

KIRK FURNISHINGS: THE LITURGICAL MATERIAL CULTURE OF THE SCOTTISH REFORMATION

Stephen Jackson

Of the furniture found in churches, the most essential is that associated with the Christian liturgy. From λειτουργία, or leitourgia, meaning ‘a public work’, a liturgy describes the set of established ceremonies for a given religion. Prior to the Reformation, the epicentre of Scottish liturgy and kirk was the Mass celebrated at the altar. As elsewhere, stalls, thrones, screens, secondary altars, lecterns, pulpits and fonts, adorned with imagery, radiated out from this point. After 1560, altars were removed and icons comprehensively destroyed. Scotland experienced a Reformation as unique to itself as those taking place in other European territories. As in England, the pieces of the new church fell into place over a number of decades but against a background of endemic political instability. It was Parliament that abolished the Mass in 1560 and the General Assembly of the Kirk that approved John Knox’s *Book of Common Order* as the basis for a new liturgy in 1562. The General Assembly, led by Andrew Melville, established a Presbyterian ecclesiastical polity in 1578, acknowledged by Parliament in 1592. In terms of the physical fabric of church buildings, early and total iconoclasm frequently created a clean slate but Parliament’s decision in 1562 to deny the new Kirk the lands and income of the old, led to centuries of neglect in many parishes. Above all, new priorities asserted themselves, determining the form and furnishings of Scotland’s churches down to the present day. The sacraments of Communion and Baptism continued in use but required new forms of paraphernalia, while the importance of the sermon within the Protestant liturgy placed the pulpit at centre stage.

Constitutional proposals for the new Scottish church were gathered together in the *Book of Discipline*, compiled in 1560 by a committee of reformers including John Knox. The book declared that:

Everie Church must have dures, cloise wyndoes of glass, thak or sclait able to withhold raine, a bell to convocat the people together, a pulpite, a basyn for baptisme, and tables for the ministration of the Lordis Suppar.¹

Most parish churches had previously been equipped only with a lectern, pulpits being confined to the grander collegiate churches and cathedrals. The only pre-Reformation pulpits in existence today are kept at the Chapel of King’s College, Aberdeen: the ambo from the former rood screen of the Chapel, and Bishop Stewart’s pulpit from St Machar’s Cathedral, Old Aberdeen. The ambo was part of a scheme for Bishop William Elphinstone’s new Chapel, carved between 1506 and 1509 in the workshop of John Fendour. Fendour was the leading figure in an Aberdeen ‘school’ of woodcarving tentatively identified from the dispersed remains of screens and stalls from King’s, St Machar’s and Aberdeen’s St Nicholas Kirk.²

The Chapel served a variety of purposes after 1560, including library, school and

storeroom, but Fendour's choir stalls, and parts of the screen, survived to be incorporated into nineteenth and twentieth century restorations. Bishop Stewart's pulpit (Figure 1) was taken from St Machar's in 1793 and has been moved and re-arranged no less than five times.³ The arms of James Stewart (1532–45) identify its commissioner and the form of the Royal arms suggests a date in the late 1530s. The central panel depicted the *arma christi* until the covenanting Earl of Seaforth had them 'hewn out' in August 1640.⁴ The profile heads within roundels, surrounded by dolphins and naturalistic foliage, are characteristic of the new Renaissance forms established in Scottish woodcarving from the mid-1530s. The mannerist shield shapes were also an *avant garde* feature, sitting contentedly alongside the conventional late Gothic tracery.

Preaching in the reformed Scottish church took place every Sunday. The first summoning bells rang at 4am in the large urban parish of Perth where citizens took it in turn to listen to two hours or more of Biblical readings and a sermon.⁵ Even in small parishes, there were two sermons, of about an hour each, before and after lunch. Attendance was compulsory, absence resulting in fines and excommunication. Sermon structure proceeded from the recounting of a Biblical text to an exegesis, followed by directions on how the text applied to everyday life. Surviving printed sermons, and the written notes taken by literate parishioners, evidence fine doctrinal hair-splitting alongside the passionate denunciation of sin, warnings of the wrath to come, appeals to God's mercy, and horrific descriptions of Hell. Charismatic ministers made full use of oratorical devices, including calls for 'amens' from the audience. In certain respects there were elements of continuity with pre-Reformation experience: visual images of the Five Wounds were broken up and burnt at the same time as excruciating verbal descriptions of Christ's suffering body were brought before the auditors of Scotland's leading preachers.

Only two pulpits survive from the period 1560 to 1600. The remains of one, thought to have been made in 1594 for the Chapel Royal of Stirling Castle, are now highly dilapidated.⁶ The other, now displayed in the National Museum of Scotland, was given to the church of Parton, Kirkcudbrightshire, by the minister of the parish, Robert Glendonwyn, and his father John. Their initials are carved upon the sounding board cresting, along with the family's coat of arms and the date, 1598 (Figure 2). The circumstances behind the gift are worth rehearsing, for they illustrate several aspects of the immediate post-Reformation period. John Glendonwyn of Drumrash headed a cadet branch of the family of Glendonwyn of Parton. The senior family held the right of presentation to the parish before 1560 and remained Catholics into the seventeenth century. John Glendonwyn, by contrast, adopted the new faith and obtained the church lands of Parton. Robert, his son, graduated from Glasgow in 1584 and became the first Reformed minister at Parton in 1594, the parish having been served only by readers since the departure of the priest in 1564.⁷ The pulpit does not just proclaim the victory of one gentry family over its cousins; the central inscription, 'Feir the Lord and Honor his Hous', equally asserts the rôle that the Word, and the minister, held in the new religion. The remaining innocuous decoration is fundamentally late Gothic, with Renaissance flourishes in the repeating guilloche panels and the stylised vegetal motif of the central back panel. The interlace figure seen on this panel is similar to provenanced woodwork from secular contexts in Dumfriesshire and Kirkcudbrightshire of the same period.⁸

