals mainly with the organisation of the government of the Craft, and lays down the usual regulations for the election of officials, the entry of masters, and the booking of apprentices, and sets out a scale of fees, and fines for disobedience and disorder. In this case, however, the document is unusually specific about the manner of goods concerned. The preamble mentions that it had been the custom of the leaders of the Craft to 'try and examinat the insufficient work maid and wrocht be divers and sindry bonnetmakarisis reparand to aure mercat of Glasgow bryngand thairto thair bonettis volvine [woven?] sockis and maid wylicottis quhairof the stuff wes nocht sufficient but of grof wall and insufficient colouires'; later, it confirms that the deacons and masters of craft were to have the power to examine the work of both free and unfree bonnet-makers 'sik as bonettis wylicottis wolvyne sokkis hois and

1 The Burgesses and Guild Brethren of Glasgow 1573-1750 (S.a.).
uther siclik waris' to ensure that they were both well dyed and adequately made. From this it can be seen that in Glasgow, as in Edinburgh, it was recognised that bonnet-makers made a variety of woollen garments, not just bonnets.

Entries in the Incorporation's two earliest surviving minute books, covering the period from 1592-1718, are largely concerned with elections of officials, admission of freemen and so on, but, particularly up to the 1650s, there are also items which regulate, or at least refer to, methods of work. Once again, features are revealed which are already familiar from the examination of bonnet-making in the East of Scotland.

Among the first entries is one setting down that no servant be allowed to 'dight' (dress) bonnets until he had first served his apprenticeship, paid his dues and had his service approved by the deacon and masters. Another, dated 27 April 1598, decreed that no member was to pay any dyer 'for dighting of any blue wool but aucht werkis for the stane weyt', on pain of a fine of £5. Within a few weeks, members were being arraigned for disobeying the order - on 13 May, for example, Iselene Nylye came before the deacon accused of having paid nine merks to John Quhyte for dyeing a stone of wool. The same Iselene is mentioned again on 12 July 1598, convicted of 'slanding of the dekin': she was fined £4, with the stipulation that if she offended a second time she was 'nevir to vork walk or weif with bonattis nor uther airt of the craft....in tymc coming'.

1 Lindsay, op. cit., 29.
2 Glasgow Lss: minute book I.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
For waulking it appears that, as in Dundee, the Incorporation had its own waulk mill, and in 1599 members of the Craft were exhorted 'to keep their mylne dayis....in waulking of thair bonatis'\textsuperscript{1}; at least at times, this milling process was the responsibility of one man, as on 3 February 1636 Adam Kirkland bound himself 'to walk sufficientlie to the haill craft the haill bonatis for the coming year', undertaking that there only should go into the mill and 'na auld playdis nor uther clayth\textsuperscript{2}'. Carelessness in performing this part of the bonnet-making process must often have led to the spoiling of the goods as there are frequent injunctions about not mixing dyed and undyed articles in the same batch: on 13 November 1611, for example, it was ordered that no white bonnets be waulked with those of other colours\textsuperscript{3}; forty years later, a fine of 40s., with a further 6s. 8d. to be paid to the officer, was decided on as the penalty for putting gray or white bonnets or hose, 'or uthir quhit or gray work', in the waulk mill with blue bonnets\textsuperscript{4}.

Final confirmation, if any be needed, that the Glasgow bonnetmakers were knitters like their brethren in the east of the country, is to be found in the inventory of the goods of John Nasuzyth, bonnetmaker burgess of Glasgow and son to Thomas Nasmyth mentioned above. This is recorded in the Register of Testaments of the Glasgow Commissary Court under 14 March 1605\textsuperscript{5}, and shows that John Nasmyth's goods at the time of his death were valued at £77-2s.-8d..

\textsuperscript{1} Glasgow Mss: minute book I.
\textsuperscript{2} Glasgow Mss: minute book II (ends 19 September 1718).
\textsuperscript{3} Glasgow Mss: minute book I.
\textsuperscript{4} Glasgow Mss: minute book II.
\textsuperscript{5} SRO: CC 9/7/3, 15r.
£53-13s.-4d. of this being accounted for by eight dozen bonnets 'maid and unmaid'. But the particular interest of this inventory is that the tools, household effects, and so on, are listed in detail, even to 'ane dussane of bonnat brodds with ane scheir that dichtis the bonnettis', that is to say, his knitting needles and the shears he used to dress the nap of the milled bonnets; together these needles and shears were worth just 16s. whereas it is common for a bonnetmaker's working material - wool - and his products in various states of completion to figure prominently in his testament, it is rare indeed for the tools of his trade to be mentioned. Since, however, the equipment required for the making and finishing of these knitted garments was so simple, and, as is indicated by the entry above, of such small value, this is scarcely to be wondered at, and these tools must generally have been included in the lump sum for 'utenceillis and domeceillis with the abulymentis of his bodie' which often appears at the end of an inventory.

Although the Bonnetmaker Incorporations of Edinburgh, Dundee, and Glasgow have histories covering several centuries, it is the Kilmarnock and Stewarton area which has been particularly associated with the manufacture of the native knitted bonnet. This reputation must have been established quite early in the seventeenth century, for an entry in the minutes of the Glasgow Incorporation on 7 March 1611 records the imposition of a stiff fine on Andro Scheills, servant to John Smyth, for advising James Robesoun, servant to William Govan, 'to gang to Stewartoun and thair

1 DOST gives brod as a pointed instrument, prick or goad.
he will be better intertenit and get ane gooder fie nor he got in this town\textsuperscript{1}. In Kilmarnock the craft was sufficiently developed by 1656 for Richard Frank to mention specifically in his Northern Memoirs..., not otherwise particularly enlightening on the subject of Scottish manufacture, that 'knitting of bonnets' was a principal activity of the place\textsuperscript{2}. But despite the apparently well-established state of the craft in this area in the seventeenth century, its immediate antecedents are curiously obscure: the presence of a bonnetmaker in Ayr in the 1530s, mentioned above, shows that bonnetmaking was not unknown in Ayrshire well before 1600, and yet, if it flourished in Kilmarnock and Stewarton in the sixteenth century, it has left no trace.

Entries in the registers of testaments confirm the existence of individual bonnetmakers in Kilmarnock and Stewarton in some numbers early in the seventeenth century: there are testaments for fourteen different bonnetmakers, or their wives, dating between 1606 and 1632. In passing, it may be commented that these too exhibit the elements now familiar from the testaments of bonnetmakers elsewhere, with entries concerning wool, dyeing, and made-up garments featuring prominently. To take the earliest surviving example from Kilmarnock - the inventory of the goods of Isobell Creilman, spouse to Archibald Gibson, registered on 24 July 1612\textsuperscript{3}, set the value of the couple's possessions at £190: these included ten stones of white wool valued at a
hundred merks, another four stones of wool of various colours, and ten dozen blue bonnets at eleven merks the dozen; most of their debts were accounted for by £12 owed to a dyer in Glasgow, and money owed to John Smyth, skinner, for wool, and to two other skinners, presumably also for wool. The first available testament from Stewarton is that of Margaret Fultoun, wife of David Biggart bonnetmaker in Harschaw, registered on 15 February 1606: the couple are described as 'tua puir cotteris' and the largest part of their few goods was a quantity of lambswool and 'certane raw unwalkit bonattis', together worth £20.

Notwithstanding the presence of numbers of individual bonnetmakers in Kilmarnock and Stewarton early in the seventeenth century, indications of corporate organisation are difficult to find until later. The records of the Bonnetmakers of Kilmarnock, in the form of a minute book beginning in 1776, are preserved in the Dick Institute there. Earlier records, still extant during the last century, are now lost, and reliance has to be placed on such extracts as were printed, or referred to, in the past. Nor are the burgh records of Kilmarnock of help for the seventeenth century development of the craft: Kilmarnock was erected into a burgh of barony in 1591, by a charter in favour of Thomas, Lord Boyd, and there are no regular records of burgh business until 1695 when the first magistrates and councillors were appointed. Archibald Mackay, the historian

1 CC 9/7/4, 94r.
2 Deferred to hereafter as Kilmarnock Ms.
3 It is feared that these records have been destroyed: according to the Curator, Mr J. Hunter, they are thought to have been among the items lost in a fire at the Burns Monument, Kilmarnock.
4 J. Paterson, History of the County of Ayr, ii, 151.
of Kilmarnock, describes a charter granted to the Bonnet-makers of the burgh by James, Lord Boyd, in 1647, which indicated that the trade was already about thirty strong: in response to complaints about the stealing of apprentices, servants leaving their masters' work to do their own, and general disorder in the trade, it was enacted that no one be allowed to set up on his own until 'thought worthy by the Craft and have given up his sey trial piece to them'.

If the charter described the nature of the trade this is not mentioned by Mackay, but the point is clarified in another charter, of 9 March 1706, the text of which is printed in Wylie's Ayrshire Museum: on this occasion William, third Earl of Kilmarnock, ratified the privileges granted 'by [our] predecessors', including that no one 'shall weave bonnets milled hose or stockings Except for their own private use or wearing unless they be sighted and allowed by the Visitor to be appointed by the said trade'; similarly, no one was permitted 'to work spin caird or dress bonnets hose or stockings that make vendition of the same', unless they had first been received into the Craft. This manufacture of 'milled stockings' was of sufficient consequence to merit frequent attention from the burgh council early in the eighteenth century: these acts will be considered in more detail below, but it is relevant to mention here that an act dated 11 August 1713 states that the Bonnetmakers in the burgh had formerly had a monopoly of

1 A.Mackay, The History of Kilmarnock, 43.
3 Paterson, op.cit., 154-5.
dressing stockings made for sale; another, made two years previously, suggests that this monopoly was of long standing, as it refers to an act of 1603, made by one of the Earl of Kilmarnock's predecessors, stipulating that none dress hose or stockings made by anyone not incorporate in the trade, unless that person had made them purely for his own use. The implication is that by the early 1600s the bonnetmakers in Kilmarnock were not only making a variety of garments, just as in Glasgow and Edinburgh, but that the craft was sufficiently developed there for them to have become a coherent body. Unfortunately, this early charter is now lost, and there is no corroborative evidence available.

To turn to Stewarton, the first indication that bonnet-making there had been put on an organised basis is an agreement, dated 24 April 1650, allowing Stewarton bonnets to be sold in Glasgow. At the time the inhabitants of Stewarton were tenants of the Cuninghames of Corshill, and subject to their Corshill Baron Court, so the negotiations were undertaken by 'Alexander Cuninghame of Corshill for him his aires and successors on the one part' and 'Gawan Nasmyt present deacon of the bonnetmakers of Glasgow with consent of the maisteris thereof'. The tenor of the agreement was that 'it sail be leisur to the hail bonnetmakeris subject to Corshill's court in all tymes comming to haunt the marcats of Glasgow to sell their bonnets without any interuptionne'. The conditions were that Alexander Cuninghame appoint

1 Ibid., 154.
2 Glasgow hisst: in the back of minute book II.
visitors to check and maintain the quality of the Stewarton bonnets and that if any Glasgow merchant had cause to complain of the quality of a bonnet sold to him 'by any persons subject to the laird of Corshill his court', the said laird would pay a fine of 6s. 8d. to the Glasgow Incorporation; finally, the Cuninghames agreed to pay twenty merks annually for the privilege of access - and the minutes of the Glasgow Incorporation show that this was adhered to, and the sum was still being paid regularly nearly a century later\(^1\).

A book recording the proceedings of the Corshill Baron Court, beginning 22 October 1666, is still in existence\(^2\). Not unexpectedly, matters concerning bonnets are prominent. Common cases are those dealing with non-payment for bonnets supplied - on 25 May 1661, for example, John Wyllie in Hareschaw was in pursuance of Alexander Dickie for £9 Scots owed for two dozen bonnets; an entry a few years earlier suggests that bonnets could even have been treated as an item of currency in the area, for when, on 6 March 1673, Andrew Buchanan in Robertland claimed recompense from Thomas Wyllie for tending a lame horse, Thomas was ordered either to pay the sum or 'to deliver to the said Andrew ane sufficient blue bonnet upon demand'. In general though, the activities of bonnet-makers were governed by a special court, the minutes of which, from 1673 onwards, are written into the back of the Baron Court Book.

With the exceptions that the office of deacon was heritable - vested in the Cuninghame family - and that some

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1 Glasgow MSS: e.g. minute book III, 27 August 1745.
2 SRK: GD 1/300/1.
at least of the fees were pocketed by the deacon, the affairs of the Corshill Bonnet Court have much in common with those of the Incorporations of Bonnetmakers already examined. The minutes are largely devoted to the admission of freemen, the administration of oaths and the payment of dues, and to organisational matters such as the provision of mortcloths and the appointment of officials. Other entries deal with the disputes between members and the regulation of the quality and extent of work, and these too reveal the use of processes common to bonnetmakers elsewhere.

Among the earliest entries (1673) is one recording a dispute between Alexander Harper and Thomas Lackland, the former claiming he had sent six bonnets to the latter to be waulked but only four had been returned. The quality of the wool was a matter of continual concern and there are frequent injunctions about dyeing - such as that of 27 January 1690 against buying white wool and dyeing it black, and of 5 March 1756 against dyeing wool blue with any substance other than indigo. The bonnets themselves had to be of a certain weight and standard of finish, and substantial fines were imposed for under-weight products or for finishing a bonnet 'without sheiring and dressing behynd the neck' (29 June 1738). At times the demand for bonnets was poor, and this was dealt with by restricting certain activities. Consequently, it was laid down in the minutes for 7 January 1731 that 'no young women after they are twelve years... shall weave

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1 Although in the same book as the above, for the sake of clarity the minutes of the Bonnet Court, which run from 1673-1772, will be referred to hereafter as Stewarton his 1.
Bonets after this day till the next court day¹, and a year later (5 January 1732) it was decreed that no spinning be
put outside the trade for the next twelve months; there were also penalties for those who might be tempted to go
to Kilmarnock when work in Stewarton was being restricted¹. A particularly severe punishment - a fine of £50 Scots and
permanent expulsion from the Incorporation - was reserved for those who bought bonnets in Kilmarnock and sold them in
Glasgow as Stewarton products².

From the above, it can be seen that in all the main centres of bonnetmaking, the processes employed were
essentially the same; that workers could be tempted to move from one place to another, or that goods from one centre
could be mixed with, or passed off as, those of another, only serves to emphasise the point. Furthermore, although the
evidence quoted has covered a period from before 1500 to the mid-eighteenth century, the basic methods of work revealed
- preparing the wool, knitting, andilling and dressing the surface to finish the garment - have remained constant. In
short, there is every reason to suppose that from the first, bonnetmakers in Scotland were knitters working with wool,
and that this continued to be the nature of the craft in the following centuries.

¹ Ibid., e.g. 4 December 1761.
² Ibid., 28 June 1746.
It is apparent that the work of the bonnetmaker, in whatever part of Scotland, and probably from the introduction of the craft onwards, consisted of producing coarse knitted woollen garments. Yet for all the demonstrable homogeneity of the processes employed, this is not to say that the course of development of the various Incorporations of bonnetmakers was necessarily the same. From about 1600 the Edinburgh Bonnetmakers, for example, concentrated on the production of boot hose, that is, coarse over-stockings, which were exported to markets in Holland, Flanders and elsewhere. Although representing a comparatively small proportion of Edinburgh's overall trade, this regular export of stockings was sufficient to induce a marked expansion in a previously small and insignificant craft group, and also to bring prosperity, at least to their leaders. As it turned out, the specialisation led to the downfall of the craft: the collapse of this section of the stocking trade in the second half of the century was accompanied by a rapid decline in the fortunes of the Incorporation, and the disappearance of the Edinburgh Bonnetmakers into obscurity.

The question now arises as to whether all the other main Incorporations - at Dundee, Glasgow, Kilmarnock and Stewarton - were also involved in the stocking trade, or whether some developed in a different direction.

The bulk of the documentary material for the
Incorporation of Bonnetmakers in Dundee post-dates 1660. Where, in the few earlier records of the Incorporation, there is mention of the goods produced it is invariably bonnets that are specified. Similarly, in the fourteen known testaments of members of the Craft and their wives, all of which date between 1596-9 and 1624, if stock-in-trade is listed in the inventories it is again bonnets rather than other garments. In view of the limited evidence available it would be unwise to conclude that at this stage (that is, before 1660) the Craft in Dundee made no goods other than bonnets. Even so, it is unlikely that they produced stockings in any quantity, not least because there is no external evidence for the existence of a stocking trade in the area.

