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Pirrie, Robert (2019). Edinburgh's Urban Enlightenment and George IV: Staging North Britain, 1752-1822. Student dissertation for The Open University module A826 MA History part 2.

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**Edinburgh's Urban Enlightenment and George IV:
Staging North Britain,
1752-1822**

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A dissertation submitted to The Open University

for the degree of

MA in History

January 2019

WORD COUNT: 15,993

Abstract

From 1752 until the visit of George IV in 1822, Edinburgh expanded and improved through planned urban development on classical principles. Historians have broadly endorsed accounts of the public spectacles and official functions of the king's sojourn in the city as ersatz Highland pageantry projecting a national identity devoid of the Scottish Lowlands. This study asks if evidence supports an alternative interpretation locating the proceedings as epochal royal patronage within urban cultural history.

Three largely discrete fields of historiography are examined: Peter Borsay's seminal study of English provincial towns, 1660-1770; Edinburgh's urban history, 1752-1822; and George IV's 1822 visit. The analysis reveals how authorial preferences have shaped secondary literature, obscuring common urban cultural forms and inhibiting potentially illuminating synthesis. The study's resulting hypothesis is to flex and extend Borsay's analytical framework to characterise as an 'Urban Enlightenment' the cultural resurgence and planned expansion of Edinburgh, 1752-1822. The concept is developed using primary sources to identify similarities and distinctions between Edinburgh and English provincial towns, before being applied to primary sources relating to the royal visit, disclosing cultural patterns that conform to the 'Urban Enlightenment' paradigm.

The study concludes that reframing George IV's visit within urban cultural history offers fresh insight into the role of the city in projecting Scottish identity. This proposes new perspectives on widely disseminated interpretations, suggesting historians' disproportionate concerns over the legitimacy of Highland cultural signifiers have eclipsed Edinburgh's Urban Enlightenment as a context for the royal visit.

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Declaration

I declare that this dissertation is my own, unaided work and that I have not submitted it, or any part of it, for a degree at The Open University or any other university or institution. Parts of this dissertation are built on work submitted for the End of Module Assessment of A825.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr Nicholas Cott for his support and encouragement in supervising this dissertation, and Dr Isobel Falconer for her advice and guidance as my tutor on the A825 module.

Chapter 1: Introduction

‘No other nation has cherished so absurd an image, and none perhaps would accept it while knowing it to be a lie. For that monstrous error, the pageantry of Scott and the euphoria of the King’s Jaunt were largely responsible’.¹ John Prebble’s judgement of the first visit to Scotland by a reigning monarch in one hundred and eighty-nine years remains widely accepted and disseminated, as evidenced by the official website of Edinburgh as a UNESCO City of Literature: ‘In 1822, Sir Walter Scott arranged a huge pageant for George IV’s visit to Edinburgh, changing the way Scotland viewed itself forever’.² Eric Evans’ widely-read scholarly history of modern Britain disparages the visit as ‘grandiose myth-making’ and a portrait of George IV in Edinburgh as ‘an odious mixture of pure kitsch and gross insensitivity’.³ Primary sources reveal more complex sensibilities in which urban agency animated the experience of contemporaries who witnessed events during the three-week visit: ‘You never saw a small room so crowded [...] as were all the broad long streets of this magnificent town that evening’.⁴ First impressions were augmented by the interaction of city, king and citizens: ‘He was yet more surprised when he entered Princes Street the Calton [*Hill*] burst upon him covered with 150 thousand people, the Castle the old town St Andrew’s Square [*no punctuation visible*], the street itself all filled with human beings [...] I never saw such a glorious sight’.⁵ That this impact was achieved by civic Edinburgh with just three

¹ John Prebble, *The King’s Jaunt: George IV in Scotland, August 22, ‘One and twenty daft days’* (London: Collins, 1988; repr. Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2000), p. 364.

² ‘Sir Walter Scott and George IV’, Edinburgh City of Literature <<http://www.cityofliterature.com/a-to-z/sir-walter-scott-george-iv/>> [accessed 8 December 2018].

³ Eric J. Evans, *The Shaping of Modern Britain: Identity, Industry and Empire, 1780-1914* (Oxford: Routledge, 2011), pp. 258-9.

⁴ ‘A Contemporary Account of the Royal Visit to Edinburgh, 1822’, ed. by B. C. Skinner, *The Book of the Old Edinburgh Club*, XXXI (1962), pp. 65-167 (p. 109).

⁵ Caroline Johnstone, Letter to Elizabeth Cholmeley describing George IV’s visit to Edinburgh, n.d. [end August 1822], p. 2, Buxton Papers, 119/1, Cambridge University Library, Cambridge.

weeks' notice of the king's intended sojourn suggests the preceding seventy years of urban expansion were more historically important to the occasion than secondary literature acknowledges. Historians prefer the pageant characterisation of a 'stage-managed royal visit' and overlook the morphology of the urban stage upon which its impact and meaning depended.⁶

Employing the theme of urban history, the dissertation addresses the main research question of whether evidence supports the argument that the historical significance of George IV's 1822 visit to Edinburgh is best understood within the narrative of the city's urban transformation over the seven preceding decades. Supplementary questions are: what was distinctive about Edinburgh's urban transformation in a British context; why does the historiography of George IV's visit isolate the event chronologically and spatially from Edinburgh's urban history; and why have historians fixated on the visit as evidencing myth in the making of Scottish history? By contextualising the visit in terms of urban change over time — not a single episode — the dissertation challenges secondary literature that isolates, diminishes and trivialises George IV's 'jaunt'. The objective is to construct and test a fresh approach to the event founded on urban *cultural* history. This perspective does not depend for validity upon wholesale contradiction of existing historiography, but rather seeks a more nuanced and holistic treatment of George IV's visit.

The genesis of this dissertation lies in studying three texts, each respectively formative within three domains of historiography, and asking how and why these subject areas have remained largely segregated in secondary literature. Chapter 2 examines this

⁶ Evans, p. 259.

historiography and its dominant modern texts to identify inter-relationships. The first domain is represented by Peter Borsay's *The English Urban Renaissance* in which, significantly for this study, royal patronage is ascribed dynamic urban agency.⁷ Borsay's analytical framework — with its explanatory power — provides the methodological core of this dissertation. While Borsay's field of study is English provincial towns, 1660 to 1770, his analysis has utility in a British context, although there has been little attempt to apply his seminal approach to Scotland. The English Urban Renaissance and Scottish Enlightenment-era Edinburgh remain discrete subjects in the literature. Secondly, Edinburgh's urban history is dominated by A. J. Youngson's *The Making of Classical Edinburgh*.⁸ Where Borsay is an aggregation of local histories, Youngson is a singular local urban history, 1750-1840, without mention of George IV's 1822 visit. Thirdly, Prebble's popular history, *The King's Jaunt*, is the only modern text devoted exclusively to the royal visit and dominates its historiography. Hugh Trevor-Roper's assessment of the occasion as a 'charade' is also influential.⁹ Neither author engages in any depth with urban historical context. As Eric Evans' history cited earlier demonstrates, if they mention the visit at all, historians treat it as episodic and tangential in language that echoes Prebble and Trevor-Roper.

Analysis of the historiography will be used to support a conceptual synthesis characterising Edinburgh's classical expansion and urban cultural flowering from 1752 until (and including) the royal visit of 1822. It will be termed Edinburgh's 'Urban Enlightenment', modelled on Borsay's English 'Urban Renaissance'. Chapters 3 and 4

⁷ Peter Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and society in the provincial town, 1660-1770* (Oxford: OUP, 1989; repr. 2002).

⁸ A. J. Youngson, *The Making of Classical Edinburgh 1750-1840* (Edinburgh: EUP, 1966; repr. 1967).