Over a dozen seventeenth century pulpits survive although in no case is the integrity of the item unblemished.⁹ Two associated with the name of John Knox almost certainly

do not antedate his death in 1572. The first of these, from St Giles in Edinburgh, given to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland in 1826 and now displayed in the National Museum of Scotland, is exceptionally plain and somewhat mutilated. The second, from St Andrews parish church and now in St Salvator's Chapel at the University, is semi-circular at the front and embellished with classical arcading (Figure 3). Knox ministered briefly at St Andrews during the first months of 1560 before becoming the parish minister at Edinburgh, a post he retained until his death; hence the inductive leap made on behalf of these two pulpits by nineteenth century antiquarians. Other less romantic examples survive in the churches for which they were made but they are rare, and dated examples, such as that of 1615 at Dun, Angus, exceptionally so. Perhaps the earliest pulpit for which a record of the maker's name survives is that at Ayr, for which John Hunter was paid £600 Scots in 1655.¹⁰ It was substantially damaged during renovations in 1887 but restored in 1952. A photograph of 1883 shows how it appeared formerly, with a bowed front and simple decoration, but of great size and presence (Figure 4).¹¹

With many of these pulpits, below the minister's position was the seat of the reader. The reader was the parish junior, an un-ordained scholar licenced by the Presbytery and contracted to read out in public, in urban parishes on a daily basis, the books of the Bible; not according to a lectionary but from the first to the final chapter without omission. Hunter's Ayr pulpit is unusual in accommodating not only the reader but also providing benches at either side for the parish elders, elected by congregations to sit on the Kirk Session, or parish court.¹² Readers were also frequently the session clerks, parish schoolmasters and precentors. The role of the precentor was to lead the congregation in the singing of psalms. Seven metrical psalters were printed in Scotland between 1564 and 1666, employing simple melodies, and translations easy both to understand and to commit to memory.¹³ Organs and other musical instruments, however, were regarded as superfluous idolatry. A rare precentor's chair from Biggar, Lanarkshire, made in ashwood in 1788 by the wright, John Tweedie, was discovered by David Jones in 1987 (Figure 5).¹⁴ The chair happens to be one of the earliest recorded brander-backs.

Unsurprisingly, the eighteenth century witnessed increasing architectural sophistication in church building. St Andrew's Church in Glasgow was designed by the local tobacco merchant and amateur architect, Allan Dreghorn, along with the stonemason, Mungo Naysmith, between 1739 and 1759, drawing inspiration from James Gibb's St Martin's in the Fields, London. The magnificent rococo plasterwork was supplied by Thomas Clayton and the mahogany pulpit was constructed by James Cation in October 1757.¹⁵ In 1742 at St Nicholas' Kirk, Aberdeen, the roof caved in and Gibbs himself, Aberdonian by birth, gave the kirk plans for a new building. These included a sumptuously decorated pulpit, ready for use in 1755.¹⁶

Beyond the minister sat the congregation. Before the Reformation, people often stood to witness Mass and to hear what they could of the liturgy. Not until the seventeenth century did permanent seating gradually appear in churches and until the eighteenth century men and women were often accommodated apart. Women in particular brought their own small domestic stools to church.¹⁷ One rare example of such a stool has survived thanks to its alleged provenance (Figure 6). This was reputedly the stool that Jenny Geddes, an Edinburgh greengrocer, flung at the Dean of St Giles during the rioting that greeted the reading of the new prayer book in July 1637. This event has long been celebrated as the starting point for the civil wars that engulfed the British Isles in the years

following and after the stool was given the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland in 1818, lengthy enquires into its history established that it was at least believed to be Jenny's stool from as early as the 1720s.¹⁸

During the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, box pews became established and galleries were constructed to accommodate expanding populations. Seating was paid for by the heritors (*anglice* freeholders) of the parish, who were legally responsible for maintaining the church and minister. Some pews remained the property of the family that built them while others were rented out. In towns the magistrates and trade incorporations might have their own seating. The grander the occupant, the grander and more prominent the construction, as with the loft at Kilbirnie, Ayrshire, built in around 1705 for the first Viscount Garnock (Figure 7). An evocative view of a typical accretive interior, now lost, was drawn for the antiquary George Henry Hutton in 1819 at St Duthac's church in Tain, Easter Ross (Figure 8).¹⁹ The sketch was made four years after the church had been abandoned in favour of an entirely new building. Formerly a major pilgrimage destination, the structure had been completed in 1460 and Hutton's interest lay in the pre-Reformation sanctity of the site. The pulpit raised up against the south wall, was probably made using parts of the former choir stalls and rood screen. When the building was restored in 1877, the interior had decayed almost entirely and the pulpit was reconstructed anew, incorporating a few ancient fragments.²⁰

The key physical dissimilarities between English and Scottish churches arise from the relative infrequency of communion in Scotland and the manner in which it was enacted. Communion before the Reformation (in contrast to witnessing of the Mass) was an annual event for most people. The *Book of Discipline* anticipated ministration of the Lord's Supper four times each year, but in practice once or twice yearly was more common. Thus, as in most other Calvinist countries, pulpits came to occupy the central position of the former altar. Imposing pulpits were built in English churches during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries but remained at one or other side of the chancel. In the rare instances where funds allowed, Scottish churches were actually rebuilt in a short cruciform, T-shaped, or entirely box-like manner, all notion of nave and chancel extinguished and the preacher audible and visible from all parts of the building. Yet while sermons were central to weekly observance, the infrequent sacrament of communion remained a high point in the calendar.