Looking at Dundee between the Reformation and the mid-seventeenth century, Professor Lythe found that the main commodities exported, as elsewhere in Scotland, were fish, skins, and plaiding (coarse woollen cloth), and, to a lesser extent, linen cloth and yarn¹. There were other items sent out in very small quantities, but among these only gloves are even possible bonnetmaker products; the type is not specified and they could equally well have been of leather. This pattern is exemplified on an individual basis by the notebook of David Wedderburne, merchant of Dundee, which covers the period from 1587 to 1630². The book shows that in return for Norway timber, olive oil and wine from

² *The Court Book of David Wedderburne...* (SIS).
France and Spain, iron from Sweden, fine clothing, clothing fabrics and dyestuffs, and a wonderfully miscellaneous assortment of personal and household items, David Wedderburne was exporting all the main goods specified by Lythe; there is no trace of stockings or, for that matter, of bonnets. At one point a Patrick Gardyn 'pilcario' (bonnetmaker) appears in the notebook: he is identifiable either as the man who became a Bonnetmaker Burgess of Dundee on 4 October 1587, or another who was deacon of the Craft a few years earlier. On this occasion the entry is in connection with Wedderburne's legal, rather than mercantile, activities, but ten years later (September 1597), the following note appears: 'Memorandum My pak scheittis and pak towis Patrik Gardyn retenis thame with 1 gudlen and xl gross of wrang compt'.

From this it might be supposed that there was some trading connection between the merchant and the bonnetmaker. A few months earlier, however, Wedderburne, as the notebook shows, had been dealing with a ship's master of the same name, and it is presumably this latter who is referred to in the September entry.

Although no firm conclusions are possible for the years before 1660, after this date it is evident that the Dundee Bonnetmakers were indeed specialising, perhaps exclusively, in bonnets. The acts of the Incorporation, for instance, are always concerned with bonnets rather than other goods: their act of 27 May 1674 was directed against

1 Ibid., 55.
2 Ibid., 55n.
4 The Count Buik of David Wedderburne..., 60.
5 Ibid., 72.
freemen who 'presume or tak in hand to mak usse of the
burges libertie in buying unwakit bonetis or drest or
omdrest'\(^1\); twenty years later (16 October 1694), there was
a statute made concerning the quality of dyestuffs used,
enacted because, in the view of the Incorporation, poor
dyeing 'hath prowacked the cuntrie to buy bonetes made in
other pleaces'\(^2\); in the meantime (1683), it had been
necessary to take action against members profaning the
Lord's Day by laying out bonnets to dry\(^3\). In the next
century there was a measure passed (1726) against members
who had betrayed local interests by purchasing 'from
strangers in Glasgow bonnets which they have exposed to
sale and even sold to merchants in this burgh with the
bonnets that are the product of our manufactory'\(^4\); the year
before there had been unsuccessful moves against unwelcome
competition from the Dundee tailors who had taken to making
cloth bonnets\(^5\). This pre-occupation with bonnets is also
reflected in individual contracts between master and
servant, some of which (between 1682 and 1737) have been
recorded\(^6\). In these agreements the nature of the work is
often given in some detail, but whereas bonnets in a
variety of sizes are mentioned - great, middling, small,
'3rd size', '4th size', 'manglars' and so on, sometimes
with the exact weight of wool to be used, no other product
is ever specified.

\(^1\) Dundee Mss: unbound sheet.
\(^2\) Dundee Mss: entered in the back of the account book.
\(^3\) Ibid., 28 March 1683.
\(^4\) Ibid., 13 October 1726.
\(^5\) Charters, Writs and Public Documents of the Royal Burgh
    of Dundee, ed. A. Ray (Dundee, 1880), 165.
\(^6\) Dundee Mss: entered in the back of the account book.
Even with the aid of the Incorporation’s post-1660 records it is not easy to obtain a reliable or constant picture of the size of the membership or the extent of their trade. At times during the last four decades of the seventeenth century, there are hints that the Craft was in difficulties: in 1673, for example, the Incorporation was so far in debt that it was necessary to impose a levy, in addition to the usual quarterly dues, each master paying 4s. 4d. and ‘Irk servand that can dight a bonet two shillings two pennies’; towards the end of the century, the wording of the act concerning dyeing (16 October 1694), quoted above, implies that trade was poor, and this impression is strengthened by an entry of a few months before regarding action against masters and servants leaving the trade. Visiting Dundee after the devastations of the Civil War, Tuck had found the town (1656) ‘much shaken and abated in her former grandeur’, and, according to one modern authority, Dundee ‘never showed a flicker of recovery in the following half century’. From this it might be supposed that the Bonnetmakers were suffering from the general economic decline of the burgh — and yet there are other indications that such a view would be erroneous, and that the Incorporation’s difficulties were of no more than temporary significance.

An act of the Incorporation dated 27 May 1674 is

1 Ibid.
2 Ibid.
3 Gardan, op. cit., 452.
4 Miscellany, 22.
5 T. Cout, Scottish Trade on the Eve of Union, 140.
attested by fifteen signatures\textsuperscript{1}, and this figure presumably approximates to the number of master bonnetmakers active in Dundee at the time. In addition, an examination of the minutes shows a fairly steady flow of freemen entering the Craft from 1660 until well into the eighteenth century. The numbers of entrants are not spectacular, but the figures of twelve new masters for 1660-1669, and eleven for 1680-1689, are only a little smaller than those of the entrants to the Edinburgh Incorporation at their height (between the 1620s and 1640s), when their stocking export trade was in full swing. This suggests at least the possibility that the Dundee Bonnetmakers were providing for more than purely local consumption.

Further evidence becomes available in 1705 with the first of the Incorporation's surviving annual accounts.\textsuperscript{2} Each year the accounts include a figure referred to as 'Weekly Pennies', that is, the revenue derived from the charge made to members for milling their bonnets at the Incorporation's vault mill at Dalmossie. The entry for 1706-7 shows that 1021 dozen bonnets were milled at a charge of 1s. 2d. per dozen; in the following year the figure rose to 1914 dozen. Since a bonnet was a durable item and, even in 1756, after a period of growth, the population of Dundee was thought to be less than 12,500\textsuperscript{3}, this level of production far exceeded the needs of the male population. Consequently, it must be supposed that many a head outside the immediate area was

\textsuperscript{1} Dundee Mss, unbound sheet.
\textsuperscript{2} The following figures are taken from the account book, which covers the years 1706-1848.
\textsuperscript{3} EPM, viii, 208.
covered with a Dundee bonnet.

The revenue the Incorporation derived from milling reached a peak in 1709-10: the figure entered in the accounts for that year is £119-7s.-0d., which, at the rate of 1s. 2d. per dozen, represents 2046 dozen. Thereafter the revenue dropped, and in the following forty or so years it was generally between £60 and £80. Unfortunately this annual figure is difficult to use. After the first few years detailed entries listing the quantity of bonnets milled, master by master, ceased: since at some stage, the date of which is not recorded, the charge per dozen changed, the single annual figure cannot by itself be used as an indicator of the scale of production. What can be said is that whereas for the first year, 1706-7, eighteen masters were listed as using the mill, by 1763-4 the entire revenue came from two men - James Langlands and James Gib junior. After this there is no identifiable revenue from milling in the accounts; furthermore, references to the payment of mill rent disappear and it seems that the waulk mill was abandoned.

The above is not in itself sufficient to allow the conclusion that production was in decline - members may have been making other arrangements for milling, or it is not impossible that James Gib and James Langlands had come to control output, without reducing it in scale - but there are other indications that by the 1760s, if not before, the Dundee bonnet trade was contracting. A change can be traced, for example, in the membership of the Incorporation: as far as can be ascertained, until 1760 all entrants were invariably
practising bonnetmakers, but on 10 June 1761 the first
honorary member, Mr George Dempster of Dunnichen, advocate
and M.P. for the burgh, was admitted 1. Thereafter admissions
were increasingly either of tradesmen not identifiable as
bonnetmakers, or of men of wealth or influence admitted on
an honorary basis. This suggests that the practical value
of the Incorporation, at least in terms of bonnetmaking, was
coming to an end. The Dundee trade directory for 1783 listed
only four bonnetmakers 2 - as compared with over one hundred
weavers - and ten years later the previous significance of
the craft seems to have been slipping from memory: the entry
for Dundee (1793) in the *First Statistical Account*, which
describes all the principal manufactures of the place, and
even refers to the loss of the previously important trade
in plaiding, make no mention at all of bonnetmaking 3. By
1836 a description of the burgh could state that although
there had been a time when the craft had flourished there
and had occupied many hands, 'there is now not a single
bonnet made in this place' 4.

The reasons for the demise of the craft in Dundee can
only be guessed at, but one probable factor is an alteration
in habits of dress. Ministers contributing to the *First
Statistical Account* (1790 on) were asked to record the
changes that had taken place in their parishes during the
period of their ministry: a very common comment is that just
as homespuns, formerly worn by all but the gentry, were

1 Dundee MSa: minute book
2 The Dundee Register of Merchants and Trades for 1783
(Dundee, 1782, reprint, 1879).
3 RSA, viii, 216-219.
4 C. Z. Ackie, *Historical Description of the Town of Dundee*
(London, 1836), 179.
being replaced by 'imported' fabrics, so the native bonnet was being replaced by the hat, particularly among their younger parishioners. Typical is the minister of Coupar Angus, not far from Dundee, who wrote that although not above forty years ago the broad blue bonnet, with a coat of home manufacture, was universally worn by the men ... at present few servant lads are to be seen at church without their coats of English cloth, hats on their heads and watches in their pockets.

The minister of Laurencekirk, a little further north, illustrated the point with an anecdote:

As a specimen of the change that has taken place within these twenty years with regard to dress, it may be worth mentioning that about eighteen or nineteen years ago a hatter came from Edinburgh to settle in the village, and having arrived on Saturday, he attended public worship on a Sunday. There, seeing only three hats in church besides his own, he was so discouraged that he dropped his scheme, and left the place on Monday. But were he now here he would hardly see a single bonnet in the whole congregation.

The change was by no means universal - and some entries, particularly for parishes in the far North and West, mention the tenacity of the old ways, including the wearing of the bonnet - but the comment appears too often to be discounted. It may be that in eighteenth-century Dundee, which in any case had seen a move away from the old woollen industry and a strong development of the production first of linen, then cotton, textiles, the consequent drop in demand was sufficient to bring bonnetmaking to a close.

2 ibid., v, 181.
3 ibid., iii, 25, 196; xii, 184, 467-8; xiv, 301-2; xvi, 160-1.
4 or other examples see ibid., i, 326, 389, 466-7; ii, 515; v, 226-7, 255-6, 392, 403-4; vi, 352, 380; ix, 50; xiv, 315-6, 364, 541; xvi, 313; xvii, 181, 293-4; xviii, 307; xxi, 143.
Turning to the west of the country, the development of a similar specialisation, but with less successful results, can be discerned in Glasgow. At the end of the sixteenth century the Glasgow bonnetmakers, according to their seal of cause, were producing 'bonettis, wylicottis, woolvne sokkis, hoes and other siklik waris'. The picture is less clear for the following years as although the Incorporation's minutes for the whole of the seventeenth century are still extant, the manufactures of the membership are mentioned only occasionally. If these rather infrequent references, some of which are quoted in the previous chapter, give an accurate guide, then the bonnet was their main product: in decisions concerning standards or methods of work this item is almost invariably specified, while other garments received but little attention. Stockings do appear sometimes - for example, in the act of 12 February 1652 which forbade the mixing of white or grey hose and bonnets with coloured goods in the waulk mill - but if, as in Edinburgh, they represented a major part of the output of the Craft, this is not reflected in the minutes.

The predominance of the bonnet is also apparent from the few known testaments of Glasgow bonnetmakers and their wives. Of the eight earliest, which date between 1592 and 1628, five list bonnets, generally by the dozen, in the inventory of the goods of the deceased, but only one of these mentions stockings. The exception is the testament of

1 Glasgow Miss: seal of cause 29 October 1597.
2 Glasgow Miss: minute books I and II.
3 Glasgow Miss: minute book II.
John Brownesyde (or Burnesyde) which was registered on 29 April 1615: apart from quantities of wool, his stock included one and a half dozen 'blew walkit bonnattis', worth £9, and forty-two pairs of 'buithois', valued at 10s. each. The same man, with an estate of £231, was the wealthiest of the group, and as most left less than £150 the overall impression is of craftsmen in very modest circumstances. It is perhaps not surprising that Margaret Wylie and John Biggart, her husband, who died in October and November respectively of 1604, should have left as little as £60 between them, as they were 'twa auld aigit persons', but a few months later John Nasmyth, who was a son of a deacon of the Craft and who had been a burgess since 1600, died worth little more. There is no one who approached the wealthier of the bonnetmakers in Edinburgh, some of whom left around £500, and no trace of a Glasgow equivalent of Thomas Paterson, who appears to have made a substantial fortune from the stocking trade.

The evidence of the testaments of the Glasgow bonnet-makers is not entirely satisfactory as the surviving sample is so small. None the less, the impression they give may be substantially accurate, since there are other signs that the Craft there was never very strong. The Incorporation had about thirteen members in 1593, while a list of the bonnet-

1 Glasgow Commissary Court: Register of Testaments (S&O: CC 9/7/10, 229v-230v); the other testaments which mention bonnets are Margaret Dunlope (16 July 1607) Margaret Wylie and John Biggart (15 February 1606), Margaret Reid (8 March 1611), John Nasmyth (14 March 1605).
2 CC 9/7/4, 89v.
3 CC 9/7/3, 157r.
4 See ch. III and appendix 1.
maker burgesses which was made around 1610 gives just eleven names, and it is doubtful whether these numbers increased significantly during the century. Working from the minutes, it is apparent that only a handful of new masters were admitted in any given decade: the largest group was the seven who entered during the 1620s, and whereas in the thirty years from 1620 the Edinburgh Incorporation admitted forty-two bonnetmakers, that in Glasgow acquired only a quarter the number. This suggests that even if the craft in Glasgow was engaged in the stocking trade, it was to no great effect.

The second minute book of the Glasgow Incorporation continues to 1718, but after the 1650s there is every appearance that the organisation was falling into desuetude. Entries concerning new members are few and far between, the minutes are generally brief in the extreme and mainly concerned with elections, and there is very little about the control of work, standards of dyeing, and so on. In one case at least, a member can be shown to have abandoned his calling in favour of other work: the 1680 inventory of the goods of John Walker, who had become a bonnetmaker burgess in 1648, lists not the usual wool, bonnets and so on, but 'ane quantitie of timber' worth £140, and five last of herring barrels valued at £66-13s.4d.; his debtors included several people who owed him money for timber work. Confirmation of

1 Glasgow MSS: minute book 11; the entry is undated, but the approximate period can be identified because the list mentions John Burnesyde, who was dead by April 1615, but not John Nasmyth who had died ten years earlier.
2 See ch.11.
3 CC 9/7/43, 541-543
this supposed parlous state of the Craft is to be found in the Glasgow burgess list, for on 30 January 1702 John Byllie, bonnetmaker, was admitted burgess and guild brother gratis 'for helping to preserve the said trade, now near worn out'.

After 19 September 1718, there are no minutes until towards the end of 1742. It is possible that a book has been lost, but equally likely that the Incorporation had more or less ceased activity, because the new book opens, on 5 November 1742, with what reads as an effort at revival. On that date fifteen new members were admitted, all but one of them described as dyers. These entrants and nine others, presumably the existing membership, signed an agreement that in future the deacon in alternate years was to be a practising bonnetmaker, any member being eligible at other times. As far as can be seen, however, dyeing rapidly became the main concern of the Incorporation. A seal of cause granted by the burgh council on 29 September 1760 gave legal recognition to the inclusion of the Dyers, and although the Incorporation continued to be known as the 'Bonnetmakers and Dyers', the bonnetmaking element, just as in Edinburgh, had virtually died out.