⁹ Hugh Trevor Roper, *The Invention of Scotland: Myth and History* (London: Yale University Press, 2009; repr. 2014), p. 216; Hugh Trevor Roper, 'The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland' in *The Invention of Tradition* ed. by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: CUP, 1983; repr. 1984-2012), pp. 15-42 (pp. 29-31).

develop and interrogate the Urban Enlightenment, using the structure, concepts and terminology of *The English Urban Renaissance* to examine primary sources. Chapter 3 examines Edinburgh's urban development through civic publications and minutes, maps, newspaper and journal articles and personal correspondence to reveal cultural conformities with the socio-economic structures and belief systems Borsay postulates. The expository power of the cerebral realm is lacking from Youngson and has important interpretative implications for George IV's visit. Chapter 4 examines similar primary sources relating to the royal visit to again reveal cultural forms and behaviours identified by Borsay. The chapter will also consider how these primary sources have been interpreted, particularly by Prebble, and consequently how they resonate within the historiography. Edinburgh Town Council Minutes reveal Edinburgh's civic response to news of the visit, testing claims of meddling and self-aggrandisement on the part of Sir Walter Scott. This will inform assessment of reductive interpretations of the visit as a 'hallucination' and evidence 'myth [*in Scotland*] has played a far more important part in history than it has in England'.¹⁰ Chapter 4 contextualises George IV's visit as urban hyper-royal patronage, facilitating a Borsay-esque 'pursuit of status', stratified into personal and social arenas, and beyond into urban and national realms.

Prebble's conclusion is disparaging: 'Walter Scott's Celtification continued to seduce his countrymen, and thereby prepare them for political and industrial exploitation'. Even in acknowledging an enduring impact — 'Scotland could not be the same again' — this authorial viewpoint presents an implicitly pejorative interpretation of urban expansion, condemning related cultural developments as 'absurd' and a 'lie'.¹¹ The

¹⁰ J. G. Lockhart, *The Life of Sir Walter Scott, Bart., 1771-1832, New Popular Edition* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1893), p. 485; Trevor-Roper, *The Invention of Scotland*, p. xxii.

¹¹ Prebble, p. 364.

dissertation scrutinises an alternative perspective, that the visit was the apotheosis of seven decades of Edinburgh's Urban Enlightenment in which the aggregated cultural forms of the city explained the meaning and possibilities of 'Scottish particularity' within modern Hanoverian Britain.¹²

¹² Murray Pittock, 'Plaiding the Invention of Scotland' in *Tartan to Tartanry: Scottish Culture, History and Myth*, ed. by Ian Brown (Edinburgh: EUP, 2010), p. 43.

Chapter 2: Historiography and Edinburgh's Urban Enlightenment

History is a narrative representation of the past, a literary form founded upon a set of historiographical preferences as to subject, 'conceptual apparatus', methodology, sources and writing genre.¹ Factors such as originality, critical reception and popularity cause some histories and authorial preferences to be more formative than others in shaping secondary literature. Inherent in this process is the risk of a singular interpretation — compressed into a static 'abridgement of history' — being transmitted as received orthodoxy, detached from primary research and disengaged from alternatives, parallels and common processes.² This chapter discusses the three historiographic domains referred to in Chapter 1 that have remained largely dissociated. It will be suggested that George IV's 1822 visit to Edinburgh is the subject of sustained abridgement. The chapter proposes Edinburgh's Urban Enlightenment — a Scottish metropolitan correspondent of Borsay's English Urban Renaissance — as the methodological framework with which to examine primary sources in Chapters 3 and 4.

2.1: *The English Urban Renaissance*

Borsay's *The English Urban Renaissance*, published in 1989, is described as the first 'general framework to consider common changes that occurred in many urban places throughout *Great Britain* [*emphasis added*]'.³ The 'Urban Renaissance' is an interpretative construct to represent a series of inter-related developments in English

¹ John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, 6th edn (Oxford: Routledge, 2015), pp. 124-5; Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1978; repr. 1985) cited in Keith Jenkins, *Re-thinking History* (London: Routledge, 1991; repr. 2003), front matter.

² Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (London: G. Bell, 1931; repr. London: Penguin, 1973), pp. 72-6.

³ Donna T. Andrew, Review of Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, *Urban History Review*, 19.1 (1990), 68-9 (p. 69).

provincial towns between 1660 and 1770. Borsay ‘placed the titular tag [*Urban Renaissance*] in the vocabulary of the English social and urban historian’.⁴ It remains ‘the seminal work’ in English provincial urban history, providing a frame of reference with which to differentiate urban centres and their functional specialisation.⁵ Angus McInnes proposed an alternative interpretation of provincial urban change as the emergence of the leisure town.⁶ Both scholars agree that prosperity (Thorstein Veblen’s ‘surplus wealth’) brought about urban specialisation in leisure (to accommodate and display Veblen’s ‘conspicuous consumption’).⁷ Borsay goes beyond an economic-leisure account to explore how and why certain ideas and cultural forms propagated and not others. In order to explain urban phenomena, he penetrates the mental world of educated elites and their aspirations of ‘improvement’. His approach undoubtedly foregrounds elites and is open to criticism as a Whig interpretation of history as progress. Nevertheless, applied critically, it stands as a useful framework to map certain ‘diverse but integrated processes’ of urban development in Great Britain in the long eighteenth century.⁸

There are reasons to be cautious about applying Borsay’s concept to Scotland, among them distinctive political, social, religious, legal, economic, demographic and topographical features. Bob Harris and Charles McKean point out, ‘urban improvement in Scotland remained overtly tied to a set of national meanings in a way not replicated

⁴ Robert Tittler, Review of Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, *Albion*, 22.2, 309-10 (p. 309).

⁵ Bob Harris, ‘Cultural Change in Provincial Scottish Towns, c. 1700-1820’, *The Historical Journal*, 54. 1 (2011), 105-41 (p. 107).

⁶ McInnes, ‘The Emergence of a Leisure Town: Shrewsbury 1660-1760’, *Past & Present*, 120 (1988), 53-87; Peter Borsay, ‘The Emergence of a Leisure Town: Or an Urban Renaissance?’, *Past & Present*, 126 (1990), 189-96; Angus McInnes, ‘The Emergence of a Leisure Town: Or an Urban Renaissance?: Reply’, *Past & Present*, 126 (1990), 196-202.

⁷ Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Macmillan, 1899; repr. London: Random House, 1934).

⁸ Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, p. viii.

south of the border'.⁹ Yet, given the countries' interwoven histories and union in 1707, some common ground or cross mapping is to be expected. While Borsay's implied English provincial exceptionalism *a priori* excludes Scotland, his analysis has an internal logic and dynamic quality that transcends locality. Offering an appealing, generic synthesis of the historian's 'three basic techniques of description, narrative and analysis', sensitively applied, it has utility to explain and compare urban change in Scotland.¹⁰

Writing about Scottish *provincial* towns (therefore excluding Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen), Bob Harris references *The English Urban Renaissance* when describing a 'historic cultural assimilation a century or so after the union of 1707 [...] as one aspect of a Scottish "urban renaissance"'.¹¹ Harris' mapping of developments in Scottish provincial towns bears similarities to Borsay's, encompassing architecture, theatre, assemblies and balls, horse racing, book culture and libraries, music, newspapers, societies and coffee houses. North and south of the border, 'the town came to be a focal point for the consumption and manufacture of culture'.¹² Borsay explains royal patronage was the ultimate imprimatur of status on a given urban form (e.g., monarchical associations in street and building names), the more so if associated with a royal visit.¹³ Borsay systematically aggregates English provincial urban examples and therefore does not micro-historically analyse any single royal visit.

⁹ Bob Harris and Charles McKean, *The Scottish Town in the Age of the Enlightenment 1740-1820* (Edinburgh: EUP, 2014), p. 84.

¹⁰ Tosh, p. 124.

¹¹ Harris, 'Cultural Change', p. 107.

¹² Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, p. 199.

¹³ Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, p. 241.

The periodisation of a Scottish equivalent to the Urban Renaissance would differ from England, which begins with the Restoration of 1660. The 1707 Act of Union — so insignificant for *The English Urban Renaissance* as not to rate a mention — was a seismic event in Scotland, requiring decades of adjustment. Suppression of the last Jacobite Rebellion, 1745-6, brought relative Scottish political stability, coinciding with signs of economic growth gained from the Union. Tom Devine cites the example of linen, ‘Scotland’s most important eighteenth century industry [...] which experienced dynamic growth between 1740 and 1780’.¹⁴ The evidence suggests Scotland’s economic recovery — and springboard for urban improvement — began approximately ninety years after England’s (according to Borsay).

Political stability and consequential prosperity contributed to a process Borsay calls ‘*positive* urbanization’, meaning English towns increasingly had the economic capacity to absorb greater numbers. He charts the growing proportion of England’s population living in settlements of over 5,000 from 8% in 1600 to 16.5% in 1700; and in those over 2,500 from 19% in 1700 to 22.5% by 1750.¹⁵ Estimates for Scotland suggest the proportion living in towns over 2,500 grew from 2.5% in 1560 to 17.3% by 1750.¹⁶ For comparable figures, Devine uses research by Jan de Vries on European urbanisation to conclude that, while England was more urbanised, Scotland’s rate of growth in the later eighteenth century was significantly higher than England’s. English growth was ‘a continuous and protracted process of steadily intensifying urban development’, whereas from 1750 Scottish urbanisation was ‘altogether more abrupt and swift and [...] more

¹⁴ Tom Devine, *The Scottish Nation: A Modern History* (London: Penguin, 2000; rev. 2006 and 2012), p. 58.