To gain access to communion required proof of good repute and an understanding of the faith. Catechism was thus an essential preliminary to participation in the Lord's Supper and during the week or fortnight before this special Sunday, parishioners were questioned by elders and minister to establish orthodoxy, faith and understanding. In return for a clean sheet one received a paper ticket or lead token allowing entrance to the church for the sacrament. A watercolour by David Allan of the 1780s shows this process taking place at Dunfermline Abbey (Figure 9). Typical elevated box pews, with armorial decoration, are visible at left and right. The green napery draped upon the pulpit and lower lettern was customary from at least the early seventeenth century and the purpose of the hourglass was to confine enthusiastic preachers to their allotted time.²¹ Also visible at the left of the pulpit is an iron bracket, for a silver or pewter baptismal basin. Baptism after the Reformation continued to be administered to infants although the parents had to demonstrate Christian commitment and Calvinist orthodoxy. The reformers were insistent that this sacrament, using unconsecrated water and without any sign of the cross, take place in full sight of the

congregation, hence the pulpit-side position of the new basins.²²

Communion was preceded by the usual sermons, only intensified in anticipation of the event to come. Saturday would be devoted to preparatory sermons and readings, Monday to thanksgiving sermons and prayer. In the decades around 1600, fasting was common, ecstatic visions were not unknown, and the minister never let his parishioners forget that some among them were fraudulent and destined for damnation. Communion itself was a model of simplicity. In the words of Knox, 'the exhortation ended, the Minister commeth down from the pulpit, and sitteth at the Table, every man and woman in likewise taking their place as occasion best serveth'.²³ Giving thanks, the minister would break the bread and pour the wine into cups (not a chalice), each to be circulated among the communicants themselves. The reformers reasoned that since at the Last Supper 'Christ Jesus sat with his discipillis ... thairfoir do we jüge, that sitting at a table is most convenient to that holie actioun.'²⁴

The tables used were temporary trestle tables. Kirk session minutes record regular payments to wrights for the timber and labour involved.²⁵ In England, permanent communion tables, resembling the domestic dining tables of the gentry, were quite common during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries but this was not so in Scotland.²⁶ The nature and positioning of communion tables was in fact emblematic of the divisions between, and within, English and Scottish churches during the reign of Charles I. The English Church's Injunctions of 1559 stipulated that tables be stored against the east wall and moved into the centre of the nave for the Lord's Supper. Local practice varied, however, and many English tables were actually kept in the position of the former altars. Under William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1633 until his execution in 1645, the restoration of the Holy Table to an altar-like position became a matter of policy.²⁷ Under pressure from the King, this preference was incorporated into the new Scottish liturgy compiled between 1634 and 1637 by Bishops Maxwell and Wedderburn, undermining the very deliberate equality and simplicity that Knox had envisaged. It was this *Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments* that when read at St Giles on 23 July 1637 provoked the (premeditated) riot that resulted in the composition of the National Covenant.²⁸ The National Covenant was effectively a declaration of rebellion, with signatories from all ranks of society, in defence of Scottish religious practice. The imposition of a new liturgy without the approval of a General Assembly was taken as unlawful and when an Assembly met in 1638 it abolished the office of bishop. War broke out between the Scots and the King in January 1639.

Vividly illustrative of several points of variance between Scottish and English practice during the 1630s is the unique representation of a communion table, in the English fashion, occurring on the central medallion of a silver bread plate made for Trinity College Church, Edinburgh, in 1633 (Figure 10). A few Scots, among them the minister of Trinity College, Thomas Sydserff, were sympathetic to Laud's ceremonial innovations and to the notion of the 'beauty of holiness'.²⁹ Attracting favourable attention from Charles I during the King's visit to Scotland in 1633, Sydserff was appointed Bishop of Brechin the following year and became Bishop of Galloway in 1635. The bread plate formed part of a lavish service acquired using £1,400 Scots donated by wealthy parishioners and Sydserff's bravado is manifested in the figure seen kneeling alongside the table.³⁰ This might be either a minister in receipt of grace or Christ Himself, each equally abhorrent to Reformed Scottish sensibilities since if depicting Christ, the plate itself was idolatrous, or if

a minister, the action depicted was an idolatrous one. In 1618 James VI had managed to force the General Assembly to accept a new policy of kneeling at communion but it was not subsequently enforced.³¹ The view among the Scots was that this common English practice was at best idolatrous and at worst indicated a belief in transubstantiation.³²