The lack of the records (in the original) of the Kilmarnock Incorporation of Bonnetmakers for the period before 1776 makes the course of the Craft in earlier years difficult to follow, but from what can be pieced together,

1 The Burgesses and Guild Brethren of Glasgow (SRS), 250.
2 Glasgow MSS: minute book III.
3 Ibid.
they were a considerably more flourishing group than their counterpart in Glasgow. Then, in 1647, the Kilmarnock Incorporation received a charter, there are thought to have been about thirty members¹ - making it approximately twice the size of the Incorporation in Glasgow - and by 1699 Kilmarnock could be described as 'consisting' for the most part of trademen such as bonnet makers and stockin weavers². Turning to the register of testaments, a similar picture emerges. Whereas the testaments recorded for Glasgow bonnet-makers suggest almost uniformly humble circumstances, there are bonnetmakers in Kilmarnock who, at least by the standards of craftsmen, could be described as wealthy. An early instance is that of Robert Hudzean, 'bonnetmaker indweller in Kilmarnock', whose testament was registered on 2 November 1616³: his goods included over £400-worth of wool, some blue and some white, as well as nine dozen new bonnets, and overall his estate was valued at £1,350.

In contrast to the bonnetmakers in Glasgow, who came to specialise in bonnets, by the early eighteenth century those in Kilmarnock were still manufacturing a variety of garments. An act of the Kilmarnock Incorporation of 5 October 1721, for instance, states that they had been engaged in 'several branches of the Trade, particularly Boot-hose, milned Stockens, Bonnets and Mittens...', although all were said to be in decline⁴. Of these it seems that the making of stockings, dressed and wauked like all

¹ A. Mackay, The History of Kilmarnock, 43.
² APS, x, appendix, 115.
³ CC 9/7/12, 179v.-181r.
other bonnetmaker products, had been of particular importance, as the burgh council made considerable efforts in the second and third decades of the eighteenth century to control and revive it. Interestingly, the acts imply that originally the stocking trade had been entirely in the hands of the Incorporation, although this monopoly had now effectively been broken. As it is diplomatically expressed in an act of 11 August 1713:

[when] the trade of lined stockings in Kilmarnock was come to little or no perfection the bonnetmakers and others incorporate with them might then be able to furnish all such stockings that occasion offered to sell; but since that time the said incorporation being very sensible and convinced they were not able themselves to furnish and supply the country and kingdom, and also countries abroad, with these stockings, have hitherto not withstanding their privileges... allowed and permitted all persons that had a mind to use their employment that way, and dressed to these persons their stockings without obliging them to enter...

The production of stockings by the Kilmarnock bonnetmakers is supposed to have begun at least as early as 1603, although if this was the case it is not reflected in their testaments until the middle of the century. On the other hand, the quantities of hose mentioned show that by the 1640s some bonnetmakers were producing stockings on a comparatively large scale: the inventory (1648) of the goods

1 J. Paterson, *History of the County of Ayr*, 154-6; the minutes of Kilmarnock burgh council before 1737 are missing, and it has therefore been necessary to rely on the paraphrases and quotations printed by Paterson. I am grateful to Mr J. T. Hunter, Curator of Museums with Kilmarnock and Loudon District Council for his help in this matter.
2 Ibid., 155.
3 Ibid., 154.
of Jonet Mure, wife of John Thomson, bonnetmaker in Kilmarnock, for example, lists thirty stones of wool 'mixt and paitlie quhyt to be boot stockings', and 'four packis of boote stockings' valued as high as £800. The claim that Kilmarnock had had an extensive trade in stockings, including to 'countries abroad', can partially be substantiated from other sources. Looking at the period between 1660 and 1707, and working from the papers of Andrew Russell, Scottish factor at Rotterdam, and the fragmentary series of Ayrshire customs- and bullion books, T.C. Smout found that 'Kilmarnock hooses' were being exported to a number of destinations. The stockings were finding their way to Holland, France, Ireland, and even the west Indies, although quantities were small by comparison with, say, the trade in Galloway cloth, and the parcels of stockings, and even occasionally bonnets, must generally have been make-weights rather than a main cargo. The overland trade cannot be followed in like manner, but some of it undoubtedly passed through Glasgow, as the minutes of the Glasgow Incorporation mention Kilmarnock bonnetmakers who had aid 'Glasgow Broadpenny', that is, a fee giving them special access to Glasgow market.

Perhaps surprisingly in view of their geographical proximity to Kilmarnock, there is no indication that the Stewarton bonnetmakers were ever engaged in the stocking trade. Indeed it may well be that until the 1730s their

1 CC 9/7/30, 1878.
3 Lindsay, 'History of the Incorporation of Bonnetmakers and Dyers of Glasgow', 19n.
products consisted entirely of bonnets. In the minutes of the Corshill Bonnet Court (from 1673 onwards) it is always the bonnet that is specified, whether in acts against the mixing of hair with bonnet wool\(^1\) or the use of white wool to make black bonnets\(^2\), the settlement of disputes between members concerning waulking\(^3\), or payments to the officer 'for his paines in visiting [i.e. inspecting] the bonnets of the tradesmen'\(^4\). Before 1673 the available evidence is mainly in the form of testaments, surviving examples of which cover the years 1606-1632 and 1664-1669. Here again, if their products are mentioned it is invariably bonnets.

An unusual feature revealed by the testaments of the Stewerton bonnetmakers is that bonnetmaking was only one of their activities: as might be expected in a rural area, all of them had livestock, and many had arable land as well, and it is evident that their income was derived from more than one source. The point is illustrated particularly clearly by the testament of Thomas Akker, described as a bonnetmaker in Nareshaw in the parish of Stewerton, who died in May 1612\(^5\): his inventory, as usual for a bonnetmaker, includes a quantity of wool, but animals - a horse, two cows, a ewe and a lamb - and cereals are equally prominent. From elsewhere in the document we learn that he was a tenant of the Laird of Corshill, to whom he paid £6-13s.-4d. for his land yearly, and that he owed fees to two men, one

\(^1\) Stewarton Ms I, 27 June 1688.  
\(^2\) Ibid., 27 January 1690.  
\(^3\) Ibid., January 1673.  
\(^4\) Ibid., 7 July 1691.  
\(^5\) CC 9/7/8, 210v.-212r.
'for keeping of his kye' and another for tilling his land; similarly, although his debtors included a burgess in Ayr to whom he had sold bonnets, others - John Yllie in Stewarton and Adam Nicoll, merchant in Kilmarnock - are mentioned as purchasers of webs of blue clott, and others still as having bought young horses from him.

Even though Stewarton bonnetmakers were not specialist craftsmen in the same sense as their counterparts in the other main centres of bonnet-making, it is apparent that by the middle of the seventeenth century their output went beyond the needs of the inhabitants of the immediate area.

The 1650 agreement between the Laird of Corshill and the Glasgow Incorporation of bonnet-makers allowed the Stewarton men special access with their bonnets, and the minutes of the Bonnet Court, which include regular references to Glasgow Broad-jenny and setting a date for going to Glasgow, show that they continued to find a market there. Curiously, whereas the Glasgow Incorporation virtually disappeared at the end of the seventeenth century, the Stewarton minutes show a steady flow of new members, and even at the end of the first quarter of the eighteenth century, after a period when the demand for bonnets seems to have been slack, there were still as many as thirty-seven bonnet-makers present to vote at one meeting.

By the 1720s the bonnet-makers of both Kilmarnock and Stewarton were in difficulties. In 1721 the various branches of Kilmarnock's trade were described as 'Degenerate and some

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1 Glasgow MSS: in the back of minute book II.
2 Stewarton MSS 1, 26 June 1724.
of them altogether brought to nothing. Eight years later, the market for bonnets was so poor that hasty consultations were held with the Laird of Corshill about the imposition of an 'idlesett', that is, 'the giving over of making bonnets and spinning of wool', in both places until such time as prices improved. The Kilmaurnock men attributed the decline in their trade to poor workmanship and lack of control of standards, but it may simply have been that public taste was beginning to require more refined products than they had been able to make. Even so, while bonnet-making in the other main centres in Scotland died out during the eighteenth century, in Kilmaurnock and Stewarton it held its ground, and if anything, the number of bonnet-makers there increased. The Book of Minutes of the Kilmaurnock Incorporation, which begins on 26 October 1776, opens with a list of members forty-six strong. By the 1790s although bonnet-making no longer held pride of place in the burgh, having been outstripped by the manufacture of carpets and woollen cloth, and of boots and shoes, the annual output of knitted goods was still estimated to be 11,700, with an additional 1600 for 'stockings knit by women'. In 1785 the Stewarton bonnet-makers, who had formerly been governed by the Corshill bonnet Court, formed themselves into the bonnet-makers' Society of Stewarton, with a membership of fifty-seven. Their minutes cease in 1790, but this was by no means an indication of

1 Lylie, op. cit., 90.
2 Ibid., 92; Stewarton Ms I, 3 July 1729.
3 Now in the Dick Institute, Kilmaurnock.
4 RSA, ii, 38.
5 Stewarton Ms II, 1 September 1785.
the end of their trade: the entry for the parish in the Statistical Account (1793) states that it was still the main activity there, supplying not only the country around but the Highlands and countries abroad.

A factor in the survival of the Bonnetmakers of both Kilmarnock and Stewarton was their success in finding a new product - the cap - which, along with the bonnet, became the mainstay of their trade. The manufacture of caps in Kilmarnock is first mentioned in an act of the Incorporation of 1721 which laid down regulations concerning the making of this new item; three years later the burgh council ratified the Incorporation's monopoly of cap making, which by this time was described as 'a considerable Branch of their Trade'. A little later the manufacture of caps can be traced in Stewarton, and the minutes in the late 1730s note measures to ensure uniformity of quality. According to one entry, there was a set pattern:

> each cap shall have three score of loup's upon each needle and three score of bouts and nine afterwards and the rest to make the cap shapely to the crown and further twenty eight bouts to the upfall [turned-back brim].

The caps, like bonnets, were milled and dressed, but they must have been an altogether finer and lighter product because whereas bonnets could weigh anything from eight to twenty ounces a piece, caps were expected to weigh 'two pounds wanting an ounce per dozen'.

From the above description it appears that, at least

1 FSA, ix, 380.
2 Blythe, op. cit., 90.
3 Ibid., 91-92.
4 Stewarton AS 1, 29 June 1738.
initially, the new product was the more or less conical cap, often called a nightcap, which was worn virtually universally by men in Scotland (as elsewhere) for informal purposes; a similar headcovering is still used today, particularly for winter sports. According to Rev. John Mitchell, writing of Ayrshire as he remembered it about 1780, 'a woollen cap commonly called a Kilmarnock cock' was habitually worn by older men, both indoors and out: the exceptions were such important occasions as attending church or a funeral, or going to market, in which case 'a broad blue bonnet prepared generally in the same place [i.e. Kilmarnock]' was worn instead. Just a few years earlier David Loch had noted during his tour through Scotland that Kilmarnock nightcaps found a ready market in Holland 'as they are wore by all the Dutch seamen'.

More detailed information about the Stewarton and Kilmarnock bonnet trade in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries can be derived from the business archives of William Wilson and Son of Bannockburn, near Stirling. The Wilsons had formerly been manufacturers of tartan, but by the 1790s they were dealing in all manner of woollen goods and had a substantial export trade, especially with North America; in addition, they acted as military outfitters, particularly to the Highland regiments. The firm purchased all its bonnets and caps, as well as some

1 J. Mitchell, 'Memories of Ayrshire about 1780', _SLS misc., vi_ (1939), 264.
2 D. Loch, _A Tour through... Scotland_, 36.
3 The archives have now been split up: a large holding of the letters is in SLS, and there are smaller holdings in SUSM, TMSAS, and private collections.
gloves and mittens, in Kilmarnock and Stewarton. Their suppliers, including James McLean and, later, John Keyburn and John Lauchland in the former, and John and James Styrie in the latter, acted as middlemen, commissioning and buying the desired items from the bonnetmakers. Demand fluctuated wildly: sometimes trade was slow, with only one or two dozen of any item required, but on other occasions orders were substantial, and usually required in a hurry. One such instance is recorded in a letter of 16 June 1795 from regular customers, Messrs Hindmarsh and Claylock, in Newcastle: they ordered two separate consignments of blue caps, each of one hundred dozen, 'for our friends in Norway', to be delivered in a month; two months later there is a letter from James McLean in Kilmarnock confirming that an instalment of these had been shipped to Newcastle via Leith.

By far the most important part of the bonnet trade at this time, however, and one which no doubt compensated for the drop in demand from the population in general, was that in military bonnets. The troops recruited for the Government from the Highlands from the 1720s onwards had been allowed to retain their native costume, including the knitted bonnet, but once adopted by army, this manner of dress was gradually converted into a uniform. In the case of the bonnet, the headband gradually deepened until the whole achieved a cylindrical or 'pork pie' shape; set-up and trimmed with feathers it was worn as full dress, and

1 NLS: 6671.
2 NLS: 6670.
unstiffened as a forage cap. The feathered bonnet was peculiar to the Highland regiments, but the knitted forage cap was soon adopted by other Scottish regiments and, in the glengarry form, in the second half of the nineteenth century, by English regiments as well. The letters from the Stewarton and Kilmarnock suppliers to Wilsons of Bannockburn on this subject mention a bewildering array of types and patterns: bonnets were often made in three qualities— for officers, sergeants and privates; the basic colour was generally dark blue but sometimes altered to yellow, white or scarlet; the headband might be patterned with dicing, or coloured rings to match the regimental facings; some incorporated leather peaks or chinstraps, or numerals to denote the regiment. Numbers could be large—a letter from John Blylie in Stewarton dated 10 October 1798, for instance, records the dispatch of 980 bonnets for privates, and a further 71 for sergeants, probably for the 'black batch' but the army also required a high degree of uniformity in colour and pattern. That the bonnetmakers were able to meet this requirement speaks for the flexibility and organisation of the trade in Kilmarnock and Stewarton.

In 1820 it was commented that almost all the regimental bonnets, including the undress caps worn by the English Dragoons, were made in Kilmarnock and Stewarton, and that the trade employed 275 men and apprentices, in addition to many women and girls. By the time of the New Statistical

1 H. Mackay Scobie, 'The Scottish Tartan Manufacturers and Bonnetmakers', Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research 21 (1942), 64-70.
2 NLS: 6680.
3 C. Robertson, A Topographical Description of Ayrshire (Irvine, 1820), 314-16, 375.
Account (1845) the annual production of the Kilmarnock bonnetmakers alone was given as 18,720 bonnets, valued at £12,000. But the major period of expansion occurred during the next twenty or so years, as by 1869 David Bremer was able to give the following account:

Bonnet-making is next in importance [after carpet weaving] of the woollen manufactures of Kilmarnock. There are six firms engaged in that trade, and the annual value of the goods made is estimated at £55,000. One firm — that of Messrs Douglas, Ey, Urn, and Co. — sent out goods in 1867 to the value of £37,010. By the various firms there are employed 1,100 women and girls as knitters, 300 as liners and 90 men and boys as finishers. In Kilmarnock, two miles off, there are employed 100 knitters, 50 liners and 20 finishers, and the annual value of the goods made is £1,500. In Stewarton, five miles off, there are employed 1,800 knitters, 500 liners, and 200 finishers, and the annual value of goods made is £90,000. In the three places about £48,000 is annually paid in wages.

As a handcraft, bonnet-making had changed but little in four centuries, but by Bremer’s time radical alterations were taking place. Bonnet-making was no longer based solely on the local clip, and by the 1850s one manufacturer at least had gone over entirely to Australian wool. A mill for spinning bonnet wool had been established in Kilmarnock in 1844, the availability of machine-spun yarn no doubt assisting in the expansion of the industry, and, at least in Stewarton, the workers were now being gathered together in factories. The bonnets too were changing: the trend was towards a more

1 NSA, v, 552.
2 Bremer, The Industries of Scotland, 205.
4 Mackay, op. cit., 376.
5 Kilmarnock Standard, 14 May 1864, 3.
6 Ibid.
refined product, the best lined and bound with silk, which was produced with slimmer needles and finer yarn; the resulting close texture was more akin to woollen cloth than the board-like stiffness of the original bonnets. Knitting was still largely done by hand, but in 1840 the introduction of knitting machines was described as a development of recent years, and the latest innovation was said to be a circular machine capable of producing complete caps in 1-2½ minutes. By the early years of this century the hand-knitting of bonnets was little more than a memory, although, at least in Stewarton, the making of them by machine methods is still in progress today.