¹⁵ Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, pp. 19-20.

¹⁶ R. E. Tyson, ‘Population Patterns: I. to 1770’ in *The Oxford Companion to Scottish History*, ed. by Michael Lynch (Oxford: OUP, 2010, pp. 487-9 (p. 488)).

likely to inflict greater strain', concentrated in the narrow Lowlands central belt dominated by Edinburgh and Glasgow where, by 1800, 60% of Scottish urban dwellers lived.¹⁷ In England, outside London, urbanisation was more diffuse and dynamic.¹⁸

Edinburgh shares with London the functional specialisation of a capital city. Until the Union of the Crowns in 1603, Edinburgh was the seat of Scotland's royal court and, until 1707, of its parliament. The 1707 Act of Union preserved Scotland's law and established religion and Edinburgh therefore remained a legal, religious and cultural capital. As an urban hybrid — part national, part regional capital — it sits uneasily with Borsay's 'provincial' parameters. As will be evidenced in Chapter 3, Edinburgh's urban resurgence from 1752 is also distinguished by its originating ideology, reflecting its role as intellectual capital of the Scottish Enlightenment. Urban improvement in Scotland was imbued with national meaning and ambition beyond anything evident in *The English Urban Renaissance*. This was hyper-urban renaissance that extended Borsay's 'pursuit of status' beyond the personal and civic to the national and pan-national.¹⁹ In like manner, the royal visit to Edinburgh in 1822 is distinctive — temporally, spatially and semiotically — from the intermittent royal visits to English spa towns of Borsay's study.

To summarise, periodisation, demographics, urbanisation, functional specialisation and national meaning distinguish urban development in Scotland and Edinburgh from English provincial towns, but political stability and economic prosperity were common

¹⁷ Devine, *The Scottish Nation*, pp. 154-9.

¹⁸ Evans, p. 52.

¹⁹ Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, p. 225.

stimulants. Geographical proximity combined with social, economic and linguistic affinities suggest the likelihood of significant convergence in urban forms and culture.

2.2: *The Urban Historiography of Edinburgh*

The first serious historical study of Edinburgh is Arnot's *The History of Edinburgh From the Earliest Accounts to 1780*, published in 1779.²⁰ As historiography, it ranks as a primary source in the history of the 'extraordinary outburst of intellectual activity' known as the Scottish Enlightenment.²¹ Arnot established an exceptionalism in relation to the city that has remained a feature of its historiography ever since: 'The affairs of a kingdom, and of its capital, are so closely interwoven, that [...] to connect or separate with propriety their respective affairs, requires nice discernment'.²² Arnot was writing at the height of the Scottish Enlightenment when Edinburgh was 'a hotbed of genius'.²³ Underlining the city's formative intellectual status, in 1780 Edinburgh philosopher Adam Ferguson wrote a forty page entry for 'History' in the second edition of *Encyclopædia Britannica*, replacing the first edition's one paragraph. Arnot's *History of Edinburgh* was a product of the city's literary industry, jointly published by William Creech in Edinburgh and the Scottish publishing house of John Murray in London. Illustrating Borsay's observations on the supply and demand of culture, 'Creech had a passion for the subject and would have been particularly interested in the chapter that discussed the development of printing and periodical publishing in Edinburgh'.²⁴

²⁰ Hugo Arnot, *The History of Edinburgh From the Earliest Accounts to 1780* (Edinburgh: W. Creech, 1779; 2nd edn Edinburgh: T. Turnbull, 1816), p. iii.

²¹ David Daiches, 'The Scottish Enlightenment' in *The Scottish Enlightenment 1730-1790: A Hotbed of Genius*, ed. by David Daiches, Peter Jones and Jean Jones (Edinburgh: Saltire Society, 1996), pp. 1-41.

²² Arnot, p. iii.

²³ The phrase is attributed to the Scottish author Tobias Smollett (1721-71).

²⁴ Richard Sher, *The Enlightenment and the Book: Scottish Authors & Their Publishers in Eighteenth Century Britain, Ireland and America* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2006), p. 423.

Annot himself features in another hybrid primary and secondary source, John Kay's *Original Portraits and Caricature Etchings*, edited by Hugh Paton, first published in 1838, twelve years after Kay's death.²⁵ Highly visual and exquisitely rich in dense social detail, *Original Portraits* is an extraordinary quotidian chronicle of Edinburgh in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In over three hundred and seventy richly detailed etchings forming a visual primary source, Kay recorded the social melting pot of Edinburgh's Old Town as it transitioned to a socially differentiated pattern, sequestering elites in the classical New Town. Accompanying biographical texts are a secondary source, abundant in finely grained particulars of urban life and reflecting a mid-nineteenth century demand for urban cultural nostalgia: 'Kay's characters were "representations of space", maps of the social body, as important to the overall production of urbanism as a "way of life" as the town plans or maps of the city'.²⁶ *Modern Athenians* of 1882 was a retrospective series of caricatures by a different artist, whimsically referencing both Kay and the classical assimilation of Edinburgh originating in the mid-eighteenth century.²⁷ These publications evidence consumer appetite for histories of Edinburgh's urban and socio-cultural transformation from walled city to expansive metropolis, a market some historians argue began with the commercial exploitation of George IV's visit of 1822.

Henry Cockburn's *Memorials*, written between 1821 and 1830, was published in 1856, two years after the author's death. As a memoir, it is a hybrid primary and secondary

²⁵ *A Series of Original Portraits and Caricature Etchings by the late John Kay, with Biographical Sketches and Anecdotes*, ed. by Hugh Paton (Edinburgh, n.p., 1842).

²⁶ Nick Prior, 'The art of space in the space of art: Edinburgh and its Gallery, 1780-1860', *University of Leicester Museum & Society*, 1.2 (2002), 63-74.
<<https://journals.le.ac.uk/ojs1/index.php/mas/issue/view/18>>

²⁷ Benjamin W. Crombie, *Modern Athenians: A Series of Original Portraits of Memorable Citizens of Edinburgh, 1837-1847, with Biographical Sketches*, ed. by William Scott Douglas (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1882).

source.²⁸ It was said, ‘no resident of Edinburgh [*could*] properly enjoy his city’ without reading *Memorials*.²⁹ Cockburn was an Edinburgh lawyer and judge (as Lord Cockburn) who belonged to Edinburgh’s Whig ‘literati’ circle. *Memorials* is a personal reminiscence, subjective and outspoken in its Whig sympathies, causing the Tory-leaning *Quarterly Review* to comment, ‘books like Lord Cockburn’s are the bane of history’.³⁰ Cockburn resolutely ignores the royal visit in his detailed account of the year 1822. Focusing on Edinburgh’s civic, political, legal and architectural developments, Cockburn establishes by omission a separation between Edinburgh’s urban history and the royal visit.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, antiquarian histories dominate. Cockburn mentions William Smellie (1740-1795), editor of *The Scots Magazine* and the first editor of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and Thomas Thomson, successor to Sir Walter Scott as president of the Bannatyne Club, an Edinburgh publication society that printed over one hundred volumes of rare works of Scottish history, poetry and general literature. With Scott, Thomson played a part in the 1818 ‘discovery’ of Scotland’s crown jewels in storage at Edinburgh Castle. A cultural reawakening was stimulated by the hugely successful publication of Scott’s *Waverley; or ‘Tis Sixty Years Since*, the first of a new genre of fiction, the historical novel.³¹ This modern narrative form about the recent past fuelled the demand and supply in antiquarianism throughout the nineteenth century. In 1843, Robert Chalmers’ anecdotal *Traditions of Edinburgh* appeared and the ‘meticulous spirit [*of the antiquarian*] went about as far as it could’ in

²⁸ Henry Cockburn, *Memorials of his Time* (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1856).

²⁹ Henry Cockburn, *Memorials of his Time, Abridged and Edited with Notes*, ed. by W. Forbes Gray (Edinburgh: Robert Grant, 1946), p. v.

³⁰ Cockburn, *Memorials Abridged*, p. vii.