Kneeling in England was connected with railing since the presence of a chancel rail implied kneeling to take communion. In 1636, Laud ordered the railing of chancels as a measure to inspire 'uniformity and decency'.³³ In practice, many parishes ignored him, some introduced rails for the first time, and still others did nothing because their Elizabethan rails had not previously been removed. Railings were doubly irrelevant in Scotland, however, since kneeling was considered inappropriate and tables were not permanent fixtures.³⁴ Nevertheless, a temporary fixture erected in some large churches at communion time superficially resembled railings and this was the *travess* or fence, designed to prevent the ungodly from taking part in the proceedings. At gates within these fences, elders might collect the precious tokens or tickets, rather than at the kirk door. A rare, and probably unique, drawing of fencing, in around 1800 at Lady Glenorchy's Church, Edinburgh, was published by the Reverend Thomas Burns in 1924 and is reproduced here in spite of the poor quality of the printed image (Figure 11).³⁵ The cost of 'ane travess for holding furth of ye non-communicants' is commonly recorded in the session minutes of large parishes during the seventeenth century and the term 'fencing the tables' survived into the nineteenth century, regardless of whether separation was achieved using a fence or by other means.³⁶

It was seldom possible to serve all communicants in one sitting, regardless of the type of table employed, and as fixed seating encroached upon the floor space in many parishes, communion tables were replaced by convertible pews. Apparently designed on a Dutch model, the seats and dividing haffits could be removed and rearranged to form long tables. On normal Sundays adaptable pews gave rent-free seating to the poor. A particularly ingenious variation on this format, occasionally adopted in the nineteenth century, involved a tilting mechanism. By releasing a few bolts, the back of one line of pews became the table top, the bench for that row moving forward against the rear of the row in front. An example of such a mechanism, from the Free Kirk of Livingston at Tulloch, West Lothian, and made in 1844, is preserved in the National Museum of Scotland (Figure 12). A third alternative along these lines was simply to abandon the tradition of the long table and for communicants to remain within their adaptable box pews, the elders taking the consecrated elements by hand from a small head table to each box.

A vital adjunct to Sunday sermons, limited in England to localised pockets of puritanism, was public confession and repentance. Previously a private matter resolved through sacramental absolution, the pursuit of forgiveness for sin became after 1560 a concern for the community and nation. Elders were charged with seeking out transgressions, the most common offences being fornication, drunkenness and brawling, and those whose guilt was established by witnesses at the Kirk Session had to undergo penance before readmission to worship and communion.³⁷ The sinner would be made to stand at the kirk door in shame, whilst the congregation filed past. They would then sit, kneel or stand barefoot upon a stool of repentance, close by the pulpit, wearing a gown of sack cloth. This ordeal could continue over several sabbaths, the number depending upon the severity of the sin, until the penitent was allowed to confess and ask forgiveness of his neighbours and of God. This done, the minister would lead the congregation in

receiving him back into the fold. The spectacle was voyeuristic but might also offer a means of healing, providing that the people accepted its necessity and value.³⁸

The design of repentance stools varied greatly. Some, such as that from Monzie, Perthshire (Figure 14), were oversized domestic stools, but such examples may date from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries when Reformation fervour had waned and few individuals underwent the process. At Holy Trinity Church, St Andrews, there survives a short bench, the back painted with the word 'Repentance', and documentary evidence shows that 'forms' for several occupants were used quite widely.³⁹ In many cases the position was elevated: the 'pillar' at Elgin required access from a ladder, while an English visitor to St Giles Kirk in Edinburgh in 1636 found the stool there erected 'about two yards from the ground'.⁴⁰ Elsewhere, however, penitents sat beneath the pulpit, separated from the godly audience by a level distance, while in some kirks high and low stools were built to discriminate between greater and lesser sinners. David Allan's late depiction of *The Black Stool*, implicitly critical of the institution, features a form of anti-pulpit or sinners' loft (Figure 13). The key to the young man's misdemeanour sits sobbing in the centre foreground.⁴¹

One final, incidental class of furniture worth recording is the 'wenscot stools to hold ye basins at ye church doors' which many session records mention following the purchase of brass, copper or pewter alms basins.⁴² In contrast to the shameful stools of penitence, these utilitarian objects were often well jointed from quality timber. Three particularly elegant alms stools from Cromarty, Ross-shire, dispense with the need for a basin by virtue of their concave surfaces (Figure 15). Alms were also taken from the pew using ladles, that is, boxes affixed to long poles (Figure 16).

This brief discussion of the major classes of wooden artefact produced to serve the religious culture of the Scottish people between the mid-sixteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries is intended to spark interest in a field that has not attracted great attention from furniture historians. The Scots have not, historically, valued a religious tradition embodied in material things to the same extent that the English have done. The key work of scholarship touching these matters, George Hay's *The Architecture of Scottish Post-Reformation Churches*, was published as long ago as 1957. Only 22 of Hay's 300 pages discuss furnishings, including tantalising references to items which have since disappeared. One reason for the loss of interior fittings lies in the continuing tempestuous history of the Scottish church. The single most important event in Scotland during the nineteenth century was quite probably the Disruption, in May 1843, when three fifths of the Scottish clergy left the established Church of Scotland to form the Free Church. The immediate cause was the question of whether patrons could impose ministers upon congregations – the proprietorial right of presentation – or whether congregations should be free to choose, or at least to veto, new ministers. This was a long established grievance among strict Presbyterians but the wrangling it provoked between the General Assembly and the Court of Session exposed a deeper constitutional conflict between church and state. Among the consequences of the Disruption was the ultimate duplication of ecclesiastical provision in almost every part of the country, and subsequent splits and unions during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries produced a considerable number of redundant church buildings. Taken alongside a Calvinist insistence upon the fundamental irrelevance to worship of material trappings, the remains in timber of what was still the relatively recent past were highly vulnerable. Antiquaries, such as Sir Walter Scott, who procured panelling from the Abbey Church of Dunfermline with which to line his

hall at Abbotsford, were a cranky minority. Today the situation is changing. NADFAS branches are recording interiors regardless of denomination while the gazetteer project run by Scottish Church Heritage Research promises to make available an unprecedented record of church contents as well as of the architectural context.⁴³

At the confluence of several disciplines – art history, social history, political history, architectural history, and the history of ideas – the study of Scottish kirk furnishings is ripe for further research.