1 Kilmarnock Standard, 19 June 1880, 3.
2 The Tape Industry of Stewarton...Interesting Lecture by ex-'rovost Jackie', Ardrossan and Saltcoats Herald, 4 April 1913.
In previous chapters the appearance of knitted woollen goods, particularly stockings, among Scottish exports from about 1600, has been linked with the bonnet-makers who established themselves in central and eastern Scotland, and in Ayrshire, from the late fifteenth century onwards. Although by the Restoration there are signs that some of their trade was beginning to pass into other hands, the bonnet-makers must still have been responsible for the bulk of the 'Hose, Bonnets and Bucks of woole made in Leith Wynd, Dundee and other places in this kingdome' and 'the mittens called woven mittens', which are mentioned in the revised book of rates aproved by Parliament in 1661. The garments made by the bonnet-makers were characterised by the use of coarse wool in the making and heavy waulking in the finishing, and the judgement that 'the finished products were nearly always cheap and crude' is probably as justifiable in this case as in that of the other textiles manufactured in Scotland during the seventeenth century.

In consequence, it is all the more remarkable that by 1747 the writer of a discourse on trades and professions could describe Scotland, and in particular Aberdeen, as the producer of the best handknitted stockings in Europe; the finest, at anything up to £4 sterling per pair, were the

1 ANS, vii, 252-3.
product of many hours of labour and, he considered, too costly for everyday wear. Although the work was printed in London the name of the author is Campbell, so there may be a suspicion of national bias. Even so, this is but one instance of the reputation for high-quality knitwear which Scotland has continued to enjoy to the present day. It is certain that these finer stockings were not produced by bonnetmakers, since by the early eighteenth century those in the principal centres of the craft were all specialising in the manufacture of headgear. The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to chart the spread of the handknitting industry in Scotland, outside the ranks of the bonnetmakers; the exception is the special case of Shetland which will be dealt with separately in the following chapter.

To take Aberdeen, the example cited by Campbell, the manufacture of stockings on a sufficient scale to allow export can be traced back to 1627, when the product of bullion duty on hose shipped out from the burgh first appears in the Exchequer Rolls. The stockings were mainly bound for the Baltic, but at this stage the trade was very small, and no more than a minor adjunct to that in plaiding, fish and so on: starting as just a few dozen pairs, it rose to 5,250 pairs in 1631, and, perhaps affected by the Bishops' Wars, had dropped again to five dozen by 1639.

1 R. Campbell, The London Tradesman: Being a Compendious View of All the Trades, Professions, Arts (London 1747), 215.
3 Ibid., 227.
Thomas Tucker's report of 1656 makes no mention of the making of stockings in Aberdeen (or anywhere else in Scotland for that matter) - perhaps by comparison with plaiding, which was produced in the surrounding district 'in a greater plenty than any other place in the nation whatsoever', it was too small to merit his attention - yet by the 1660s it was described as one of the principal commodities of trade in the burgh, and was the subject of petitions to Parliament for its protection and regulation.

The subsequent development of the Aberdeen stocking trade has been examined by Dr Grant, and more recently, in greater detail, by Mr Barnes. Both writers concluded that, like plaiding, the stocking industry there was based on imported as well as locally-produced wool. But whereas the demand for plaiding had slumped by 1700, and did not recover, that in stockings survived the vicissitudes of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries; in 1714, although depleted, stocking exports from Aberdeen were still going to destinations in Norway, Holland, Portugal, Spain and Germany. The great days of the industry came in the second half of the eighteenth century when the foreign exports of worsted stockings rose from just under 220,000 pairs in 1743, to a peak of 910,320 in

1 Report by Thomas Tucker...1656', Miscellany of the E.S.I. (1881), 22-3.
2 John Gordon, Description of Aberdeen (1661), quoted in G. Surrere, Antiquarian Gleanings from Aberdeenshire Records (1881).
6 Ibid., 80-1.
1973. Thereafter, affected in the short term by the Napoleonic War, and in the long term by increasing competition from the stocking frame (and despite attempts to diversify into fishermen's jerseys, bonnets and so on) the handknitted hosiery trade in the area went into decline.

From the viewpoint of the present study, the interest of the Aberdeen stocking industry is that from an early stage it was not just the prerogative of a small group of craftsmen. The origins of the stockings exported from Aberdeen in the late 1620s and the 1630s cannot be known for certain, but it is most unlikely that they were produced by bonnetmakers. Although there was a distinct group of bonnetmakers in the burgh in the early 1600s, this is not so later, and there is no evidence for the presence of more than the occasional member of the craft at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The 'boothoys maker' who became a trade burgess of the burgh in 1646 was presumably a craftsman of comparable nature, but it is evident that he was not one of a large group as his admission was 'in respect of the few number of the said trade'. The description of these early exported stockings was not boot hose, as

1 Ibid., 77 and fig. 1.
2 Ibid., 91; Grant, op. cit., 263-9. It seems to have been about this time, when the use of the knitting frame for a variety of goods was growing rapidly, that the term hosiery was extended to cover not only socks and stockings, but other knitted goods as well: for example, writing about the activities of Messrs. Sadden and Co. of Aberdeen, commented 'besides stockings, they make rocks, mitts, and all sorts of hosiery'; History of Aberdeen, ii (1912), 150-1.
3 See Ch. IV.
4 'Aberdeen Burgess Register', New Spalding Club Misc., ii, 41.
was often the case with the products of bonnetmakers, but 'white woolen shanks'. The distinction may be significant, because although a list of the inhabitants of Old Aberdeen compiled in 1636 makes no mention of bonnetmakers, it does include several women whose occupation is given as 'shanker'\(^1\), that is, stocking knitter\(^2\). Seven years later, there is a further reference to women knitters in Aberdeen: an agreement of 1643, between Elspet Gilchryst on the one hand, and William Drumther and Jean 'Lawkart' on the other, records that 'Jean Lawkart sall learn the said Elspet Gilchryst to wyff schankis and that during the space of sevin yeires'\(^3\).

The evidence from the first part of the seventeenth century is perhaps too small for certainty, but by the end of the century it is beyond doubt that in Aberdeen the knitting of stockings for sale had become a domestic craft practised, in the main, by women. In 1705 the writer of a pamphlet mentioned Aberdeen as the place 'where great increase of profit arose from the industry of both poor and rich women by one stone of wool, first in spinning, and then in knitting it into fine stockings....'\(^4\). About the same time, the text of a pro-Union tract indicates

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\(^1\) Scottish Notes and Queries, vii (1893), 2 and 21.
\(^2\) O.D., s.v. shanker.
\(^3\) Anro, Records of Old Aberdeen, i, 74.
\(^4\) Report to the Board of Agriculture for Scotland on Home Industries in the Highlands and Islands (1914), 10; hereafter cited as Report on Home Industries.
that 'the peer: thank workers and spinners of
Aberdeen and places thereabout', who were supposedly its
authors, were all female\(^1\). Or was the industry limited to
Aberdeen itself: according to an account published in
1683, it had recently been greatly improved by one George
Pyper who, apart from employing 400 women to knit and
spin, had encouraged 'the country people' to produce fine
stockings 'by giving them a little money, or some lining
at times, that from five groats the pair he caused them to
work such a finness that he had given twenty [shillings]
sterling upward for the pair'\(^2\).

As one of the few means of obtaining ready money\(^3\),
the knitting of stockings appears to have become an important
part of the rural economy in the hinterland of
Aberdeen. According to General Rae (1745):

> The manufacture here is chiefly of stockings of which
> they make vast quantities all round the adjacent
country. And every morning the women bring in loads
to sell about the town to merchants, who have them
scoured for exportation to London, Hamburg, and
Holland. They are generally all white from the maker
and knit mostly plain, some ribbed and a great many
with squares which greatly please the Dutch\(^4\).

Just how far 'the adjacent country' extended is not clear,
but about the same time, people in the rural area as far
north as Cullen, were being offered inducements to bring
stockings to the local market, and in 1769 Pennant found

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1 Northern Notes and Queries, xii (1697-8), 101-5.
2 Philopoliteus, A Succinct Survey of the Famous City of
Aberdeen (1685) quoted in Barnes, op.cit., 77-8.
3 Grant, op.cit., 279.
women knitting stockings to supplement the family income as far inland as Braemar; in 1760, on reaching Inverbervie, Bishop Cockerell commented "here the linen manufacture begins and the woollen of stockings ends: the linen manufacture of the north being mostly of linen yarn brought from Banff and sent to Nottingham". By the late eighteenth century Aberdeen merchants were acquiring stockings from the whole north-east corner of Scotland south to Stonehaven. Primarily, the knitting was done by the female members of a family as a means of paying the rent, but in addition it was, as one local historian in eulogistic mood expressed it, "a never failing source of employment to the young and aged of every description, to the deaf and the dumb and even to those who were bedridden or disabled from other kind of work.

Impressive as was the progress of the Aberdeen stocking trade in the eighteenth century, it was also exceptional, and attempts to develop the hosiery industry in Scotland in general seem to have met with less success. Although since the sixteenth century there had been a desire, based on mercantilist ideas, to improve Scotland's manufactures, and in particular its textile products, it was not until the Restoration period that attention was

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2. Pococke, Tours in Scotland (Eds. 1847), 212.
4. Ibid., xv, 115.
directed to knitting. In 1661 an act was passed with the aim of 'establishing Companies and societies for making linning, cloth stuffs etc.' Among the commodities the production of which it was considered desirable to encourage, were stockings - not the coarse woollen products of the bonnetmakers but those made of worsted, that is, of combed wool which is capable of being spun into a smooth fine yarn. As inducements, companies which undertook to produce such goods were to have freedom from duty on both materials and finished products, and special privileges for skilled workers introduced from abroad; in addition, it was stipulated 'that there be in each paroche one or more persons provided and appointed upon the charge of the heritors thereof for instructing of the poore children, vagabonds and other idlers to fine and mix wool, spin worsted and knit stockings'. In theory this last clause was to be prosecuted by the commissioners of shires who were to call together the heritors in their respective areas to elect an organising committee for each parish. There is, however, no more evidence now than fifty years ago, when I.F. Dean published her work on Scottish spinning schools, that it was ever put into practice.

Twenty years on, the Scottish Parliament passed a further measure designed to improve native products - the 1681 'Act for Encouraging Trade and Manufactories'. This

1 APS, vii, 255-6.
2 I.F. Dean, Scottish Spinning Schools, 49-50.
3 APS, viii, 848-9.
sought to provide protection by prohibiting the importation of a variety of goods, including both silk and woollen stockings. At least in the case of silk stockings, the instigators of the act were almost certainly thinking not of handknitted woollen, but of fine goods made upon the knitting frames which by this time were in widespread use in England. In general, frameknitting is outside the scope of this study, but a brief account of its appearance in Scotland is included here for the sake of clarity.

One of the companies formed in the wake of the 1681 act was the ill-fated enterprise at New Mills in east Lothian. Set up primarily to produce fine woollen cloth, it also ventured into frameknitting. Frames are first mentioned in the company’s records in May 1683 when four ‘silk stocken frames’ were bought from Sir James Stanfield; other frames were brought from London and the west of England. At first a variety of silk stockings were made, striped as well as plain, but worsted stockings were tried in 1684, and silk gloves later the same year. The records suggest that the venture was never very successful; production was in small quantities, there were labour problems, and it was difficult to obtain enough orders to keep the frames in work; in the case of the worsted stockings, yarn of the requisite quality was hard to come by in Scotland. In practice, the legislation to

2 The Records of a Scottish Cloth Manufactory at New Mills, Haddingtonshire: 1661-1703 (11).
3 Ibid., 22.
4 Ibid., 63.
5 Ibid., 78.
6 Ibid., 99.
exclude imports apear to have provided little protection, and it is an indication of the extent to which the 1681 act was disregarded, and foreign products preferred, that one of those who was prosecuted for importing silk stockings was actually a member of the New Mills Company\(^1\). After only five years it was decided to auction the frames\(^2\).

The failure of the experiment at New Mills did not mark the demise of frameknitting in Scotland. There is evidence that both frames and knitters removed to Edinburgh\(^3\), and in 1698 a stocking-frame maker who had come to the city was admitted a burrress without charge 'in respect there is none of his art can make these frames and that the incorporation of hammermen has condescended to admit him freeman gratis'\(^4\). By the mid eighteenth century, if not before, there were frameknitters in the Aberdeen area\(^5\), and by 1756 the craft was sufficiently well-established in Glasgow for the formation of the Incorporation of Stocking-makers and for its official recognition by the burgh council\(^6\). Even so, on current evidence, numbers

\(^1\) Ibid., 116.
\(^2\) Ibid., 189.
\(^3\) Oliver, 'Framework Knitting in Scotland', Trans Hawick Arch. Soc. (1969), 21; one of the workmen from New Mills, John Burton, appears in the Register of Deeds (Orn. Office, vol. 72) in 1690 as 'framework knitter in weller in Edinburgh'.
\(^4\) Ibid., 159 s.v. Mathew Downing.
\(^5\) Arnes, op. cit., 92; the earlier evidence is difficult to interpret, as in view of the widespread use in the North-east of the term weaver to denote knitting in general, it cannot be assumed that references to a stocking weaver necessarily imply a frameknitter.
\(^6\) Oliver, op. cit., 22.
were so small that it may reasonably be supposed that frameknitting did not begin to make a significant contribution to the Scottish hosiery industry until well into the latter part of the eighteenth century.

To return to the subject of legislation concerning the hosiery trade, in 1701 there was another move to protect the woollen industry: among the items covered by the 'Act Dischargeing the Importation and bearing of foreign woollen manufactures' were woollen caps, stockings and gloves. As it happened, the act was nullified by the Union of 1707, but thirteen years later Parliament (in London, that is) passed a measure 'for Ascertaining the breadths and Preventing Frauds and Abuses in Manufacturing Serges, Plaidings and Fingrums, and for Regulating the Manufactures of Stockings in that part of Great Britain called Scotland'. The clauses on stockings laid down that they should be 'wrought and made of Three Threads and of one sort of wool and worsted, and of equal work and fineness throughout, free of left loops, hanging bails [sic], and of burnt, cutted and wended Holes'; stockings for men, women, and children had to conform to specific measurements, and to be inspected by the dean of guild in the appropriate burgh and stamped as approved before they could be sold.

Although by 1720 the stocking industry in Scotland was

1 APS, x, 275-7.
2 Statutes at Large, v, s.v. 6 Geo. II c.13.
of sufficient significance to merit the attention of Parliament, it is questionable just how widespread it was at this time. It is true that stockings, which in 1676 had been described as not being 'a commoditie that frequently vends at the staple port', had by 1696 been added to the list of staple goods which were exported through Campvere. These, however, may well have been accounted for largely by those shipped out from Aberdeen, with some from Leith, which was exporting worsted stockings in some thousands of pairs a year by the end of the seventeenth century. The only other area of mainland Scotland in which the stocking industry appears to have been of any importance at this period is Ayrshire. In Kilmarnock, in the early eighteenth century, the making of the old heavily willed and dressed stockings, formerly a monopoly of the bonnet-makers, was still in progress, and attempts were being made to improve the standard. In November 1725 officials were appointed for the stamping of stockings, as instructed by the act of 1720, and four years later the burgh council issued a further set of regulations including 'that none of the said stockings shall be accounted sufficient that are woven upon the bonnet-makers' pricks'; in addition, there is for the first time a reference to another product - 'unlaid stockings for women' - which was presumably a finer, perhaps white, stocking of the type made in

1 J. Davidson and A. Gray, The Scottish Staple at Vere, 357.
2 Barnes, op. cit., 90.
3 See ch. III.
4 J. Paterson, History of the County of Ayr, ii, 154-6.
So far the evidence for the extent of the Scottish hosiery trade has, of necessity, been gathered piecemeal, but from the 1770s comes an attempt, perhaps the first, at a country-wide view. The writer was David Loch, an ardent protagonist of the native woollen industry, who in 1776 had undertaken a tour through Scotland with the aim of providing a report on manufactures, particularly those of textiles, for the Board of Trustees. Two years later, the results were published in the form of a place-by-place account. Loch’s findings concerning the production of hosiery (summarised in table 1) are not exhaustive, and there are some strange omissions, not the least of which is Glasgow. Even so, it is reasonable to suppose that the picture he gives is in essence correct. Loch had a particular interest in the subject, and believed in the suitability of Scottish wool for making stockings, and in the potential ability of Scotland to supply not only its own needs but a substantial surplus for sale abroad. By way of confirmation, the outlines provided by Loch generally coincide with those provided by the Statistical Account less than twenty years later.