³¹ Sir Walter Scott, *Waverley; or ‘Tis Sixty Years Since*’ (Edinburgh: Constable, 1814; repr. London: Penguin, 2011).

James Grant's *Old and New Edinburgh*, originally appearing as a periodical and published in 1880.³² Grant's methodology was to describe Edinburgh district by district, street by street, building by building, with accounts of notable occupants, generously illustrated with engravings. Following Cockburn's example, neither Chalmers nor Grant examines George IV's visit, other than in passing when discussing other material of that period, further entrenching an emerging historiographical dichotomy between Edinburgh's 'History, Its People, and Its Places' (Grant's sub-title) and the visit.

Youngson's *The Making of Classical Edinburgh* of 1966 marked a decisive shift in the historiography of Edinburgh. Its critical reception revealed both an appetite for the subject and the reason for its neglect: 'Paradoxically, if, instead of being the capital of Scotland, Edinburgh were simply a provincial town in England, it is inconceivable that the grandeur of its Georgian legacy would have passed almost unnoticed until well into the twentieth century'.³³ An economist, Youngson combined economic and architectural history to narrate chronologically Edinburgh's sustained period of urban transformation in neo-classical form. His chapter on Edinburgh's changing social life and manners was innovative, yet merely descriptive, lacking the cultural depth of Borsay's later study and the latter's depiction of the cerebral world behind visible cultural forms. Recognised as 'carefully presented and beautifully produced', Youngson's book was seminal, 'a very tempting *hors d'oeuvre* for later dishes that will undoubtedly arrive one day'.³⁴ By omitting any mention of George IV's visit, Youngson cemented the implicit historiographical assumption that it had no place in a serious

³² Chalmers, Robert, *Traditions of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh: W. & R. Chambers, 1843; rev. 1868); Michael Fry, *Edinburgh: A History of the City* (London: Macmillan, 2009), p. viii; James Grant, *Old and New Edinburgh*, 6 vols (Edinburgh: Cassell, 1880)

³³ Anthony Forward, Review of Youngson, *Journal of Architectural Historians*, 27.2 (1968), 151-2 (p. 151).

³⁴ Forward, p. 152.

urban history; and by failing to give his study a broader British or European context, he reinforced exceptionalism in the historiography of the city.

Youngson led to more serious appreciation of Edinburgh's urban development. A collaborative scholarly study appeared in 1984 in the Pevsner series, with an 'abundance of untapped research material'.³⁵ In 1995, the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh received UNESCO World Heritage Site status in recognition of their 'outstanding universal value' and '[t]he remarkable juxtaposition of two clearly articulated urban planning phenomena'.³⁶ Following renewed interest in the Scottish Enlightenment, historian Arthur Herman's intellectual history, *The Scottish Enlightenment*, located Edinburgh centre stage, 'where brains rather than social rank took pride of place'; novelist James Buchan's *Capital of the Mind* focused more exclusively on the city.³⁷ Works of popular scholarship re-animating the Scottish Enlightenment, neither refers to Borsay and their treatment of George IV's visit is abridged, derivative and reductive. In the same genre of popular scholarship, Michael Fry's *Edinburgh* is a cultural, political and social history of the city, and he too omits George IV's visit.³⁸ *Edinburgh: Mapping the City* by Christopher Fleet and Daniel MacCannell is a cartographic history from c.1530 to the present day, a valuable visual source of Edinburgh's expansion from the mid-eighteenth century onwards.³⁹

³⁵ John Gifford, Colin McWilliam and David Walker, *Edinburgh* (London: Penguin, 184; rev. 1988 and 1991), p. 11.

³⁶ 'Old and New Towns of Edinburgh', United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation <<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/728>> [accessed 13 August 2018].

³⁷ Arthur Herman, *The Scottish Enlightenment: The Scots Invention of the Modern World* (London: Harper Perennial, 2001; repr. 2006), p. 182; James Buchan, *Capital of the Mind: How Edinburgh Changed the World* (London: John Murray, 2003; repr. Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2007, 2012, 2017).

³⁸ Fry, *Edinburgh*.

³⁹ Christopher Fleet and Daniel MacCannell, *Edinburgh: Mapping the City* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2014).

In summary, the Scottish Enlightenment as intellectual history dominates Edinburgh's urban history, entrenching historiographical exceptionalism in the subject. The 1822 royal visit has been treated as an anomalous or discordant sideshow to an urban history ballasted by the Scottish Enlightenment legacy.

2.3: *The Historiography of George IV in Edinburgh*

The king stayed in Edinburgh for two weeks, 15-29 August 1822, but the preceding preparatory week is included in the oft-repeated epithet, 'one and twenty daft days'. Although ranking as a primary source, discussion of the historiography of George IV's visit to Edinburgh begins with journalist Robert Mudie's foundational *Historical Account*.⁴⁰ The single most densely detailed contemporary account of these events, it is clearly written with access to official bulletins and lists. Fold-out illustrations of key events add a commemorative, souvenir quality, and authorial bias is evident in a consistently favourable treatment. Asides and footnotes demonstrate historical sensibility, suggesting the book was written as much to educate an English readership to correct 'the obduracy of certain habits of thinking [*in England*], that the merits of the Scots have been but reluctantly acknowledged'.⁴¹ In 1824, Mudie incorporated an account of the king's visit into a lighter general work on contemporary Edinburgh, whimsically entitled, *The Modern Athens [...] By a Modern Greek*.⁴²

The role of Sir Walter Scott in relation to the king's visit came to prominence in the biography of Scott written by his son-in-law, John Gibson Lockhart.⁴³ Lockhart's

⁴⁰ Robert Mudie, *A Historical Account of His Majesty's Visit to Scotland* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1822).

⁴¹ Mudie, *A Historical Account*, p. 2.

⁴² Robert Mudie, *The Modern Athens: A Dissection and Demonstration of Men and Things in The Scotch Capital By a Modern Greek* (London: Knight and Lacey, 1825).

⁴³ J. G. Lockhart, *The Life of Sir Walter Scott, Bart., 1771-1832*, 7 vols (Edinburgh: Caddell, 1837-8).

account needs to be treated cautiously as subjective, uncorroborated and opinionated. It is reasonable to speculate on the conscious and sub-conscious tensions between Lockhart, with literary ambitions of his own, and his world-famous father-in-law. Lockhart's intimate familiarity with Scott's home life in the New Town's Castle Street — which Lockhart depicts as a hub for Highland clan chiefs during the royal visit — may have caused him to perceive both Scott and Highlanders as more conspicuous actors than others with whom he was less concerned. Contemporaries perhaps weighed this inherent bias in the balance when reading Lockhart, but over time such considerations faded, and he is cited presumptively as evidential.⁴⁴ Lockhart's phrases became pervasive, particularly 'plaided panorama' and 'Sir Walter's Celtified pageantry' and important context regarding his hyperbolic language was increasingly obscured.⁴⁵ The 'shady editor' Lockhart, who infamously ridiculed Keats and others as 'Cockney', causing a fatal duel in 1821, morphed from classist controversialist to authoritative source.⁴⁶ It is inconsistent with Lockhart's 'Celtified pageantry' portrayal of Scott's urban sensibility that Scott chose the modernity of a classical home in the first New Town.

The only modern text devoted exclusively to George IV's Edinburgh sojourn is Prebble's *The King's Jaunt*. Although criticised for his journalistic approach, 'Prebble's work has been highly influential for more than a generation'.⁴⁷ His 'lack of a full scholarly apparatus' brought criticism from Tom Devine: 'The problem was that

⁴⁴ E.g., Robert Withington, 'Scott's Contribution to Pageantic Development — A Note on the Visit of George IV to Edinburgh in 1822', *Studies in Philology*, XVII.2 (1920), 121-5.

⁴⁵ Lockhart, *New Popular Edition*, pp. 481 and 484.

⁴⁶ Leonidas M. Jones. 'The Scott-Christie Duel', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 12.4, 605-29 (p. 618).

⁴⁷ Ian Donnachie and Christopher Whatley, 'Introduction' in *The Manufacture of Scottish History*, ed. by Ian Donnachie and Christopher Whatley (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1992), pp. 1-15 (p. 6).