REFERENCES

1. John Knox, *Works*, ed. David Laing, 6 vols, Edinburgh, 1846–64, vol. II, *The Buke of Discipline*, p.252. Compiled at the request of the Privy Council, the book was not adopted by Parliament since its insistence upon sound financial foundations threatened gains secured by the nobility and gentry from the collapse of the existing order.
2. Sallyanne Simpson, 'The Choir Stalls and Rood Screen', in *Kings's College Chapel, Aberdeen, 1500–2000*, ed. Jane Geddes (Aberdeen, 2000), pp.74–97.
3. Richard Emerson, 'Bishop Stewart's Pulpit', in *Kings's College Chapel, Aberdeen, 1500–2000*, ed. Jane Geddes (Aberdeen, 2000), pp. 137–46. Emerson discusses at length the inconsistency between the irregular plan of the pulpit and its symmetrical sounding board, concluding that the form recorded by Logan in a drawing of 1815 is a rearrangement of the 16th century. See also *Logan's Collections*, ed. J. Cruickshank, Third Spalding Club, Aberdeen, 1941, p.147.
4. John Spalding, *Memorialls of the Troubles in Scotland and England*, ed. John Stuart, Aberdeen: Spalding Club, 1850–51, vol. I, p.313. Any idolatrous iconography that had evaded destruction during the 16th century was generally swept away during the civil wars of the 17th century. For the covenanters, see below.
5. Margo Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland*, New Haven, 2002, p.85. Todd's important study of the actual religious experience of the Scottish people during this period is drawn from Kirk Session records.
6. Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, *Stirlingshire*, vol. I, Edinburgh, 1963, p.138 and pl.95. Devoid of decoration, the remnants indicate a polygonal plan.
7. R.C.Reid, 'The Family of Glendonyng', *Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society*, vol. XXII, 1942, pp.10–17. Hew Scott, *Fasti ecclesiae Scotticae*, New Edition, vol.2, p.470, and vol.8, p.207, Edinburgh, 1915. P.H. McKerlie, *History of the Lands and their Owners in Galloway*, Edinburgh, 1879, vol. V, p. 32. Parton, and Drumrash, are situated on the east bank of Loch Ken. The pulpit was removed when the church was rebuilt in 1834 and in 1865 it was given to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland by the incumbent minister. McKerlie states that before 1834 the church had held 'pews likewise carved'. A 17th century pulpit bearing the initials of the incumbent minister was recorded by Logan at Udney, Aberdeenshire, *Logan's Collections*, 1941, p.10. For readers, see below.
9. The extensive survey undertaken by George Hay and published as *The Architecture of Scottish Post-Reformation Churches, 1560–1843*, Oxford, 1957, includes an inventory of furnishings. Hay's findings on furniture were also published as 'Scottish Post-Reformation Church Furniture', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, vol.LXXXVIII, 1956, pp.47–56.
10. Hay, 1957, p.185.
11. Curved plans appear to have been more numerous than polygonal ones during this period. Hay, 1956, p.49.
12. Elders are a defining element of the presbyterian structure, a summary of which can be found in Henry R. Sefton, 'Presbyterianism', *Scottish Life and Society: A Compendium of Scottish Ethnology*, vol. 12 (Religion), ed.s C. MacLean and K. Veitch, Edinburgh, 2006, pp.127–42. Francis Lyall, 'The Impact of the Reformation in Relation to Church, State and Individual', in the same volume, pp.103–23, is equally useful. Not all contributions to this work, however, demonstrate an appreciation of material culture or historical methodology.
13. Todd, pp. 68–73.
14. David Jones, *Looking at Scottish Furniture: A Documented Anthology, 1570–1900*, Crawford Arts Centre, St Andrews, 1987, catalogue number 12.
15. *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Glasgow, 1718–88*, Scottish Burgh Records Society, vol.23, Glasgow, 1911, p.364. Caiton shared the main joinery contract of 1753, worth over ££800, with John Wilson. Final payments were made in 1757.
16. Hay, 1957, p.100; Terry Friedman, *James Gibbs*, New Haven, 1984, pp.81–3. The design for the pulpit in

the collection of the Victoria & Albert Museum, D.1163-1898, resembles only partially the finished work: either an alternative drawing has been lost or the wright involved departed somewhat from Gibb's design.

17. William McMillan, *The Worship of the Scottish Reformed Church, 1550-1638*, Dunfermline, 1931, pp.155-6.

18. Minute Book of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 20 December 1850. For the Prayer Book controversy, see below.

19. National Library of Scotland, Adv.Ms.30.5.23.147. This drawing was apparently a commission but Hutton also received drawings as gifts from others. Figure 1, Adv.Ms.30.5.22.3a, was given to Hutton by James Logan.