The first impression gained from Loch’s Tour, and his other works, is that in terms of products the Scottish

1 Ibid., 156; 2 ‘[gives ‘unlaid’, when applied to wool, as meaning untreated with tar and preservative.]’
2 Loch, A Tour Through Most of the Trading Towns and Villages of Scotland.
3 D. Loch, Letters concerning the Trade and Manufactures of Scotland, 3.
N.E. Scotland

Cullen
Banff, Portsoy & Fochabers

Tnately

Buth & Old Deer

Aberdeen

Johnshaven & Inverbervie

Stonehaven

Laurencekirk

Central Scotland

Aberdour & St Davids

Kinghorn

Edinburgh & Leith

Linlithgow

Stirling

Borders

Fawick

S. Scotland

Ayr and Irvine

Kilmarnock

Dumfries

Sanquhar

8 stocking frames
stocking thread for Nottingham
hosiery industry
silk stockings, garters, mitts
and breeches-pieces
stocking knitting, the main
industry
stockings worth £120,000 dealt
with annually
some stocking knitting
extensive stocking knitting
stockings (hand & frameknitted);
'stocking suits' and broad lace

thread and worsted stockings
thread stockings
stocking frames 'increasing
daily'
9 stocking frames
30 stocking frames

6 stocking frames

25 stocking frames
quantities of woollen stockings,
nightcaps & bonnets;
6 stocking frames
10 stocking frames making
worsted, thread & silk stock-
ings & gloves
quantities of good quality hand-
knitted stockings;
5 stocking frames

Table 1. The Scottish Hosiery Industry c.1776: summarised
from Lock's Tour.
### N.E. Scotland

**Aberdeenshire**
- Hosiery worth £20,000 per annum, in decline

### Central Scotland

**Alloa**
- Yarns for hosiery & shawls

### Borders

**Hawick**
- 900 frames producing hosiery worth £130,000 per annum, utilizing 1,000,000 lbs wool, plus other fibres

### S.W. Scotland

**Kilmarnock, Stewarton & Kilmarnocks**
- (Handknitted) bonnets & caps worth £146,500 per annum

### Dumfries & district

**Dumfries & district**
- 500 frames producing stockings, underclothing & fancy goods

### Highlands

**Inverness and area**
- Handknitted hosiery & shawls

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**Table 2. The Scottish Hosiery Industry c.1669: summarised from Bremner.**
Hosiery industry was making progress. There were goods of thread and silk as well as those of wool, attention was being paid to the production of suitable yarn, and although Loch's comment that stocking frames had been introduced 'throughout every part of Scotland' was, by his own evidence, a considerable exaggeration, they were indeed to be found in a number of areas. Geographically, however, it is remarkable how little the industry had moved beyond the areas in which it had been carried on by the bonnetmakers. There had, of course, been expansion in the North-East and, to a lesser extent, in the South-West (although even this latter development was implied to have been recent), but vast areas of the country were apparently untouched by the industry. In the Borders for instance, Loch noted the introduction of a few stocking frames to Hawick which, as it proved, were the beginnings of a rapidly growing manufacture of frameknitted hosiery (see Table 2). On the other hand, there is no indication that this had been preceded by the utilisation of part of the abundant local crop of wool for an equivalent manufacture of handknitted goods. To the contrary, Loch was scathing about those in the area of the Tweed who had 'not had penetration enough to avail themselves of what nature has given them as the greatest blessing' (that is, wool), when they might have been turning it into knitted stockings, and flannel. More

1 D. Loch, Essays on the Trade, Commerce and Fisheries of Scotland, i, 168-9.
2 Loch, Tour, 40; Essays, i, 181.
3 Loch, Tour, 49-50.
notable still, is the exclusion of most of North and West Scotland, the bulk, in fact, of the Highlands and Islands.

In the middle of the next century David Bremner commented on the ready market found by the handknitted hosiery and shawls which he described as being among 'the woollen manufactures indigenous to the Highlands'¹, but no hint of this is to be found in Loch. It therefore remains to be seen when and how this Highland section of the hosiery industry came into being.

Efforts to establish the making of hosiery in the Highlands can first be traced in the eighteenth century, as part of what has been described as 'a great movement for extending to the Highlands the industrial activities that were transforming Lowland Scotland'². In the forefront of this movement was the Board of Trustees for Manufactures, which had been set up in 1727 in fulfilment of a clause in the Treaty of Union stipulating that each year a sum be spent on improving fisheries and manufactures in Scotland³. Initially though, the board's interest in textiles was largely in linen cloth and thread. In consequence, the schools established by the Board in the Highlands (and elsewhere) to provide technical instruction, were more concerned with the dressing and spinning of flax than with knitting⁴.

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¹ D. Bremner, The Industries of Scotland, 213.
² Dean, op.cit., 119.
³ Bremner, op.cit., 216.
⁴ Dean, op.cit., 61-4.
Another force for improvement in the Highlands was the Board of Annexed Estates which was appointed to administer the property of Jacobites, sequestered after the Forty-Five. A similar project earlier in the century - to fund public works by the sale of estates forfeited after the 1715 rising - had come to grief, but in this later scheme the Commissioners were instructed to continue the running of the estates, the profits from which would be used for:

- the purposes of Civilising the Inhabitants upon the said Estates and other Parts of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, the promoting amongst them the Protestant Religion, Good Government, Industry and manufactures, and the principles of Duty and Loyalty to His Majesty.

The main instrument of the 'civilising' process was to be the establishment of schools. These were to teach not only the reading and writing of English, but also the rudiments of trades and agriculture - as a remedy for the 'idleness' of the inhabitants.

Among the manufactures the introduction of which was intended to convert a rebellious population into dutiful and useful subjects, was knitting. In 1752 the newly-appointed factor of the Cromarty and Loyal estates adjured the tenants to 'conduct themselves by obeying the laws, applying themselves to agriculture, manufactures, the education of their children in the Protestant religion, and to speak and read English, knit stockings etc.'

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1 A Selection of Scottish Forfeited Estates Papers 1715: 1745 (CUL).
2 Dean, op. cit., 76.
3 Ibid.
4 Forfeited Estates Papers, 76.
Similarly, in 1766 Archibald Lenzies, General Inspector to the Board, recommended that all schools on the annexed estates should have a practical as well as academic aspect because:

If the boys were so many hours in the day employed in knitting stockings or any other branches of manufacture that, when grown up, would employ them in the winter evenings, it would be a great advantage to the country, as it would employ a great deal of time now spent in lounging about the fireside.

As early as 1751, the wife of the schoolmaster in the Kannonch area, on the estate of Robertson of Strowan, was teaching the boys to knit stockings, and within three years it was reported that seven new schools had been erected on the estate, and that the pupils numbered over 350 'instructed not only to read, but some of them to spin and knit stockings'. A little later (1756), the factor of the estate of Perth, vexed by the sight of children who 'strolled about the streets' of Crieff when they might have been usefully employed, recommended the establishment of a spinning school there, and the appointment of an instructor competent to teach stocking knitting. It appears that his hope was fulfilled, as a letter to the Commissioners, dated 1775, from Ketty Drummond, schoolmistress in Crieff, lists 'nitting of stockings which is one of the easiest branches of education' among the subjects she was engaged in teaching.

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1 Reports on the Annexed Estates 1755-1769 (V.C.S.), 89.
2 Forfeited Estates Papers, 224.
3 Annexed Estates, 42.
4 Source: Exchequer Records: Forfeited Estates Papers, E 777/103/5.
The Board of Annexed Estates was not alone in its efforts to teach knitting in the Highlands. In 1733 the Society in Scotland for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge had received a second charter, which permitted the enlargement of the scope of its work, and in the 1750s the society began in earnest to provide technical as well as academic instruction in its schools. Again the emphasis was primarily on the spinning of flax, but knitting was also taught. In 1756, for instance, having heard that the wife of the schoolmaster at Laggan was well qualified and had been in use of instructing children at the said school in knitting and spinning, the Society agreed to pay her 6d. a quarter for every child so instructed, provided that each of them also spent three hours a day on reading, writing and arithmetic. Help was also forthcoming from some owners of Highland estates. Mrs Mackenzie of Seaforth, for example, supported an English school on Lewis, and was responsible for the setting up of a number of others there, all for the teaching of spinning and knitting. In addition, the newly-formed Highland Society in 1785 offered a gold medal to the proprietor who:

shall have brought and settled on his estate a person properly qualified to prepare the wool...and teach the knitting of stockings of the same, after the Aberdeen or Shetland method or both; and on whose estate the greatest quantity shall be made.

1 J. Mason, A History of Scottish Experiments in Rural Education, 3-38; ibid., op. cit., 113.
2 ibid., op. cit., 115.
3 FSA, xix, 243-4, 278, 363.
4 Scots Magazine, xlvi (1785), 107.
Although there is plentiful evidence for the promotion of the teaching of knitting, especially stockings, in the Highlands and Islands during the second half of the eighteenth century, the efficacy of these exertions is less certain. Firstly, it may have been some time before knitting was widely adopted there as a domestic occupation. Mention has been made in a previous chapter of the retention of cloth stockings in some areas beyond 1700, particularly for Highland dress\(^1\), and indeed it is evident that they were still in use over a century later. The case of the inhabitants of remote St Kilda, who may not have taken to knitting until the 1860s\(^2\), is, perhaps, exceptional, but as late as the 1790s the women of Comrie, by no means the most inaccessible part of the Highlands, are mentioned as the producers of a considerable quantity of tartan of which they make plaids and hose, partly for home use and partly for the market\(^3\). Interestingly, cloth stockings remained a standard part of the uniform of some of the Highland regiments into the 1820s\(^4\), although whether they were retained because the recruits were already accustomed to wearing them, or simply through military conservatism, is another matter.

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1 See ch. II.
2 T. Steel, The Life and Death of St Kilda, 114.
3 R.A., xi, 182.
A second point is that the adoption of knitting in the home did not necessarily result in a surplus for export from the area. It is probable, for instance, that by the 1770s the inhabitants of Coll were familiar with knitting; for Boswell commented on the industrious manner in which they produced clothes and stockings for their own needs from flax and wool grown on the island. Twenty years later, however, the minister mentioned stocking knitting not as an already existing industry in his heavily-populated parish, but as one that might be tried because the materials, that is wool, would be easy to import. It was not by this time that there was any lack of sheep in the Highlands taken as a whole. In the later decades of the eighteenth century it had become clear, as W. H. Scott expressed it, 'that linen would not be the industrial salvation of the Highlands', and by 1800 extensive sheep walks, the product of a renewed interest in wool growing, had already been established. Rather, it was that the hoped-for wool-based industries had not automatically followed on the increase in sheep farming in the Highlands. Writing his report for the Statistical Account, the minister of Inverness, for example, commented on the need for a navigable canal to Fort William, which would open up large areas then occupied only by sheep, and allow the establishment of woollen manufactures. About the same time,

1 J. Boswell, The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides, 290.
2 RSA, x, 407.
4 RSA, ix, 407.
a similar thought had occurred to Lettice, who visited Fort William during his tour through Scotland:

There are many extensive sheep farms in this country, and it is thought that the situation of Fort William might answer well to the establishment of a woollen manufacture....This situation, which serves at present only for the convenience of exporting the raw material, might be adapted to the exportation of stockings, and coarse woollen cloths. The population of the neighbourhood too would be much augmented and bear a more creditable proportion to the sheep, its present chief occupants 1.

It may be that already families in the Highlands and Islands, as was later the case, were supplementing their income by bartering or selling stockings, knitted from the wool of their own sheep, to local merchants or chapmen 2. Yet if this was so it was not on a sufficient scale to have attracted the notice of the contributors to the Statistical Account. In general, the impression gained from their comments is that knitting had not yet joined fishing, kelp-making, and the sale of black cattle, as a means by which the bulk of the rural population in the Highlands obtained money to pay the rent or buy items which could not be produced on the croft.

From the above it may reasonably be concluded that these first efforts to extend the hosiery industry to the Highlands went largely unrewarded. Indeed it is not until the advent of the Home Industries movement, well into the nineteenth century, that traces of an organised trade become discernible. The beginnings lay in the efforts of

1 I.Lettice, Letter on a Tour through various Parts of Scotland in the Year 1792, 331.
2 See below, also appendix 2.
individuals, from the late 1830s onwards, to relieve the sufferings of the Highland population beset by the combined effects of pressure on land, a recession in the kelp industry, and failures in the potato crop which, for many families, had become the basis of subsistence. A favourite remedy was to encourage, or if necessary instigate, the production of goods such as hosiery on a domestic basis, and to find a market for the results, thus providing an alternative form of income.

A notable instance of a localised industry begun in this way is that of stocking knitting in the west-coast parish of Gairloch in Ross-shire. The origins of the industry are to be found no earlier than 1837 when Lady Mackenzie of Gairloch had twelve young women there instructed in 'knitting nice stockings with dice and other fancy patterns'. Later, in response to distress caused by the famine of 1846-6, this was taken a stage further: the women of the community were taught not only how to knit appropriate patterns, but the best way to spin and dye the yarn. Initially it was necessary for the work to be closely superintended, and customers found, but in due course the stockings became sufficiently well thought of.

2 J. Dixon, *Gairloch, and Guide to Loch Maree* (Edinburgh 1896), 130; I am grateful to Mrs H. S. Macdonald of Gairloch Heritage Museum for her advice on this subject.
3 Moss et al., loc. cit., 4.
for local merchants to become involved and, eventually, to supply the women with yarn and exchange the finished stockings for goods. A variety of stockings were made, including plain ribbed, but best known were the elaborately patterned hose for men—figured, perhaps, with stag's heads, or with an overall tartan design incorporating many colours. By the 1880s the stockings were being sent in some quantities to Inverness, Edinburgh and London, as well as being sold locally to tourists, and they were still popular early this century when the women of the parish were reckoned to earn £500 a year by their knitting.

Similar work to encourage the making of hosiery as a home industry is recorded elsewhere. In the Hebrides, success in popularising Harris tweed was followed in 1857 by the establishment of stocking and embroidery industries on Harris. It was not that the islanders had to be taught how to knit, but rather how to make stockings of a form and standard which would be acceptable to an outside market.

A charitably-minded visitor found buyers for these goods in Edinburgh and London, and at one stage the Harris knitters were estimated to number 400, supplying orphanages and the London police as well as private customers; in the meantime, patrons had extended the industry to Skye (1877) and South Uist (1882). On St Kilda, by 1877 the women could

1 Ibid.
2 Ibid., 85-6.
3 Dixon, op. cit., 130.
4 ... olson, Fairloch and Easter Ross (Dingwall and Strathpeffer n.d., c.1907), 36.
5 Ross et al., op. cit., 71, 75-6.
be described as expert knitters, and sold stockings, gloves and scarves to the passengers of vessels which called at the island.  

On the other side of the country, in 1849 an 'Industrial Society' with its headquarters at Golspie was formed under the patronage of Harriet, Duchess of Sutherland. The following year an exhibition and sale of crofters' work was held, and among the exhibits wereblanketing, plaids, tartans and other woollen cloths, and 'thirty lots of plain and fancy stockings, socks, hose and mitts'. The sale was sufficiently successful to become, for a while, an annual event, and to attract the attention of dealers. One such was Donald Macougall of Inverness who won a gold medal at the Great Exhibition of 1851 for his exhibit of 'hosiery knitted by Scotch peasants' and his work to 'create habits of self-dependence and a love of labour amongst the peasantry of the Highlands of Scotland'.