Prebble wrote a sort of faction. It was difficult to divine what was based on reasonable research and what was the product of the imagination'.⁴⁸ Fry judged, 'I think he was an inferior historian who did not have the proper respect for evidence. He seemed to come to his subjects with his mind made up'.⁴⁹ Despite this academic consensus, the book solidified the visit in popular mythology as the 'One and twenty daft days' of its subtitle, and, ironically, scholarly historians have appeared content to transmit abridgements of Prebble's interpretation. Lacking in conceptual apparatus, Prebble utilised primary sources to construct a novelistic narrative 'to promote a cause to which he is already deeply committed' (referring to Prebble's political views).⁵⁰ A notable example is highly selective use of contemporary correspondence by the Grant family, a source examined in Chapter 4. Adopting an ahistorical and arguably androcentric approach, he ignores the young daughters' positive observations on Edinburgh's urban environment, presenting preoccupations with dress, manners and interiors as female and merely ridiculous. In Borsay's analysis, these would be treated as non-gendered sensibilities of urban culture. Despite his 'faction' assessment of Prebble, Devine's own widely read, authoritative history of Scotland also dismisses George IV's visit as 'Celtic fantasy [...] a distortion of a Highland past and present and the projection of a national image in which the Lowlands had no part'.⁵¹

Trevor-Roper's 'prestigious and influential' opinion of the visit as a 'charade' may have been shaped by preconceived convictions; he was created a life peer in 1979 (the year of the Scottish devolution referendum), 'an elevation for which his sterling defence of the

⁴⁸ Colin Kidd, Review of Prebble, *The King's Jaunt*, *Scottish Historical Review*, 88.1, 141-2 (p.141); Tom Devine cited in 'Popular historian of the land that he loved', *The Glasgow Herald*, 31 January 2001.

⁴⁹ Cited in 'Popular historian', *The Glasgow Herald*.

⁵⁰ Christian Hesketh, 'Prinny in Tartan', Review of Prebble, *History Today*, 39.7, 51.

⁵¹ Devine, *The Scottish Nation*, p. 235.

Union with Scotland may have been partly responsible'.⁵² Trevor-Roper described the royal visit as 'a bizarre travesty of Scottish history, Scottish reality'; cites Lockhart's 'hallucination' epithet; and judged that 'carried away by his own romantic Celtic fantasies, Scott seemed determined to forget historic Scotland, his own lowland Scotland, altogether'.⁵³ What attention Trevor-Roper paid to the role of Edinburgh's urban environment and civic leadership is unrecorded.

In the first modern biography of George IV, Christopher Hibbert devoted five pages to the royal visit out of over seven hundred.⁵⁴ Two more recent biographies have been published, one of which, by Steven Parissien, devotes an entire chapter to the Edinburgh visit, but appears to rely almost entirely and uncritically on Prebble and Trevor-Roper.⁵⁵ A journalistic work on Walter Scott takes a similar approach.⁵⁶ Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the historiography of the royal visit is there has been no attempt to contextualise it within Edinburgh's urban history. It was a reviewer rather than Prebble himself who commented that *The King's Jaunt* unwittingly reveals 'a nineteenth century Scotland [...] agog with new ideas and the talent to exploit them'.⁵⁷

2.4: Summary

This chapter explores three historiographic strands and dominant modern texts. Borsay is seminal academic urban history; Youngson is accessible scholarship directed at professional historians and lay readers equally; and Prebble is best-selling popular

⁵² Pittock, p. 32; Trevor-Roper, *The Invention of Scotland*, p. 216; Obituary, 'Lord Dacre of Glanton', *The Daily Telegraph*, 27 January 2003.

⁵³ Trevor-Roper, 'The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition', pp. 30-1.

⁵⁴ Christopher Hibbert, *George IV* (London: Allen Lane, 1973; repr. London: Penguin, 1976, 1988), pp. 670-5.

⁵⁵ E.A. Smith, *George IV* (London: Yale University Press, 1999); Steven Parissien, *George IV: The Grand Entertainment* (London: John Murray, 2001), pp. 316-36.

⁵⁶ Stuart Kelly, *Scott-Land: The Man Who Invented a Nation* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2010).

⁵⁷ Hesketh, p. 51.

'faction'. Each represents a different literary approach, but they nevertheless share, in varying degree and form, an under-current of exceptionalism. Borsay excludes Scotland (and Ireland) from his narrative arc and, in omitting Edinburgh, leaves out arguably the most paradigmatic British example of 'urban renaissance'. By representing Edinburgh as *sui generis* and omitting the royal visit, Youngson's exceptionalism is the inverse of Borsay's aggregating, contextual and cultural approach to local history. Exceptionalism in *The King's Jaunt* treats the 1822 royal visit as extraordinarily 'absurd', apparently without precedent, parallel or broader context.

The chapter concludes there is utility in using Borsay's methodology to examine Edinburgh and the royal visit. Thus, Edinburgh's Urban Enlightenment has been posited to capture the urban *cultural* phenomenon within which to reframe the city's transformation from 1752 up to and including George IV's 1822 visit. Chapters 3 and 4 develop and test the concept against primary sources.

Chapter 3: A City of Palaces: Edinburgh, 1752-1822

‘My God! What a city and what a people’. So exclaimed a ‘surprised’ George IV when he approached the east end of Edinburgh’s Princes Street on 15 August 1822 to begin the first visit to the city of a reigning monarch since Charles I in 1633.¹ The urban spectacle that impressed a jaded sovereign, famed for excess and conspicuous consumption, was no historical contingency.² It was a product of rational design. The royal visit was a narratively predestined outcome of seven decades of urban planning, creating a sequence of diverse urban stages upon which a British head of state and his Scottish subjects embraced formerly conflicting identities and cultures. This urban apotheosis arose from decades of collusion among disparate socio-political forces, consolidating political stability, economic growth and cultural identity through geometric urban planning. In this and the succeeding chapter, primary sources are examined to more fully characterise Edinburgh’s Urban Enlightenment and substantiate the premise that George IV’s visit was an integral and logical outcome of that urban cultural phenomenon. The aim is to challenge historiography treating the visit as an aberrant, disjointed confection enacted on a static urban backdrop to beguile with ‘fake Highland regalia’.³

3.1: Origins

In Borsay’s analysis, the English Urban Renaissance was a product of favourable political and economic conditions combined with local contingency. Youngson places

¹ Johnstone, Letter to Cholmeley, p. 2.

² Parissien, *George IV*, p. 355-72.

³ Devine, *The Scottish Nation*, p. 235.

the ‘precise origin’ of Edinburgh’s transformation as the 1752 pamphlet *Proposals*.⁴ Striking to any reader of Borsay is the pamphlet’s prescience in proposing a rational exploitation of the historical forces Borsay catalogues as necessary and sufficient conditions for urban improvement. In the *Proposals*, urban improvement is understood as a means to harness and stimulate those forces. Recurring throughout the text is the theme that a capital city represents the state of a nation. Among ‘disadvantages almost without number’, the *Proposals* deplored Edinburgh’s lack of the prerequisites of a modern British capital, including nowhere ‘for the reception of any person of distinction’.⁵ A second theme contrasts the perilous insecurities of an earlier time, ‘when feudal manners prevailed’, with the opportunities of mercantile polite society.⁶ The urban dialect and customs of Scotland’s ancient capital as defensive stronghold were to osmose with the language and manners of a modern British metropolis to form an integrated urban duality — ‘a curious co-partnery of old city and new town’.⁷ As the *Proposals* put it: ‘Edinburgh might be large enough to be the capital of SCOTLAND [...] yet at this day too small for the chief city of NORTH BRITAIN’.⁸

The genesis and authorship of the *Proposals* provide an insight into the alliance of interests behind the document. Written six years after ‘the year 1746, when the rebellion was suppressed’, the *Proposals* is a blueprint for a new Hanoverian North Britain.⁹ The pamphlet, described as ‘lending so much benefit to the nation’, was published at the instigation of Scotland’s Convention of Royal Burghs, a ‘highly organised and coherent

⁴ Youngson, pp. 2-3; [Sir Gilbert Elliot], *Proposals for carrying on certain Public Works in the City of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, n.p., n.d), Pamphlets Collection, PB42-45, Signet Library, Edinburgh.

⁵ *Proposals*, pp. 7 and 37.

⁶ *Proposals*, p. 13.

⁷ Youngson, p. 2.

⁸ *Proposals*, p. 13.