20. Rev. William Taylor, *Researches in the History of Tain*, Tain, 1882, p.52. The popular notion that the pulpit was paid for by the Regent Moray to reward local protestant zeal is probably wide of the mark. Two tiny fragments of the late 15th century woodwork are kept at Tain and District Museum.

21. For green silk see Todd, p.27, note 11. Green paint was also sometimes used on woodwork: Hay, 1957, p.215.

22. Knox, vol. VI, *The Book of Common Order*, p.325. Marriage also moved from the kirk door to a position under the pulpit. Todd, p.274.

23. Knox, vol. II, *The Buik of Discipline*, p.187.

25. Thomas Burns, *Old Scottish Communion Plate*, Edinburgh, 1892, p.14; Todd, p.104, note 68.

26. For examples of such tables, see Anthony Wells-Cole, 'Oak Furniture in Norfolk, 1530-1640', *Regional Furniture*, Vol. IV, 1990, figures 36-41.

27. Or rather, of insinuation at the hands of Laudian clergy. It was not until June 1640 that canons were published ordering the permanent placement of the table at the east end 'decently served with rails'. J. P. Kenyon, *The Stuart Constitution, 1603-1688*, Second Edition, Cambridge, 1986, p.153. Laud's drive for uniformity in this regard was widely, although incorrectly, perceived as crypto-Catholicism.

28. The authoritative study of this book, containing a full text, is Gordon Donaldson, *The Making of the Scottish Prayer Book of 1637*, Edinburgh, 1954.

29. William Laud, *The Works of the Most Reverend Father in God, William Laud, D.D.*, ed. W. Scott and J. Bliss, Oxford, 1847-60, vol. III, p. 407. The phrase was coined by Bishop Matthew Wren.

30. Todd, p.102, note 60; Burns, 1892, pp.223-4. I am grateful to George Dalglish, National Museums Scotland, for discussions about this plate.

31. Kneeling was one of the Five Articles forced on the General Assembly at Perth and ratified by Parliament in 1621, the others being private baptism, private communion for the sick, the confirmation of children, and observance of holy days (including Easter).

32. Calvin, Knox and the English church all acknowledged a Real Presence within the bread and wine, specifically rejecting the Zwinglian idea that communion was a symbolic action only. There was a broad range of opinion as to what took place spiritually during communion but to accuse the English of promoting transubstantiation was a wilful misinterpretation.

33. Laud, vol. III, p. 407.

34. Exceptions, as ever, prove the rule: ministers at Melrose and Paisley who 'profaned the sacrament' through the use of rails, altar-like tables and kneeling, were reprimanded by their Presbyteries. McMillan, p.234.

35. Thomas Burns, 'An Old Communion Custom', *Life and Work: The Church of Scotland Magazine and Mission Record*, Vol. XLVI, 1924, pp.270-1. The Church, built in 1772, was demolished, along with the mid-15th century Trinity College Church, in 1844 to make way for Waverley railway station; the congregation relocated to an existing relief chapel in Roxburgh Place.

36. Burns, 1892, p.14, note 5, citing Edinburgh. The word 'flake' was also used, meaning a hurdle or framework of crossed slats as found in fencing, gates, cattle pens and barricades. The origin of the phrase was eventually forgotten and yet transferred upon the minister's exhortation not to proceed to communion in a condition of unconfessed sin.

37. Knox, vol. II, *The Buik of Discipline*, pp.227-33.

38. The rituals and symbolism of repentance within communities where it was well-established are extensively and illuminatingly examined in Todd, pp.127-82.

39. Todd, p.131, note 11, refers to Aberdeen, Glasgow and Trinity College Church, Edinburgh. Todd illustrates the St Andrews bench, plate 11.

40. Todd, p.132, note 12. Logan mentioned a 'projecting platform' at Udney old kirk, Aberdeenshire, *Logan's Collections*, p.10.

41. For Allan's genre work see National Galleries of Scotland, *The Draughtsman's Art*, exhibition catalogue, Edinburgh, 1999, p.146. There is little to suggest that the interior of *The Black Stool* was modelled on any actual location.