According to the report of the jury, the merchant drew his stock from both Argyll and Ross-shire, and paid between £300 and £500 a year for knitted socks alone; furthermore, it was claimed that 'all this class of products are exported to Hong Kong, Shanghai, and other distant parts, at from 12s. to 24s. per dozen pairs, besides being used in Scotland itself somewhat extensively'.

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1 F. Thompson, Harris and Lewis (Newton Abbott 1968), 190; Scott, op. cit., 79, 132.
2 Ross et al., op. cit., 92-4.
3 The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations: Reports by the Juries (London 1852), 488.
4 Ibid.
Despite the initial success of some of these home industries, the basis of their existence was, at best, fragile. In terms of price and quantity it was increasingly difficult to compete with factory-made goods, and in general their market depended on that section of society for whom price was less important than the individuality of the hand-made item. The quality of the goods was therefore of considerable importance, and constant vigilance was needed to maintain standards and to ensure that products met current taste. There was a tendency for the industries to decline when patrons died, or lost interest, and a further difficulty was that where goods were sold through local merchants, the workers often became involved in truck. In 18-9, to deal with these problems, the Scottish Home Industries Association was set up. There were branches all over Scotland, and their aims were to assist in the marketing of the products of home industries, including by selling through their own London depot, to improve the quality of goods, and to ensure that the makers received a fair return. About the same time, the Highland Home Industries and Arts Association was founded: its purpose was to provide workers with the opportunity to sell their goods and compete for premiums, through the medium of exhibitions.

1 Loss et al., op. cit., 1-2.
2 Ibid., 82.
3 Report on Home Industries, 42.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid., 43-4.
By 1914 W.R. Scott was able to report the existence of knitting industries in most areas of the Highlands and Islands, producing mainly socks and stockings but also items such as handknitted sports coats for women\(^1\). Even so, in terms of the Scottish hosiery trade as a whole, output was very small. It was calculated that the wholesale value of the tweed, hosiery and basket work from the Highlands and Islands sold on the open market in 1911 was £121,215, but of this by far the largest proportion came from sales of tweed, and with the exception of £30,390 from Shetland hosiery and rugs, the contribution made by hand-knitted goods to this total was minimal\(^2\). Similarly, although the census returns for hosiery workers in the Highlands and Islands included 5,386 individuals in 1901, and 3,100 in 1911, all but a few dozen of these were in Orkney and Shetland\(^3\). Nonetheless, as Scott pointed out, there was a very large output of hosiery not included in these figures - namely that made by women for clothing their own families - the value of which was beyond estimation\(^4\).

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1. Ibid., 102-3.
2 Ibid., 53-4.
3 Ibid., 204.
4 Ibid., 102.
CHAPTER VII

SHETLAND

So far the examination of handknitting in Scotland has, in general, been confined to events on the mainland, and only passing reference has been made to that area which is still the most closely associated with the making of hand-knitted goods - namely, Shetland. The Shetland section of the industry has been reserved for separate consideration because, for both historical and geographical reasons, it seems to have developed quite independently of that in the rest of Scotland. Although after 1469 the hundred or more islands which make up Shetland ceased to be part of the kingdom of Norway and, along with those of Orkney, were annexed to the Scottish crown, the Shetlanders continued to look east to Scandinavia rather than south to Britain; well into the eighteenth century trade with the Continent was of much greater significance than that with England and Scotland. Despite its position far out towards Norway, Shetland cannot be regarded as isolated, indeed in seafaring terms it could be described as something of a northern European crossroads. Yet, viewed from Scotland, the islands seemed remote and of little significance, and it is probably no accident that neither Loch, in his account of the manufactures of Scotland, based on his tour

A domestic knitter, c. 1926: Mrs Sandison of Balta Sound, Unst (NMAS)
of 1776, nor Bremner, in his 1869 summary of the hosiery trade, felt it necessary to make any reference to the Shetland contribution (although there were others on the mainland, such as Sibbald, with a general interest in Shetland).

The earliest references to handknitting in Shetland come from the second decade of the seventeenth century. According to an entry in a court book for October 1615, Mans and Olav Jeillisones of Huisetter were accused of having stolen a black ewe from Marioun in Stove two years before, and having 'made ane pair of sockis of the woll thairof'. From about the same period there is the comment of Richard James, from whom we have the first recorded account in English of the Northern Isles, that the women of Shetland were greatly 'given to knittinge mittens and stockings which the Hollanders and English doe buy for raritie'. Yet, even though the practice of knitting was sufficiently well-established by this time to provide the surplus for trade, its earlier history in the islands remains obscure. The bulk of written evidence for Shetland post-dates 1600, and the isolated documents and casual

1 D. Loch, A Tour through Most of the Trading Towns and Villages of Scotland; Loch was, however, aware of knitting in Shetland, as in his Letters Concerning the Trades and Manufactures of Scotland, 3-4, he mentioned both the trade in coarse stockings between Shetland and Hamburg, and his high opinion of the suitability of Shetland wool for stocking knitting.
4 R. James, 'Description of Shetland, Orkney and the Highlands of Scotland', Orkney Misc., i (1953), 50.
references which are all that is available for the years before \(^1\), throw no light on the period or manner of the introduction of the technique. Nor are the material remains more helpful: the only example of knitting from Shetland which may possibly belong before 1600 is the fragment from Papa Stour, which cannot yet be securely dated\(^2\).

In the absence of any contemporary account of the introduction of knitting to Shetland all that can be done is to examine likely possibilities. There is a popular belief that the inhabitants of Fair Isle were taught the coloured-pattern knitting to which the island has given its name, by sailors from the Armada, stranded there in 1588. On historical grounds alone this must be regarded with the greatest reserve, as the tradition is not recorded until nearly three centuries after the event. It is true that the wreck of El Gran Grifon is referred to in the section on Fair Isle in the Statistical Account of the 1790s\(^3\), and also in earlier writings on Shetland such as that published by Sibbald\(^4\), but it is not until the middle of the nineteenth century that the event is linked in any way with textiles. Some knitted garments from Fair Isle were shown at the Great Exhibition of 1851, and it was explained in the catalogue that 'the art of dyeing wool is

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1 G. Donaldson, Shetland Life under Earl Patrick, 1-15.
2 See ch. 11.
3 FSA, vii, 396.
4 R. Sibbald, Description of the Isles of Orknay and Shetland, 10.
considered to have been taught them by the Spaniards wrecked there after the dispersion of the "Invincible Armada"; it seems that the idea was then transferred to the knitting itself, for in 1886 the following were exhibited in Edinburgh:

Cowls, Caps, Comforters, Gloves and Stockings, knitted by the natives of Fair Isle who were taught the curious patterns and colours by the survivors of the Spanish Armada Flagship which was wrecked there in 1588.

If this belief had been current earlier it would surely have been mentioned by a writer such as Arthur Edmondston, a native of the islands, who in 1809 published a detailed two-volume account of the history and current state of Shetland. In view of this silence it is safer to regard the tradition as the result of a late attempt to account for certain similarities between Fair Isle patterns and those found on the Continent.

Another view of the origins of Shetland knitting was put forward by the late James Norbury. He believed that the technique had been introduced to both Shetland and the Faeroes by ninth-century immigrants from Norway. As has been shown above (ch. II), this theory cannot be substantiated: there is no evidence to suggest that knitting was known anywhere in the Viking sphere, either in the ninth

3 A. Edmondston, A View of the Ancient and Present State of the Zetland Islands.
4 J. Norbury, Traditional Knitting Patterns (New York, 1973), 150.
century or for several centuries after, and there are strong indications that the craft was not practised in Scandinavia until after the Middle Ages. It is not impossible that knitting was invented independently in Shetland, but since knitting industries appeared in both England and mainland Scotland during the fifteenth century, it is equally reasonable to suppose that it arrived in Shetland as part of the gradual progress north of the knowledge of the technique. An alternative, and even more probable route of entry was through northern Germany: it appears that knitting became known there during the fourteenth century\(^1\), and since merchants from the Hanse towns were regular visitors to Shetland by the sixteenth century\(^2\), if not before, they may well have been the vehicle by which the technique was brought to the islands. But whatever the true explanation, what can be said is that while knitting in Scotland, as elsewhere in Europe, was originally in the hands of small groups of craftsmen in the burghs, this was not so in Shetland. There the bulk of the population subsisted by farming and fishing, and specialist craftsmen were still rarities even as late as the end of the eighteenth century\(^3\).

It might be questioned why knitting became established in Shetland so much earlier than in northern Scotland -

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1 See ch. I.
3 _FSA_, vii, 588.
where it was not generally adopted until the late eighteenth century. Part of the answer may lie in the nature of the local wool. According to a late seventeenth-century account of Dunrossness, there were large numbers of sheep in the parish of which 'the wool is very rough, yet of it they make the finest stuffs and stockings that you will readily find of wool, but it costs them a great deal of pains to fine it'. This becomes comprehensible in the light of the modern opinion that Shetland sheep are an intermediate between the ancient, Soay-type, sheep introduced to Europe during the Neolithic period, and the modern fine and medium white-wooled sheep. It seems that, particularly before improvement, the Shetland sheep retained the ancient characteristic of a coat composed of both fine wool and long coarse hairs: properly sorted, with the hairs eliminated, the fleeces could provide a soft wool ideal for knitting, but which was probably much less suitable for the purpose of weaving - and hence the further comment in the account of Dunrossness that the cloth produced in the parish was of poor quality and much less durable than the knitted goods.

An associated element in the ready acceptance of

1 Sibbald, op. cit., 21; although not published until 1711, Sibbald's account is actually based on earlier sources - a manuscript, dated 1633, by Robert Monteith, and information, relating to the late seventeenth century, from three ministers in Shetland.

knitting in the Northern Isles may have been the state of textile technology there. The coarse woollen cloth of daily wear, which was known as wadmal and had formerly been used in the payment of dues, may be linked with the cloth of identical name and purpose made in Iceland. Dr Hoffmann has shown that wadmal was produced on the warp-weighted (upright) loom, and that in Iceland, as elsewhere in the Viking world, this ancient loom-type had an exceptionally long period of use, continuing in some places almost into modern times; further, she has suggested that the ready adoption of knitting in Iceland and the Faeroes (as compared with Scandinavia) came about because the only other available means of processing wool was this cumbersome upright loom. There is no definite information from Shetland, but it is known that in Orkney wadmal was still being produced on the upright loom as late as the eighteenth century, so it may be that Dr Hoffmann's argument concerning the taking up of knitting is also applicable to the Northern Isles.

A third, and perhaps decisive, factor in the development of the Shetland stocking trade was the market provided during the seventeenth century by foreign merchants and fishermen. The islands were frequently visited by traders: some were Scottish and English, but of greater importance

1 Sibbald, op. cit., 21.
2 M. Hoffmann, The Warp-Weighted Loom, 221.
3 Ibid., 369 n. 113.
4 FSA, xiv, 319, 324-6.
were those, mentioned above, from the Hanseatic towns – particularly Bremen, Lubeck and Hamburg. Every year in May or June these merchants set up their booths to sell fishing tackle, liquors, foodstuffs, linen cloth and so on: their main object was to obtain the islanders' catches of fish for drying and sending to the Continent, but they also bought, or acquired by exchange, local products including stockings and gloves. Other visitors to the islands were the Dutch fishermen whose boats gathered in Bressay Sound, opposite Lerwick, every summer: they too were primarily interested in the abundant shoals of fish (in this case herring) but they continued to purchase stockings in large quantities. The account of the Rev. John Brand, who visited Shetland in 1700, notes particularly:

Stockings are also brought by the Country People from all quarters to Lerwick and sold to these Fishers, for sometimes many thousands of them will be ashore at one time, and ordinary it is with them to buy Stockins to themselves, and some likewise do to their Wives and Children; which is very beneficial to the Inhabitants....

By this time the knitting of stockings was also established in Orkney, and, as Brand goes on to mention, the demand was such that Shetlanders bought up the Orkney stock in preparation for the arrival of the fishing fleets from Holland.

Stockings continued to figure among exports during the eighteenth century, but at the same time a radical change

1 J. Brand, A New Description of Orkney, Zetland, Pightland-Firth and Caithness, 1700-9; Sibbald, op.cit., 8-9.
2 Brand, op.cit., 132.
3 J. Wallace, A Description of the Isles of Orkney (Edinburgh, 1700), 14.
was taking place in the pattern of Shetland trade which, in turn, was to have a profound effect on life in the islands. There are signs that by the early 1700s traffic with visitors, both merchants and seamen, was in decline, and already causing distress. On Fair Isle, for example, according to Sibbald:

the inhabitants of this Isle were of late Men of considerable Substance, not so much through depredations, as that English and Hollanders take not them in their way, for the occasional access of strangers is their greatest advantage for vending their Fishes, Feathers etc.

A further blow came in 1712 with the imposition of a tax on foreign salt. There had long been those who had shared the view put forward by Captain John Smith (who visited Shetland in 1633 to report on the fisheries) that measures should be taken to break foreign control of the lucrative salt herring trade with the Continent: the tax, which was combined with the offer of a bounty on all fish cured with native salt and by native merchants, was intended to effect the transfer of the trade entirely into British hands. In Shetland though, the effects of the tax were not entirely welcome, for any diminution of the visits of the Germans and the Dutch entailed a decrease not only in the means by which goods were imported into the islands, but also of a valuable source of ready money. As it was expressed by

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1 A.C. O'Dell, The Historical Geography of the Shetland Isles, 297.
2 Sibbald, op.cit., 25.
3 Smith, op.cit., 258ff.
4 O'Dell, op.cit., 192.
Thomas Gifford of Busta, a prominent local landowner (1733):

These Dutchmen used formerly to buy a considerable quantity of coarse stockings, for ready money, at tolerable good prices, by which means a good deal of foreign money was annually imported which enabled the poor inhabitants to pay the land rent and purchase the necessaries of life; but for several years past that trade has failed, few or none of these busses coming in, and those that come, if they buy a few stockings is at a very low price, whereby the country people are become exceeding poor.

As it turned out the trade with the Dutch fishermen did eventually revive, but even so, the Shetland landlords had little option but to become curers, and to take over the merchant function - exporting salted fish, along with other Shetland products, and bringing in return the wide variety of goods, both necessities and luxuries, formerly brought in by foreign traders.

In the long term the involvement of the landlords in the curing and export of fish had considerable economic and social consequences for Shetland. The lairds were eager to obtain the services of as many fishermen as possible, and landlords such as Gifford of Busta wrote into leases the condition that tenants must fish for them. For the same reason there was a tendency to subdivide holdings to provide more fishermen still. This, combined with pressure on land as the population of the islands grew, and the aggravating factor that with the men away fishing from May to August the burden of cultivation fell upon weaker

1 T.Gifford, An Historical Description of the Zetland Isles, 5-6.
2 D.Smith, The Shetland Method (unpublished article, 1974).
members of the family, resulted in the plots being less viable to meet the immediate needs of a family, let alone provide a surplus. In consequence, casual occupations such as knitting became increasingly important as a means of buying, or obtaining by exchange, goods not provided by either fishing or the croft. The knitting was largely done by the women and children during winter evenings, although it could also be combined with other activities, and women knitting while carrying loads on their backs, or when travelling, were a familiar sight.

From a surviving notebook and a letterbook of the same Thomas Gifford, and the diary of one of his sons, Robert, who occasionally acted as supercargo, it is possible to obtain a detailed view of the new trade conducted by the landlords. As expected, the main outward cargoes were the ling, cod, and herring caught by their tenants, which were sent in substantial quantities to markets in Scotland and Germany, and even as far afield as Portugal. But along with the fish went smaller quantities of other goods, including stockings. In September 1744, for instance, a letter from Thomas Gifford to his agent in Hamburg recorded the dispatch of a consignment of fish, plus eight barrels containing 1050 pairs of hose; the agent was urged to obtain cash, in the

1 Ibid.
2 J. Fea, Considerations on the Fisheries in the Scotch Islands (London, 1787), 36.
3 FSA, vii, 587.
4 These manuscripts were examined in 1975 by courtesy of Mr T. Henderson, then Curator of Shetland County Museum.
5 Gifford of Busta letterbook, 1744.
form of British and Danish money, in return because 'my fishers must have a good deal of ready money'. The prices obtained were lower than expected, but the following June a further cargo of fish, with barrels of butter and 1590 pairs of hose, was sent to Hamburg in the Sybilla in the hope of catching the first market of the season. The next year, shipments via the Sybilla, on this occasion bound for Leith, and the Clara Margaretta, for Oporto, included half a barrel and one barrel of hose respectively.