⁹ *Proposals*, p. 19.

urban political lobby'.¹⁰ This made possible a nationally co-ordinated project for the capital as the 'centre of trade and commerce, of learning and the arts, of politeness and of refinement of every kind'.¹¹ In contrast to the provincialism intrinsic to Borsay's English Urban Renaissance, improving Scotland's capital is imbued with national purpose and meaning. Dominated by guilds and trade interests, the Convention reflected the growing influence of Scotland's mercantile middling orders. At the same time, the professions and landed gentry were embodied in the pamphlet's credited author, advocate (Scottish barrister) Sir Gilbert Elliot, a political operator and 'Edinburgh's agent in London'.¹² At the nexus of this concurrence of political, civic, mercantile, professional and upper-class interests was George Drummond, 'perhaps the most influential citizen of Edinburgh in the eighteenth century'.¹³ In contrast to Borsay's assessment of John Wood the elder's self-aggrandising career in Bath — 'a tangled story of idealism, failure, opportunism, and compromise' — Drummond, six times Edinburgh's Lord Provost, was distinguished by 'the grandeur of his purpose and the selflessness of his aim'.¹⁴ If, as Borsay asserts, Bath lacked 'some overriding authority' for urban improvement, a committee of judiciary, lawyers and councillors established under the *Proposals*, chaired by Drummond, controlled the opening phase of an urban transformation that, by 1822, would assume literally majestic proportions.¹⁵ The committee was superseded by thirty-five commissioners, including the Lord Provost, appointed under a 1753 Act of Parliament to oversee the erection of public buildings. The 1707 Act of Union consolidated the role of Scotland's judges and lawyers, 'the

¹⁰ Minute of the Annual Convention of Royal Burghs of 16 July 1752, vol. 12, p. 136, Edinburgh City Archives, Edinburgh; Harris and McKean, p. 65.

¹¹ *Proposals*, p. 3.

¹² Buchan, p. 176.

¹³ Youngson, p. 15.

¹⁴ Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, p. 101; Youngson, p. 16.

¹⁵ Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, p. 101.

embodiment of a distinctively Scottish way of doing things’, based on ‘closer links with European/Roman systems’.¹⁶ They formed a powerful lobby in the steering of Edinburgh’s urban improvement.

The literary style of the *Proposals*, evincing historical sensibility and critical reflection on mechanisms of economic, social and cultural change, is emblematic of the Scottish Enlightenment. The pamphlet’s philosophising — that commerce and improvement are marks of higher civilisation — ‘might have been written by any of the circle of Hume, Elibank, Smith and Kames’.¹⁷ The text is an Enlightenment prescription — a blend of reason, social science, technology and humanity — for Scotland’s evolution into ‘polite’ commercial society. Anticipating Borsay, the *Proposals* analyses the emergence in Scotland of three *necessary* macro-conditions favourable to urban improvement.

First, political stability is heralded as succeeding the final defeat of the Jacobite threat in 1746, ending a sequence of ‘distractions which constantly prevailed in this country’.¹⁸

Second, by the mid-eighteenth century ‘trade, husbandry, and manufacturers, which had hitherto proceeded only by slow degrees, now began to advance with such rapid and general progression, as almost exceeds the bounds of probability’.¹⁹ Third, urbanisation is recognised as both cause and effect of improvement: ‘Wealth is only to be obtained by trade and commerce, and these are only carried on to advantage in populous cities’.²⁰

The pamphlet anticipates cultural theory on the relationship between centres, ‘where political power, economic and hence cultural power originates’, and peripheries taking

¹⁶ Christopher J. Berry, *Social Theory of the Scottish Enlightenment* (Edinburgh: EUP, 1997), p. 9.

¹⁷ Buchan, p. 176.

¹⁸ *Proposals*, p. 11.

¹⁹ *Proposals*, p. 19.

²⁰ *Proposals*, p. 31.

their lead culturally from the centre.²¹ Advantages conferred on Edinburgh ‘will diffuse themselves through the nation, and universally promote the same spirit of industry and improvement’.²² By this process, urban improvement would assimilate alienated Highland margins. Leisure, conspicuous consumption, functional specialisation, civility and cultural differentiation are all comprehended in the text: ‘As the consumption is greater [...] [h]ence follows a more rapid circulation of money and other commodities’.²³ Simply by reading the *Proposals*, a modern historian finds an analysis very similar to *The English Urban Renaissance*.

Borsay’s *sufficient* condition of urban improvement is a local contingency acting as catalyst. On 6 September 1751, an apprentice surgeon from Jamaica named Edward Reynolds was killed when the east wall of a six-storey tenement on the south side of Edinburgh’s High Street ‘fell down from top to bottom’. A contemporary report concludes: ‘This unlucky accident has occasioned many old tenements in the city and suburbs to be surveyed; and some of these are already condemned, and ordered to be taken down’.²⁴ Commentary on the *Proposals* narrates this ‘melancholy accident’ as ‘an opportunity [...] often wished for, and Providence has now furnished’ to redress the city’s want of ‘public buildings, and other useful and ornamental accommodations’.²⁵ Capitalisation signifies urgency: ‘It is hence apparent NOW is the time for setting about the above necessary undertakings’.²⁶

²¹ Andrew Hook, *From Goosecreek to Gandercleugh: Studies in Scottish-American Literary and Cultural History* (Edinburgh: Tuckwell, 1999), p. 4.

²² *Proposals*, p. 5.

²³ *Proposals*, p. 32.

²⁴ ‘Edinburgh, Accidents’, *The Scots Magazine*, XIII, September 1751, p. 453.

²⁵ ‘An account of the scheme for enlarging and improving the city of Edinburgh’, XIV, *The Scots Magazine*, August 1752, 369-80 (p. 369).

²⁶ *Proposals*, p. 40.

3.2: Material Forms

In 1755, the population of Edinburgh was estimated at 57,195.²⁷ Mid-eighteenth-century, the royal burgh ‘was still to outward appearance a medieval town confined within ancient walls’, situated upon volcanic topography.²⁸ ‘Placed upon the ridge of a hill’, the *Proposals* explains, ‘it admits but of one good street, running east to west’.²⁹ Over the mile of its length, the High Street rises one hundred and eighty feet from Holyroodhouse Palace at the east end to the rock of Edinburgh Castle at the west.³⁰ In the herringbone pattern of Scottish urban vernacular, streets and closes run perpendicularly on either side of the High Street down steep slopes, and ‘houses stand more crowded than in any other town in Europe, and are built to a height that is almost incredible’.³¹ By the mid-eighteenth century, structural instability through age was as great a risk as fire.

The *Proposals* records, ‘Several of the principal parts of the town are now lying in ruins [...] Many of the old houses are decayed; several have already been pulled down, and probably more will soon be in the same condition’. Sites are identified for new public buildings which in aggregate amount to the infrastructure of a modern mercantile state under the rule of law: a merchants’ Exchange, civic hall, judicial and clerical quarters, lawyers’ halls and libraries, land register and public records repository.³² Extension of Edinburgh’s Royal Burgh boundaries was envisaged to link the High Street with land to the north ‘on which streets are to be laid out and houses to be built’.³³ Lastly, the Nor’

²⁷ *The First Statistical Account of Scotland*, ed. by Sir John Sinclair (Edinburgh: William Creech, 1799; repr. Edinburgh: West Port Books, 1998), p. 5.

²⁸ Edinburgh Corporation, *Edinburgh 1329-1929* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1929), p. 212.

²⁹ *Proposals*, p. 7.

³⁰ Arnott, p. 179.

³¹ *Proposals*, p. 7.

³² *Proposals*, pp. 24-6.

³³ *Proposals*, p. 43.

Loch, an expanse of stagnant water below the north face of Edinburgh Castle, was to be turned from ‘nuisance’ (owing to the adjacent slaughterhouse and fish market) to ‘ornament’.³⁴ The merchants’ Exchange was the most immediate and definite prospect, but a much larger vision is evident. Citing European rather than British comparators — evidencing pan-national ambition — the *Proposals* explains:³⁵

In these cities, what is called the *new town*, consists of spacious streets and large buildings, which are thinly inhabited, and that too by strangers chiefly, and persons of considerable rank; while the *old town*, though not near so commodious, is more crowded than before these late additions were made.

The vision combined the older ‘organic’ vernacular urban model, enhanced with new public buildings, with a modern, ‘geometric’ model on classical principles.³⁶ The vagaries of ownership and other practicalities inevitably impacted so large a vision and not every outcome went according to plan. The Exchange was not used for its intended purpose, and the public records building, Register House, was built on the New Town side of the city rather than in the Old Town, as the *Proposals* envisaged. Nevertheless, the broad parameters of the urban spectacle revealed as George IV entered Princes Street in 1822 — ‘the physical separation and visible conjunction of the old town and the new’ — had been envisioned seventy years earlier.³⁷

By the end of 1752, subscription monies (from the Crown, Royal Burghs, aristocrats, gentry, professionals, academics and tradesmen) and bank borrowing were in place to commence building.³⁸ On 13 September 1753, the first stone of the classical Exchange by architect John Adam was laid before ‘the greatest concourse of people that has been

³⁴ *Proposals*, p. 8.