42. Hay, 1957, p.232, quoting Dalmeny Session Minutes, 1709, National Archives of Scotland, CH2/86.

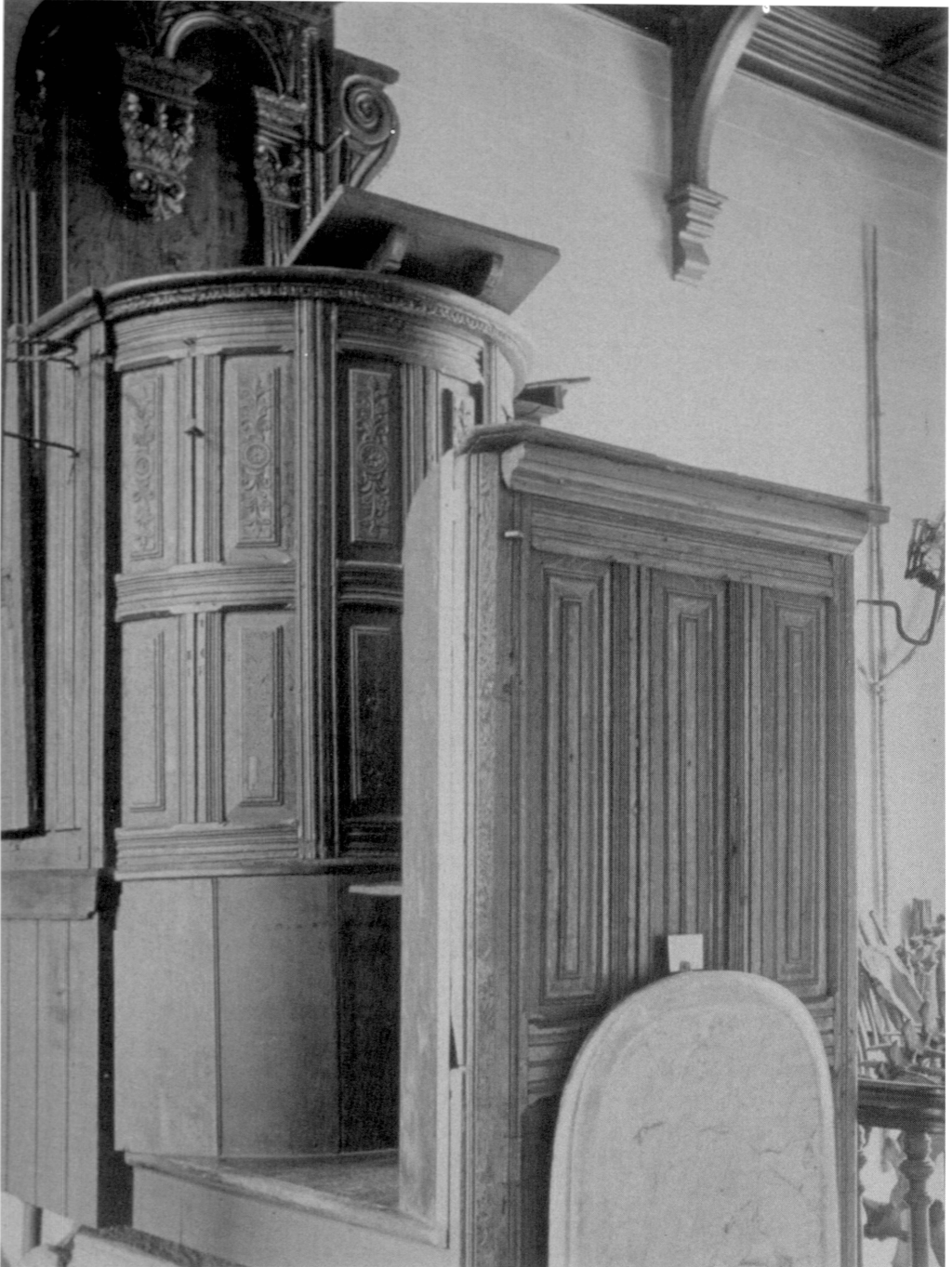
43. See <http://www.scottishchurchheritage.org.uk>.



1. Pulpit, oak, St Machar's Cathedral, Old Aberdeen, drawing by James Logan, 1819
National Library of Scotland



2. Pulpit, oak, Parton, Kirkcudbrightshire, 1598
National Museums Scotland, accession number H.KL 2



3. Pulpit, oak, St Salvator's Chapel, St Andrews, largely seventeenth century
University of St Andrews Library, Valentine Collection



4. Pulpit, oak, Ayr, by John Hunter, 1655
Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland



5. Precentor's chair, ash, Biggar, Lanarkshire, by John Tweedie, 1788
Biggar Museums Trust. Photo courtesy of David Jones



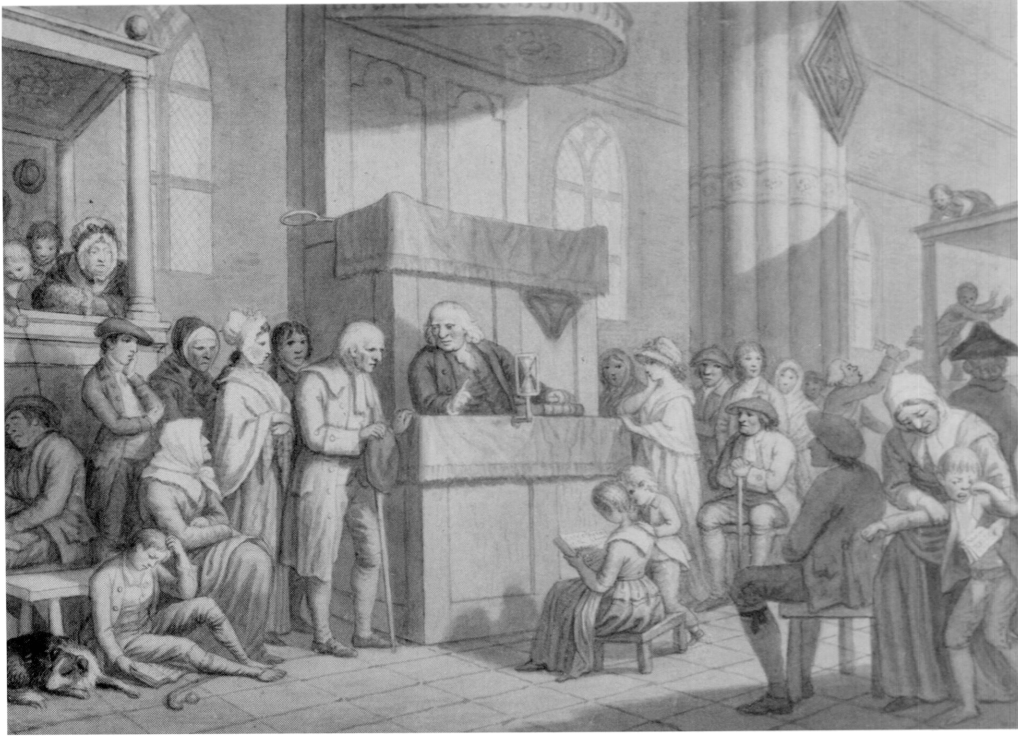
6. Stool, oak and leather, Scotland, seventeenth century
National Museums Scotland, accession number H.KL 3