Even as make-weights in the fish trade the stockings were of considerable value to the islanders. It was estimated that in 1767 they brought in over £1,500, representing about one ninth of the total value of Shetland's exports, and by 1797 the sum had risen to £17,000. But the quality of the goods is dubious. If the beautifully-made garments from the Gunnister find were actually manufactured in Shetland, then by the end of the seventeenth century the standard of some knitters there must indeed have been high. There are also accounts of some Shetland stockings having been sold for remarkable sums: the anonymous writer of a pamphlet on fisheries, for example, who visited Shetland about 1749, made particular mention of:

the Gentlewomen, who make Stockings for their Amusement, work them very fine, even so much so that one of that Country who was here lately....told me he had sold a pair here of his wife's making for four

1 Ibid., June 1745.
2 Gifford of Basta notebook, May 1746 and 30 July 1746.
4 Edmondston, op. cit., 1, 224.
5 See ch. II.
Guineas.  

Nor was this work limited to gentlewomen, for the women of the island of Unst, still renowned today, were already recognised in the eighteenth century for the special qualities of their knitting. According to the minister of the parish:

Almost every woman on the island manufactures fine woollen stockings. These are much valued for softness and warmth. Considerable quantities of them are sent every year to Edinburgh and the price which they bring is from 1/4 to 2/6 the pair.

But in general the balance of evidence suggests that fine goods were the exception rather than the rule. The stockings exported by the Gifford family are almost invariably referred to in their records as 'coarse woollen hose', and the fact that among the items Robert Gifford was commissioned to bring back from his trip to Oporto and elsewhere on the Clara Margaretta were fine worsted stockings, suggests that wool hose of good quality were not always readily available in Shetland itself. On investigation, the sum raised by stocking exports in 1767, mentioned above, proves to have largely been made up from 50,006 pairs of hose which sold at only 6d. the pair. Similarly, Low, who toured the islands in 1774, noted that the goods taken by the people to sell to the crews of the herring fleet lying

1 The Fisheries Revived and Britain's Hidden Treasure Discovered: From the Journal of a Gentleman who went upon a Survey of Orkney, Zetland and the Western Isles last Summer; the pamphlet is undated, but the copy in the library of NNAS is annotated by 'A.Z.' (who gave a substantial collection of works on Shetland to the library early in the nineteenth century) who gives London 1750 as its place and date of publication.
2 FSA, v, 194.
3 The diary of Robert Gifford, 'Account of everything I bought in port', 1746.
off Lerwick, included considerable quantities of stockings, gloves and nightcaps, but that of these the stockings were coarse and rarely sold for more than 6d. or 8d. ¹.

During the eighteenth century the landlords had made some attempts to set standards for stockings made for sale, and to regulate work through systems of inspection and stamping². These, however, seem to have been of little avail as complaints about quality continued to be frequent.

According to the minister of Sandsting and Aithsting the large quantities of wool being produced in his parish in the 1790s were partly used in the making of coarse cloth and knitted goods for family use, but as for the rest, it was:

commonly destroyed in coarse stockings which can hardly bring the original value of the wool. They are generally bartered in Lerwick for tea, snuff, tobacco, linen, lawn, cotton etc. and seldom bring above 2½d. real value, though they are nominally allowed 5d.; for neither meal nor ready money can be obtained for stockings. It must, however, be acknowledged that the manufacturers are much to blame for the low price of the stockings as they are generally of extreme bad quality³.

Indeed, with the exception of the incumbent of Unst, the Shetland ministers who contributed to the Statistical Account were almost unanimous in their condemnation of the activity with which nearly all their female parishioners occupied their spare moments. As the writer of the account of Delting expressed it:

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1 G. Low, Tour through the Islands of Orkney and Shetland (Kirkwall, 1879), 67.
2 Gifford, op. cit., 82, 93; O'Dell, op. cit., 156-7.
3 FSA, vii, 588.
after all their toil they often do not receive the original value of the raw materials employed in their homely manufacture of single [i.e. coarse] stockings.... it would be preferable for them to sell the wool rather than take up their time manufacturing it in so unprofitable a manner. 

Soon after 1800 the trade in Shetland handknitted goods was again at a low ebb: according to Edmondston, revenue from it had dropped to £5,000 in 1808. The coarse stockings which still represented the bulk of production were now mostly going to mainland Britain, but there they were in a poor position to compete with the products of the frame-based and more closely organised hosiery industries of the Scottish Borders and the Midlands of England. In Shetland there was minimal control over the quality and type of the goods made, and well past the middle of the century little was made to order. On the maker's side it was a hand-to-mouth existence as she rarely had the capital to allow her to save up her work until demand or prices improved. The merchants, on the other hand, could often get little return on the goods: they were hindered by their inability to fulfil orders for quantities of garments of the same quality and price, and, particularly until the 1830s, by the erratic nature of communications with the mainland. Yet, despite this unpromising position, not only did the hand knitting of goods for sale continue, but it began to develop from a purely subsistence activity into

1 FSA, i, 391.
2 Edmondston, op. cit., i, 224.
3 Report on the Truck System, 44-5.
4 Ibid., paragraphs 2149, 2196.
5 O'Dell, op. cit., 177-8; H. Heineberg, Changes in the Economic-Geographical Structure of the Shetland Islands, 78.
an organised industry. That it should have done so is in part due to the efforts of benevolently-minded individuals who were responsible for introducing that type of knitting for which the islands became particularly known - Shetland lace.

There are several accounts of how lace knitting came into general use in the islands. According to Mrs Jessie Saxby, a member of the Edmondston family of Unst and herself a champion of the knitters, it began in 1832: a visitor to their family home admired some knitting which had been copied from Madeira lace and suggested that shawls in this style would be marketable. Mrs Saxby's mother, Mrs Edmondston, took up the idea, teaching and encouraging the knitters; there is a tradition in the family that she designed some of the patterns herself. Another version is given in an anonymous pamphlet of 1861, which records that the idea came from a visitor in 1838. According to a further account, published in 1874, a christening cap in lace knitting was sent as a present from the mainland to a resident of Lerwick: it was copied, and eventually young knitters were persuaded to incorporate the patterns in shawls. The versions are not mutually exclusive, and in any case are agreed that openwork knitting - already used elsewhere in Europe as a means of making the fashionable

1 Henry Liss: letter from Jessie Saxby to Mrs L.D. Henry, 21 April 1928.
2 Verbal information from Miss I.D.J. Sandison (a descendant).
3 The Poor Knitters of Shetland: A Short Account of Them by a Lady Resident.
4 K. Cowie, Shetland Descriptive and Historical, 186.
lace stockings and mittens of the time, as well as baby
clothes - was not generally known in Shetland until the
1830s, and required some encouragement before it was
accepted by the knitters. Once established though, there
was a ready market for the goods. Both shawls and lace
were currently held in fashionable esteem, and the combin-
ation of the two found great favour, resulting in a heavy
demand during the early 1840s. Veils were also produced
by the same method, and, from about 1860, fancy goods such
as men's ties, in silk as well as wool.

The success of lace knitting was due in part to its
being in harmony with the current mode of dress, but it
also owed much to sympathisers who made it known and
helped to create a market for it on the mainland. Among the
first was Edward Standen who visited Shetland in 1839.
Until his premature death five years later, he publicised
the work in England through lecturing and staging exhibit-
ions, and established trade contacts for the knitters in
London. There are also numerous accounts of Shetland
ladies sending parcels of goods to the mainland to be
exhibited and sold among their friends, and of them per-
suading merchants in large cities to stock Shetland hosiery.

One Edinburgh merchant, for example, William Baillie

1 Report on the Truck System, 45.
2 Ibid., 46.
3 E. Standen, A Paper on the Shetland Islands, editor's
   preface.
4 See, for example, The Poor Knitters of Shetland; H.C.
   Black, 'A Shetland Industry', Womanhood, i no 4,
   (March 1899), 285-8.
Shawl of Shetland lace, 1863
(NMAS: TRB 4)
Mackenzie, was awarded a medal at the Great Exhibition of 1851 for his entry of Shetland knitted goods; it is interesting to note that by 1866 Shetland knitwear was sufficiently prestigious for Mackenzie's successors, John White and Co., to describe their premises in Frederick Street, Edinburgh, as the Shetland Warehouse. In addition, gifts were organised for royalty, notably to mark special occasions, both, no doubt, in the hope of publicity as well as further orders from Court. According to one writer, the articles sent to Princess Alexandra as a present from the people of Shetland on the occasion of her marriage to the Prince of Wales in 1863 were 'the handsomest collection of Shetland knitted goods ever brought together'. If a particularly beautiful triangular shawl preserved in the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland, a duplicate of the one presented to the Princess, is representative, then the best Shetland knitting being made by this date was of remarkable quality.

The product of all this activity was a demand on the mainland for Shetland hosiery, plain work as well as lace, despite competition from frame-made articles. The foundations of this popularity were already clear to Standen in 1844. First there was the improvement in communications - the advent of 'steam and cheap postage' as he put it - which

1 Catalogue of the Great Exhibition..., 585.
3 Cowie, op. cit., 186.
4 MSS: TRB 4.
provided a more reliable means of making known the wishes of the merchants in the south and of delivering the goods. Secondly there was a change in opinion: the activities of Dr Jaeger and the dress reformers in the 1880s in popularising the wearing of wool next to the skin are well known, but the change was already apparent in Standen's time, for he commented 'fortunately for the knitters a notion gains ground that woollen underclothing is more suited than any other for our variable climate'. Good capital was made of the warmth and softness of Shetland wool, and before the end of the century the list of knitted goods made and exported from the islands had become extensive - jerseys, cardigans, helmets, gloves, and other outerwear, underclothing of all types, and garments for babies, the delicate and the elderly. In 1911, said to be a relatively poor year, the value of the trade was given as £30,390.

One of the photographs taken in Shetland in the early 1900s by J.D. Rattar, a local photographer, shows shawl dressing in progress - that is, the stretching of the knitting on frames to dry after washing and bleaching. The photograph is of interest in that it shows the heavier shawls which have rarely survived, but of greater significance is that the members of the Petrie family shown therein were in business in Lerwick as specialist shawl

1 Standen, op.cit., 10.
2 For a detailed account see S.M. Newton, Health, Art and Reason (London, 1974).
3 Standen, op.cit., 31.
The Petrie family dressing shawls in Lerwick early this century
(photograph by J.D. Kattar)
dressers\textsuperscript{1} - in itself an indication of the developments that had been taking place. When the Truck Commission visited Shetland in 1872 there were already women, particularly in Lerwick, who were using knitting as their sole means of support; furthermore, merchants were beginning to specify the garments to be made, giving out yarn, including silk and black mohair spun in Yorkshire, to be made up according to set patterns\textsuperscript{2}. It was still difficult for knitters to obtain cash for their work - for despite legislation and the efforts of individuals and bodies such as the Scottish Home Industries Association to secure a fair reward for their efforts, the truck system lingered on into the 1930s\textsuperscript{3} - but the first steps had been taken towards an organised industry. This led the way for the establishment of small factories where, from about 1920, handknitting and finishing (and soon machine work as well) were carried on side by side\textsuperscript{4}. Even so, the hosiery industry in Shetland has continued to be heavily dependent on domestic labour. In 1969, when turnover had reached £1.5 million, there were estimated to be 2,000 knitters regularly employed at home, and over 1,000 more knitting on a casual basis, but only 350 full-time employees working in factory units\textsuperscript{5}.

\textsuperscript{1} Information from T. Henderson.
\textsuperscript{2} Report on the Truck System, 44-51.
\textsuperscript{3} I am grateful to Brian Smith for access to his file on this subject.
\textsuperscript{4} H. Heineberg, Changes in the Economic-Geographical Structure of the Shetland Islands, 111.
\textsuperscript{5} Planning for Progress: The Shetland Woollen Industry, Highlands and Islands Development Board, Special Report no 4.
By early this century the demand for lace knitting had declined, and the staple Shetland hosiery exports were underwear and the more newly fashionable knitted outer garments; as yet, the coloured-pattern knitting of Fair Isle and elsewhere had made little contribution. On Fair Isle goods were sometimes made to order, or sold to the crews and passengers of passing ships, but most were taken by the men of the island to hosiery merchants in Lerwick and Kirkwall. The hosiery was reckoned to bring in about £300 or £400 yearly, although it seems to have had little more than curiosity value on the general market. An investigator writing in 1914 complained that there was little attempt to suit current taste: jerseys for men, which he regarded as saleable, were not accompanied by similar garments for women and children, but by articles such as Tam o' Shanters and nightcaps 'which were in demand long ago but are now only bought as curiosities'.

In the 1920s Fair Isle knitting was discovered by the fashion world, and trend-setters such as the Prince of Wales appeared in Fair Isle jumpers and hose when playing golf. A visitor to Shetland about this time has left an account of the impact of the new fashion. The purpose of her journey had been to learn lace knitting from the women of Unst, but on arrival she found that, in response to

1 Verbal information from Mrs Helen Stout, Fair Isle, June 1975.
3 Henry Mss: 'Women of Shetland and their Industries' (undated paper).
unprecedented orders from American and British buyers, for thousands of garments rather than the usual dozens, every available knitter in the islands was being urged to abandon her usual style in favour of the coloured pattern work. For most women this entailed learning afresh, and an enterprising Lerwick man produced printed books of patterns - the first that had ever been regularly used in Shetland - to help them. The books, some of which are still current, contain a considerably wider variety of motifs than had previously been used in Fair Isle knitting. Jerseys and cardigans, for both adults and children, formed the core of the trade, but there was also a demand for caps, scarves, hose and gloves, giving an estimated turnover in 1930 of £60,000.

Almost as soon as the name of the islands became a selling point for knitwear there were complaints that goods made elsewhere were being passed off as Shetland work. Mrs Black, for example, writing in 1899, instanced the selling of frame-made shawls in the guise of Shetland lace. During this century there have been recurrent arguments as to the best method of protection, mainly centred on the possibility of using Shetland as a trade name. As explained by 

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1 The patterns were printed in graph exercise books by Miss Johnstone and her brother, 1927-33, for Bobby Williamson, Lerwick; information from Miss Johnstone, 1975.
2 Shetland Woollen Industry.
3 Black, op. cit.
4 The arguments concerning a trade mark are set out in Report on Home Industries, 91-111, and an account of the attempts at protection in Shetland Woollen Industry.
Scott in his report to the Board of Agriculture in 1914, the probable success of any legal action against hosiery made outside the islands labelled as Shetland was dubious, since a manufacturer who used a proportion of the wool of Shetland sheep in his goods could claim to use the name on this basis. This opinion proved to be accurate — and hence the Shetland jerseys made in Israel and Taiwan, for instance, that have appeared on the market in recent years.

A further difficulty in maintaining the distinctive nature of Shetland knitwear was the increasing scarcity of yarn spun entirely from Shetland fleeces, the softness of which had been the basis of its reputation. Wool sent to the mainland to be spun in mills came back blended with other types and, since by the end of the 1930s the processing of the clip on the croft was the exception rather than the rule, the majority of garments knitted in the islands came to be made of blended yarn. In 1921 the Shetland Wool Industries Association was formed, one object being to promote the use of pure Shetland wool. Various ideas were considered in the following decades, including the establishment of a spinning mill in the islands, but none proved to be practicable and it became necessary to divorce the idea of 'made in Shetland' from the use of the native wool.