³⁵ *Proposals*, p. 32.

³⁶ Kevin Lynch, *Good City Form* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1981), pp. 73-98 cited in Michael Carley and others, *Edinburgh New Town: A Model City* (Stroud: Amberley, 2015), p. 19.

³⁷ Youngson, p. 90.

³⁸ Youngson, p. 55.

known in this city'.³⁹ *The Scots Magazine* recorded, without editorial comment, an occasion replete with an almost comic abundance of classical allusion in physical and literary form. In Borsay's analysis, classicism is largely confined to architecture, but the Edinburgh ceremony embodied neoclassical theatre symbolising the dawning of a new heroic age. Dramaturgic tropes used in the event would recur writ large for George IV's visit, such as a 'triumphal arch, in true Augustan style', with a Corinthian entablature, complete with Latin inscription and a female figure representing the Genius of Edinburgh in a curule chair surrounded by classical motifs. Between the columns 'two figures, representing GEOMETRY and ARCHITECTURE', symbolised the order and rationality of classicism. The foundation stone was inscribed in Latin and inlaid with three medals, one depicting George Drummond with a legend denoting 'thrice Consul of Edinburgh'.⁴⁰ Significantly, there was no dedication or address to royalty, nor was a royal proxy in attendance. The Exchange was not referred to as 'Royal' in the *Proposals*. For now, it was an imperial pageant without an emperor, but it would be the prototypical antecedent of the king's visit in 1822, when royal patronage finally ennobled the civic endeavour of 'The Making of Classical Edinburgh'.

In the same vein, broadsheet verse by John Home (reproduced in Appendix 1) anticipated Sir Walter Scott's 'Carle Now the King's Come!' commemorating George IV's visit.⁴¹ Echoing the historical narrative of the *Proposals*, the verse portrays Scotland's journey from 'darkness' to economic recovery and cultural revival. An

³⁹ 'An account of the ceremony of beginning the Public Works of the city of Edinburgh [...]', *The Scots Magazine*, XV, September 1753, 425-30 (p. 430).

⁴⁰ 'An account of the ceremony', pp. 430-1.

⁴¹ John Home, 'Verses on laying the foundation stone of the Exchange of Edinburgh, September 13 1753', *The Scots Magazine*, XV, September 1753, p. 430; Sir Walter Scott, 'Carle Now The King's Come!' in *The Royal Scottish Minstrelsy: Being a Collection of Loyal Effusions Occasioned by the Visit of His Most Gracious Majesty George IV to Scotland, August 15, 1822* (Leith: James Burnet, 1824), pp. 1-12.

exhortation in the closing stanza has dual meaning, addressing Scots as ‘Britons’ but equally addressing all ‘Britons’. Allusions to gods of classical mythology seem calculated to resonate with Scottish pride in the foundational role of the classics in Scotland’s education and legal systems, both preserved by the 1707 Act of Union.

3.3: *Landscape*

In 1763, looking out from the completed merchants’ Exchange, George Drummond is said to have predicted the fields to the north would one day be covered with houses, ‘forming a splendid and magnificent city’.⁴² Two key developments made this possible: construction of the North Bridge began in 1765, and an Act of Parliament in 1767 extended Edinburgh’s Royal Burgh boundaries over the land to the north. Between these two events, the Town Council advertised an architectural competition for the layout of ‘a New Town’, making clear its desire to prevent ‘inconveniences and disadvantages which arise from carrying on buildings, without regard to any order or regularity’.⁴³ From six entries, the Town Council selected the plan (reproduced in Appendix 2) of a little-known, twenty-six-year-old Edinburgh architect, James Craig. In a significant evolution from the Exchange foundation stone ceremony, the cartouche of Craig’s plan includes the royal coat of arms and a dedication to the sovereign:⁴⁴

To His Sacred Majesty George III, The Munificent Patron of Every Polite and Liberal Art. This Plan of the New Streets and Squares intended for his ancient capital of North Britain; One of the happy consequences of the Peace, Security and Liberty his people enjoy under his mild and auspicious government.

⁴² Youngson, p. 17.

⁴³ ‘By the Honourable the Magistrates and Town Council of Edinburgh’, *Caledonian Mercury*, 28 April 1766.

⁴⁴ Patrick Begbie, *James Craig’s Plan of the new streets and squares intended for the City of Edinburgh*, 1768, 46.00 x 65.70 cm, National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh.

Craig arranged the streets of the New Town hierarchically, the longitudinal streets being the widest, the cross streets narrower and the intermediate longitudinal streets narrower still, with mews lanes the narrowest. Underscoring civic Edinburgh's enthusiasm for regal alliance, still to be constructed streets were named after the royal family — Queen Street, George Street, Hanover Street and Frederick Street. The main thoroughfare, originally to be called St Giles Street after the city's patron saint, was renamed Princes Street after George III's intervention when, with escalating civic self-belief, Craig travelled to London to seek royal approval. In the absence of an antecedent royal visit — as Borsay notes, often the source of royal nomenclature in provincial England — it is tempting to read predestination into the re-naming of the most prestigious street after *inter alia* the future George IV.⁴⁵ Scotland's patron saint was commemorated in St Andrew Square, and the national emblem in the naming of Thistle Street. Descending the social scale, two of the earliest New Town streets were titled after builders, John Young (Young Street) and James Hill (Hill Street). Within the dedication of Craig's plan and the finely balanced, hierarchical naming of streets, lies an emerging partnership between Hanoverian royalty and Edinburgh's polite mercantile society that reached its apogee with George IV's visit.

3.4: Society and Arenas of Display

In Borsay's analysis, the English Urban Renaissance was driven in part by 'the pursuit of status, civility and sociability'.⁴⁶ Surplus wealth among higher ranks of society generated a demand for means of displaying taste and refinement. Urban improvement was both response and stimulus to greater economic prosperity. Again, the *Proposals*

⁴⁵ Sir Herbert Maxwell, *Edinburgh: A Historical Study* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1916), pp. 238-9; Borsay, pp. 241-2.

⁴⁶ Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, p. 199.

anticipate Borsay: a ‘vulgar mistake, that the greatest part of our principal families choose to reside at LONDON’, is attributed to Edinburgh’s deficiencies. ‘Were these in any tolerable degree remedied’, the text concludes, ‘our people of rank would hardly prefer an obscure life in LONDON, to the splendour and influence with which they might reside at home’.⁴⁷ It was anticipated such people would choose ‘to build upon the fine fields which lie to the north and south of the town’. By 1767, with the North Bridge underway and Craig’s feuing plan available for public inspection, land to the north, the first New Town, would attract its initial developer-builders.

The most notable early resident of this spacious new quarter was not of landed aristocracy or gentry, but ‘one of Britain’s greatest men of letters’.⁴⁸ Edinburgh-born David Hume, consciously seeking a European intellectual milieu, lived in both London and Paris before resolving to return to his native city. However, as he wrote to Gilbert Elliot in 1765, his former home, a tenement apartment in the Old Town, was ‘too small’.⁴⁹ In 1771, Hume purchased from builder-mason William Jameson one of three houses on St David Street on the south side of St Andrew Square.⁵⁰ Affirmation that the New Town provided the ‘splendour and influence’ anticipated by the *Proposals* materialised in the 1771 visit of future American founding father Benjamin Franklin: ‘I arrived here on Saturday night, late, and was lodged miserably at an Inn; but that excellent Christian David Hume [...] has received the Stranger and I now live with him at his House in the New Town most happily’.⁵¹ Gracious New Town houses — typically three or four storeys, basement and cellars, plain ashlar or Palladian fronted,

⁴⁷ *Proposals*, p. 30.

⁴⁸ James A. Harris, *Hume: An Intellectual Biography* (Cambridge: CUP, 2015), back matter.

⁴⁹ Harris, *Hume*, p. 438.

⁵⁰ Edinburgh Town Council Minutes, 22 December 1773, Edinburgh City Archives, Edinburgh.