7. Crawford family loft, Kilbirnie, Ayrshire, around 1705
University of St Andrews Library, Valentine Collection



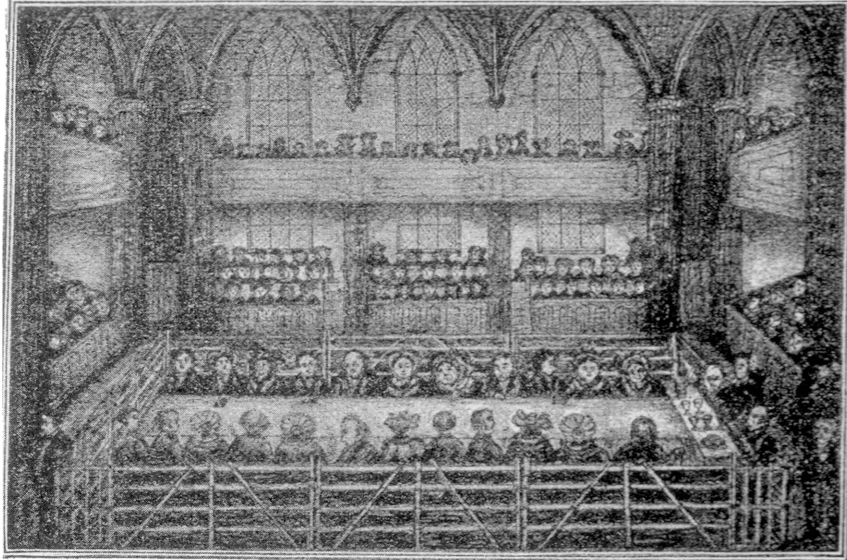
8. Interior of St Duthac's Collegiate Church, Tain, Ross-shire, drawing by James Shand, 1819
National Library of Scotland



9. *The Catechism*, drawing finished in watercolour by David Allan, 1780s
Courtesy of Robert Ferguson Esq.



10. Bread Plate, silver, detail of engraving, Thomas Kirkwood, Edinburgh, 1633
National Museums Scotland, accession number K.2001.466.5



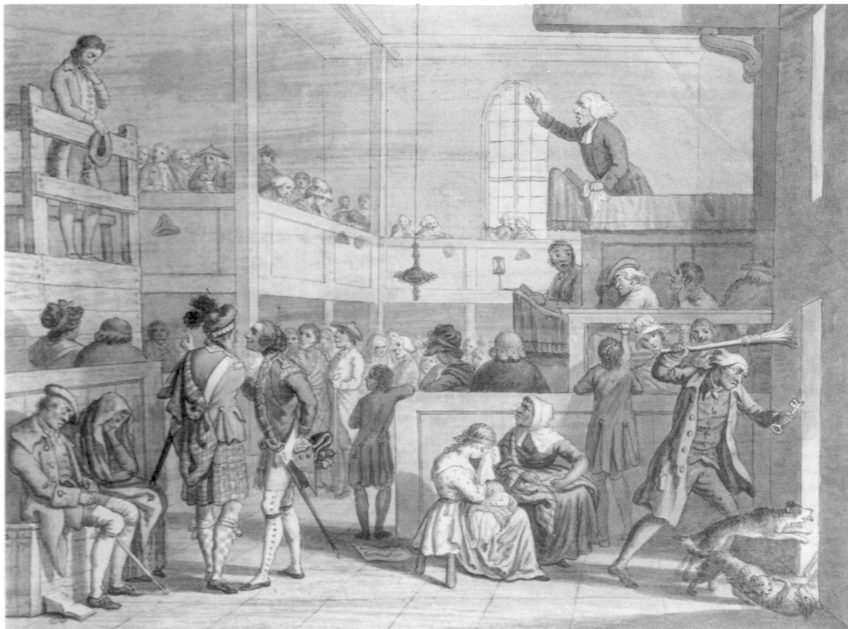
11. Communion at Lady Glenorchy's Church, Edinburgh, anonymous drawing, around 1800
National Library of Scotland



12. Pews, grained softwood, Tulloch, West Lothian, 1844
National Museums Scotland, accession number H.KL 154



13. Stool of repentance, pine, 43.5cm high, Monzie, Perthshire, late eighteenth or early nineteenth century
National Museums Scotland, accession number H.MR 41



14. *The Black Stool*, drawing finished in watercolour by David Allan, 1795
National Gallery of Scotland



15. Alms stools, elm, Cromarty East Church, Ross-shire, probably around 1900
Cromarty Courthouse Museum



16. Collecting ladle, St John's Free Church, Edinburgh, later nineteenth century
National Museums Scotland, accession number H.KJ 241