The SWIA did succeed in implementing Scott's proposal for establishing a trademark, although it never received

1 Report on Home Industries, 93.
2 Shetland Woollen Industry.
the entire support of the industry in Shetland. The mark, registered with the Board of Trade, incorporated the legend 'Made in Shetland' (or, where appropriate, Fair Isle), with alternative wording to indicate whether the garment had been handspun and handknitted. There were those who argued that the future of Shetland knitting as an industry depended on it being made entirely by hand processes, but, as has been seen, it was not possible to avoid machine-prepared yarn. In practice, economics dictated that machine work be increasingly used in the knitting itself. By 1930 a number of frames had been introduced to small factories, and their use was sufficiently common for the mark to be extended in 1956 to cover goods made on hand-operated knitting machines. In recent years the mainstay of the industry has been a compromise - a yoked jumper with the body, welt, and cuffs knitted by machine, and the patterned insert and the finishing done by hand. Even this is now being produced in entirely machine-knit versions both in Shetland and on the mainland.

Against this general trend towards machine-knitting, but in concurrence with fashion interest in 'ethnic' textiles, there was an exceptional demand in the 1970s for hand-knitted garments; Fair Isle type designs were particularly popular, and the knitwear manufacturers in Shetland bought

1 O'Dell, op.cit., 161-2.
3 O'Dell, op.cit., 33, 205; Heineberg, op.cit., 172.
Slipover in 'natural' colours, by Shetlands from Shetland, 1975
(by courtesy of P.E. Bennett)
up all such items of good workmanship offered to them. In
the past, trained designers had not been used and the
industry had been criticised for tending 'to rely on histori-
cal garment styles and colours, with little or no attempt to
dictate or even follow fashion trends'. A new development
was the establishment of several small businesses which
aimed to produce garments to suit the changing contemporary
market. The goods are produced mainly by outworkers, but to
designs which reinterpret old patterns to current taste.
Even so, machine techniques are generally combined with
the handwork, and in view of the ready availability of
domestic knitting machines capable of producing even a
garment with an allover Fair Isle pattern, rapidly and
simply in the home, it is questionable whether handknitting
as an industry in Shetland can survive.

1 Information from A. Tulloch, John Tulloch (Shetland
Industries) Ltd.
2 Shetland Woollen Industry.
CONCLUSION

In the course of this study handknitting as an industry has been revealed as a continuing, albeit not always widespread, feature of Scottish life through nearly five centuries. In terms of the Scottish textile industry as a whole the contribution of handknitting has generally been modest, although at a local level it has often been an important element of the economy of individual communities.

Considering the process of knitting began to be mechanised at an early stage, it is perhaps surprising that in the commercial field handknitting should have continued so long, and indeed it survives in Scotland today only on a specialist craft basis. There are knitters who produce elaborately-patterned items such as Sanquhar gloves, and lace shawls to order, or for sale through craft shops. In addition, there are a few small businesses which utilise the skills of outworkers to knit up small runs of garments in which traditional designs are re-interpreted to modern taste. For the knitters to receive a fair return, however, the price of such goods is necessarily high, and their market depends on the existence of those for whom the individuality of the handmade item is more important than the cost. It is not unexpected that craftsmen are increasingly turning to the now versatile domestic knitting machines as a means of producing garments original in shape and pattern.
Yet despite recent improvements in knitting machines, handknitting is still a commonplace activity in the home. Given the availability of comparatively cheap mass-produced clothing the economic argument for knitting at home is no longer viable, but even so there are many who take pleasure in handknitting garments for both themselves and their families. If the future of handknitting on a commercial basis seems doubtful, there seems every likelihood of it continuing as a craft.
APPENDIX 1: the testament of Thomas Paterson, 12 December 1616 (SRO CC8/8/49, 211v - 214r).

The testament testamentar and inventar of the guidis geir sowmes of money and debtis pertening to umquhill Thomas Paterson bonnetmaker burges of Edinburgh the tyme of his deceis quha deceist upone the [blank] day of November 1616 yeiris faithfullie maid and gevin up be him selff upone the twentienyne day of october the yeir of god foirsaid Before thir witnessis William Paterson younger merchant Alex Paterson Somer bonnetmaker burgessis of Edinburgh and Andro Wysman in the Cannogait.

In the frist the said umquhill Thomas Paterson had the guidis geir sowmes of money and debtis of the availl and pricis eftersfollowing pertening to him the tyme of his deceis foirsaid viz In the loft of the defunctis dwellinghous sex scoir stanis roll at tua hundreth merkis ilk twentie staine weycht Suma aucht hundreth pundis Item lyand in William Moyses hous loft aucht hundreth einis galloway cairsayis quhairof the just fourt part thairof appertEinis to the defunct estimat to the sowme of tua hundreth pundis Item of reddie money in the loft of his said dwelling hous the sowme of ane thousand merkis Item mais of reddie money lyand in ane littill kist in the hall of his said dwelling hous the sowme of fyve hundreth merkis Item mais of reddie money in ane littill coffer standing thair besyde sex scoir pundis Item in utenceillis and domincillis with the abulymentis of his bodie by the airship estimat to the
soume of fourtie pundis.

Suma of the Inventar ii m. i c. lx lib.

followis the debtis awin to the dead

Item thair wis awin to the said unaquhill Thomas Patersonone be William Patersonone younger merchand burgis of Edinburghe the soume of sexteine scoir pundis as for the price of foure hundreth pair buithois sauld and undelyverit to him be the defunct quhilkis ar extant in the defunctis [hous deleted] dwelling hous Item mair be the said William Patersonone ane hundrethe threttis pundis for the price of uther tua hundreth pair of buithois sauld and undelyverit to him be the defunct Item be Thomas Cruynyeane and Barbara Wrcht thair spous and thair cautioneris conforme to thair obligatioun thrie hundreth merkis Item be umaquhile Henry Kello thair airs executouris and his cautioneris conforme to thair band thrie hundreth merkis Item be Alexr Dick writer and his cautioneris conforme to thair band thrie hundreth merkis Item be Thomas Laing and his cautioneris conforme to thair band thrie hundreth merkis Item be Johne Laing messinger and his cautioneris be thair band i c. merkis Item be Robert Auchinleck in Tranent and his cautioneris be thair band ane hundreth merkis Item mair be him v lib. v s. for bonnetis Item be Thomas Anderson merchand burges of Edinburghe ane hundreth pundis be his band Item mair be him sexteine pundis sexteine schillingis of borrowit money Item be Johne Tailycfeir in [blank] and his cautioner conforme to thair band ane
hundreth pundis Item be William Moysie walker burges of Edinburgh foure hundreth merkis conforme to his band Item be Jon Patersones merchand and burges thair and [blank] Patersones his brother conforme to thair band i c. merkis Item be Johne Hilstoun [thair deleted] merchand thair fowrtie sex punds for hois bocht and reasavit be him fra the defunct sir Michaelmes last Item be William Donaldsone and Thomas Storie conforme to thair band sex scoir tuelff pundis Item be Thomas Clarksone butterman thair conforme to his band tua hundreth merkis Item be Johne Schaw merchand thair tua hundreth merkis conforme to his band Item be New Chairteris and Johne McNeische merchands thair conforme to thair band fowre hundreth fowrtie punds Item be Thomas Inglis merchand thair tua hundreth twentie fowre punds as the defunct his fowrt part of the sowme of nyne hundreth punds conforme to the said Thomas Inglis his ticket thairanent to the defunct Johne Mathie kim Moysie and Alex Somer partineris Item be Patrik Ramsay merchand thair tua hundreth merkis as the defunct his fowrt part of the sowme of aucht hundreth merkis conforme to the said Patrikis ticket or obligat-soun maid to the said defunct and his saidis partineris Item be Thomas Gledstanis merchand thair ane hundreth tuelff punds as for the defunct his [part deleted] fowrt part of foure hundreth fowrtie aucht punds conforme to his band maid to the defunct and his saidis partineris Item be James Micoll merchand thair nyne scoir ane punds
x s. as for the defunct his four part of the sowe of sevin hundreth twentie sex pundis xiii s. iv d. adebtit to the defunct and remanent his parteris foirsaidis Item be Mari Hope merchand thair nyne scoir tua pundis v s. as for the defunct his four part of the sowe of sevin hundreth twentie nyne pundis conforme to his ticket maid to the defunct and his saidis partineris Item be Johne richesone merchand thair xxviii lib. as the defunctis fourt part of the sowe of ane hundreth tueiff pundis auchand to the defunct and his saidis partineris Item be Henry scytoun merchand thair and Andro wysman or ather of thame ane hundreth fiftie pundis as the defunct his thrid part of the sowe of foure hundreth and fystie pundis adebtit be thaim to the defunct and his saidis partineris viz to the said defunct Johne Mathie and um Moysie his saidis partineris.

Suma of the debtis awin to the dead iii m. viii c. ii lib. 7 s. 8 d. Suma of the inventar and the debtis v m. ix c. lxii lib. 7 s. 8 d.

Followis the debtis awin be the dead

Item thair wes awin be the said umquhile Thomas Paterson to the said Johne Schaw aucth staune lamb woll at vi lib. vi s. viii d. the staune weycht Suma fiftie pundis xiii s. iii j d. quhilk he ordainis to be defalkit in part of payment of tua hundreth merkis aboue writitine aucthand be him to

1 The total should be £3939-9-4, giving a total for the inventory and debts owed to him of £6099-9-4.
the defunct.

Suma of the debtis awin be the dead L lib. xiii s. 4 d. I
restis of frie geir the debtis deducit v m. ix c. xi lib. 14 s. 4d. To be devydit in thrie partis deadis part is i m. ix c. lxx lib. xi s. vd. wuhair of the quot is is [sic] composit for lxxii lib.

Followis the deadis legacie and latter will

At the fute of leithwynd the twentie nyne day of october 1616 yeiris the quhilk day the said Thomas Paterson one being seik in bodie yet perfyte in mynd and spireit comitis his saule to god his creatour and his bodie to be buryet in the buriall [ground omitted?] amangis the faithfull makis latter will and legacie as followis First he nominatis and constitutis Issobell Broun his spous and Bessie Paterson one his youngest dochter his executouris and introvettoris conjunctlie with his hail guidis geir and debtis and in respect of the said Bessie his minoritic nominatis and appoyntis Alex Paterson one servitour to Mr Alex Guthrie common clark of Edinburgh and Alex Somer bonnetmaker burges of the said burghe tutoris administratoris and oursearis to the said Bessie Paterson one and ordanis the saidis Alex Paterson one and Alex Somer to be gyderonis and oursearis to the said Issobell Broun and the said Bessie Paterson one and that his said spous and dochter do nothing concerning his saidis guidis geir and debtis bot be the advyse and directiou of the saidis tua oursearis

1 The correct total is £6048.16.0.
allanderlie to the quhilk and with quhome thay agrriet and ar content and ferder the said Thomas Paterson reservis the rest of quhatsoever his guidis geir and debtis omitit be him furth of this his testament to be gevin up be the saidis executouris at the sicht and presens of the saidis tua ousearis and to confirme the samyn with this his testament morover the said Thomas Paterson leives and disponis of legacie of the thrid part to the bairnes pro-creat and to be procreat betwix Janet Paterson his eldest dochter and Henry Howe hir spous the sowme of tua thowsund merkis money foirsaid to be equalie devydit amangis thaiime reservand alwayis to the said [Joh deleted] Janet Paterson hir lyfrsent of the annualrent of the said tua thowsund merkis during all the dayis of hir lyftime and the secur-itic thairof to be mait at the speciall directioune and be the advyse of the saidis Alex Paterson as he sail think best for the weill of the saidis bairnes and failyeing of all the said bairnes be deceis ye ye [sic] said principall sowme of tua thowsund merkis to returne to the said Janet hir airis and assynayis Item he leives and disponis to the pure of the said burghe of Edinburgh ane hundreth merkis money to be distribute amangis the pure honest houshalderis at the sicht of the saidis Alex Paterson and Alex Somer Item he leives to the pure of the bonnetmaker craft fourtie pundis to be distribute at the sicht of the said Alex Somer Item he leives to Jon Paterson his brother ane hundreth merkis money Item he leives to William Paterson
his brother fourtie pundis Item he leives to the said Alexr Paterson owersear five dowbill angellis and his best cloak Item he leives to the said Alexr Somer his nixt best cloak and syftie pundis money to be gevin to his first dochter that sail happen to be marrist Item he dis- chargis be thair presentis Robert Paterson his brotheris sone of all bandis comptis rakningis sowmes of money and uthers quatsomever quhilk he his airis or executouris nicht clame of the said Robert preceeding the dait heirof Item he leives to Margaret Brown his sister in law spous to Thomas Anderson merchant burges of Edinburgh fourtie undis for to buy hir claithis Item he leives to Elspeth Paterson spous to Andro Smyth twentie pundis and the rest of quhatsomever his thrid part of his saidis guidis geir and debtis he leives and disponis to the said Bessie Paterson his dochter in witnes quhiero the said Thomas Paterson testamentar desyrit me notar publict wnder writtine to subscryve for him this his testament latter will and legacie abone writtine becaus he could not writ himselff day yeir and place foirsaidis and before the witnessis abone namnet sit subscribitur Ita est Johannes Paterson notarius publicus de mandato dicti Thoma Paterson scribere nescientis ut asseruit testibus his meis signo et subscriptione manualibus We maisteres Johne Airthair etc and gelives and commitis the intromissionne with the samyn to the saidis Issobell Brown and Bessie Paterson[ Be deleted ] onlie executoris testamentar nominat
be the said umquhile Thomas Paterson Reservand compt etc
and the said Issobell Broun in respect of the uther execut-
oris in minoritie being sworn maid faith etc William
[stevin deleted] Donaldson merchant and Gawin Stevisonsone
baxter burges of Edinburgh cautioune conjunctlie and
severallie as ane act maid thairupone beiris.
Appendix 2. The bartering of stockings at Assynt, Sutherland, in 1830.

I am grateful to Mr Morris of the National Library of Scotland for bringing to my notice a pamphlet in the collection there:

The Life of Hugh Macleod of Assynt, embracing a report of his trial at the Circuit Court, Inverness on 23 September 1831 for the murder of Murdoch Grant, pedlar (Inverness 1882).

For present purposes the pamphlet is of interest for describing a transaction which although perhaps common enough in the Highlands at the time, can, by its very nature, rarely have been recorded.

The Hugh Macleod of the title was a schoolmaster at Assynt. The pamphlet tells of his fall into debt, and of his eventual resolution to kill a pedlar, Murdoch Grant, to obtain his purse. According to the evidence given at his trial, one day in 1830 Macleod fell in with the pedlar, who when not travelling was resident in Strathbeg, and accompanied him to the house of a widow in the village of Culkin. Even though he knew the widow to be poor, Grant showed her the contents of his pack - silk handkerchiefs, prints and cottons - and she was tempted to buy. The widow had no ready money, but knitting was one of her means of earning a livelihood and eventually the pedlar accepted two pairs of worsted stockings in exchange for 3½ yards of cotton. These two pairs were then put in the pedlar's pack with other stockings already there - presumably acquired in the same
way. Shortly afterwards Macleod murdered the pedlar and stole his belongings.

In due course the crime was discovered and suspicion fell on Macleod, who was brought to trial. It was the stockings in his possession at the time of his arrest which assisted in his conviction: the stockings, 'with three blue stripes at the top' were not recognised by Macleod's sister, who usually knitted her brother's stockings, but they were identified by the widow both as her workmanship and as the ones she had exchanged with Murdoch Grant.

The pamphlet, of course, recounts only one isolated instance of the bartering of stockings for goods, and one which may not necessarily have been typical. On the other hand, there is nothing in the evidence of the witnesses to suggest that this was regarded as in any way unusual. The activities of pedlars such as Murdock Grant may not have been of great significance in terms of the Scottish hosiery trade as a whole, but they may nonetheless have afforded an important means whereby individuals or families supplemented their income, and one which is now difficult to trace.
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The bibliography covers sources and works which have made a material contribution to this study. Records and publications which have been consulted, but without positive result, are not included. Similarly, works to which only a passing reference has been made are not listed here, but bibliographical details are given in the appropriate footnote.

Items are listed according to the following scheme:

1 Manuscript Sources
   1.1 Official Documents
   1.2 Craft Records
   1.3 Business Records
   1.4 Private Papers

2 Printed Sources
   2.1 Official Papers and Reports
   2.2 Burgh Records
   2.3 Other Records
   2.4 Statistical Accounts
   2.5 Contemporary Comments, and Travellers' Accounts

3 Dictionaries and Encyclopaedias

4 Books and Articles

5 Theses
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