⁵¹ Lord Mackenzie-Stuart, ‘Benjamin Franklin in Scotland’, *The Denning Law Journal*, 6.1 (1991), 119-29.

with a garden and mews stable to the rear — provided domestic arenas of display for ‘refinement of every kind’.⁵² A clamour to rent the best houses from the highest pedigree of owner was a major preoccupation during George IV’s visit. Reflecting Borsay’s framework, public arenas of display further enhanced New Town sociability and civility, including Assembly Rooms (1787), Theatre Royal (also 1787) and the libraries and salons of the professions, publishers and learned societies, which were so fundamental to Edinburgh’s cultural and economic growth.

Development of the first New Town proceeded from east to west, house and street architecture becoming progressively grander, culminating in palatial facades by architect Robert Adam in Charlotte Square. In a textbook example of Borsay’s ‘spatial differentiation’, higher ranks gradually moved from Old to New Town: ‘Nobles and gentlemen, men of nearly all professions, deserted one by one’.⁵³ In 1773, none of Scotland’s fifteen senior judges lived in the New Town. Ten years later, three lived there and, by 1797, seven had New Town addresses.⁵⁴ The earliest residents of St Andrew Square included thirteen members of the nobility, among them one Viscount and five Earls.⁵⁵ Hotels prospered in the New Town, answering earlier complaint by English visitor Edward Topham about ‘the wretchedness of accommodation which must be put up with in this city’.⁵⁶ In 1801, responding to demand, the Town Council resolved to build a second New Town, north of the first. This was substantially complete in 1822, by which time new buildings promised to improve the city’s

⁵² *Proposals*, p. 5.

⁵³ Grant, III, p. 118.

⁵⁴ *Williamson’s Edinburgh Directory*, 1790, p. ii; 1794, p. 5; 1797, p. 4.

<<https://digital.nls.uk/directories/browse/archive/82857519>> [accessed. 13 December 2108].

⁵⁵ Grant, III, p. 166.

⁵⁶ Edward Topham, *Letters from Edinburgh 1774-1775* (London: J. Dodsley, 1776; repr. Edinburgh: James Thin, 1971), p. 18.

functions in public record-keeping (Register House), education (new University building), religion (St Andrew's Church), law (Parliament Hall façade and Signet Library), medicine (Royal College of Physicians), science (Old and New Observatories) and leisure (Princes Street gardens and Calton Hill walks). New transport infrastructure facilitated expansion in the east (by the Regent Bridge and Waterloo Place) and south (by the Mound and South Bridge). Between 1752 and 1822, Edinburgh's built environment expanded geometrically as illustrated in John Wood's 1823 plan (reproduced in Appendix 3, with the approximate footprint of the city in 1752 superimposed).⁵⁷ From 1755 to 1821, the population increased by 141.69 per cent to 138,235.⁵⁸

John Wilson Ewbank's contemporary painting of George IV's entry into the city (reproduced in Appendix 4) is a visual representation of the duality of expanded Edinburgh. In a prospect viewed from Calton Hill, to the left is the darkened, disordered mass of the Old Town, while the literally enlightened, geometric and domed New Town lies to the right, separated by the barrier of Waterloo Place and castellated structures of the Bridewell and Calton prisons.⁵⁹ This visual metaphor repeats the poetic contrast of 'darkness' and 'the dawning of a brighter morn' in the earlier cited verse memorialising the 1753 laying of the foundation stone of the Exchange.

3.5: Summary

⁵⁷ John Wood, *Plan of the City of Edinburgh, including all the latest and intended improvements* (Edinburgh: T. Brown, 1823), 54.30 x 76.40 cm, National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh.

⁵⁸ *Second Statistical Account of Scotland* ed. by Sir John Sinclair (1845; repr. Edinburgh: West Port, 1998), p. 79.

⁵⁹ John Wilson Ewbank, *The Entry of George IV into Edinburgh from the Calton Hill*, 1822, oil on canvas, 150.5 x 240 cm, City Art Centre, City of Edinburgh Museums & Galleries, Edinburgh.

In conclusion, there is ample primary source evidence supporting the concept of Edinburgh's Urban Enlightenment to represent the city's urban and cultural development from 1752 until the royal visit of 1822. There is a close correlation between Borsay's model and the Urban Enlightenment. By 1822, the city's identity had been transformed from organic to geometric, from medieval to classical, from socially diverse melting pot to spatially differentiated polite mercantile, from ancient Scottish to North British. When George IV reached the wide Palladian-terraced boulevard of Queen Street and cried out, 'A city of palaces!', it is unlikely he was referencing — in the words of 'Scotland's most important current historian' — 'Celtic fantasy [...] and the projection of a national image in which the Lowlands had no part'.⁶⁰ It was a first impression of the material form of Edinburgh's Urban Enlightenment. To suggest 'the Lowlands had no part' denies the dynamic role of the built environment of the Lowlands metropolis — conceived seven decades earlier and made material by the city's enterprise — in shaping and projecting national identity. Chapter 4 examines primary sources for evidence that the 1822 royal visit itself embodied the Urban Enlightenment.

⁶⁰ Letter from Caroline Johnstone, p. 2; Andrew Marr, Review of T. M. Devine, *The Scottish Clearances: A History of the Dispossessed 1600-1900* (London: Allen Lane, 2018), *The Sunday Times*, 14 October 2018, section Culture; Devine, *The Scottish Nation*, p. 235.

Chapter 4: A Virtuous and Enlightened People: George IV in Edinburgh, 1822

George IV's elaborate coronation at Westminster Abbey on 19 July 1821 lasted five hours and featured many 'novel' and 'fantastical' Tudor and Elizabethan costumes. The banquet afterwards in Westminster Hall was replete with medieval tropes, including a knight in full armour on horseback.¹ The occasion offers some cultural context to the announcement, just one year later, that the king would 'honour Scotland with a visit' that August.² Prioritising fashionable urban culture was 'the first movement of any importance made by the civic authorities': recommending a code of dress (for men, without mentioning women) of blue coat, white vest, nankeen or white pantaloons and hat with St Andrew's Cross cockade, an ensemble some thought 'injurious to those of humbler classes who might find it inconvenient to comply with'.³ Travelling by the royal yacht, the king disembarked on 15 August. During his two-week stay, Edinburgh staged a series of inclusive public spectacles and exclusive private levees and balls in a definitive display of urban organisation. This chapter examines primary sources to assess the extent to which cultural forms and behaviours of the royal visit — during processions, illuminations, balls, levees, banquet and theatre — conform to the model of Edinburgh's Urban Enlightenment.

4.1: City and Nation

Recorded in Edinburgh Town Council's minutes of 24 July 1822 is receipt of a letter from Lord Viscount Melville (Edinburgh's Robert Dundas, First Lord of the Admiralty in Lord Liverpool's government) to Lord Provost William Arbuthnot announcing the

¹ 'Coronation of George the Fourth', *The New annual register, or, General repository of history, politics, arts, sciences and literature*, January 1821, pp. 75-206.

² 'The King's Visit to Scotland', *The Scotsman*, 20 July 1822.

³ Mudie, *A Historical Account*, p. 19.

‘gracious intention of His Majesty to visit The Metropolis as early as 10 or 12 August’.⁴ Through two centuries of historiography, a narrative has formed that ‘the visit was largely stage-managed by Sir Walter Scott’.⁵ The Town Council Minutes suggest an alternative account of collective responsibility. With the Town Council as central authority at the heart of the construction of streets, squares, public spaces and buildings, it is unsurprising the minutes evidence the Council, not one individual, fulfilling the co-ordinating role. By appointing a committee to make ‘the best arrangements that time will permit for the reception and entertainment of His Majesty on His Visit to the City’, the Council followed recognisable patterns of hierarchical civic administration. Composed of civic, legal, banking, mercantile, trade, literary and publishing interests (see Appendix 5 for an extract of the minute), the committee replicated a model of delegation, dividing into four sub-committees each responsible for set-pieces within the visit, just three weeks’ ahead. The mix of individual appointments reflects a ‘reshaping of the nation’s social structure, as a broader and more diverse elite began to emerge’.⁶

It is significant that such an epochal event was the eighth item of Council business on 24 July. Reading the minutes, the impression is of established civic structure prioritising long-term urban planning and day-to-day regulation of trade and commerce, while delegating to sub-committees preparation, at short notice, for the royal visit — a picture at odds with Prebble’s sub-title of ‘One and twenty daft days’. Taking precedence over the visit were the latest feu grants in the New Town, regulation of harbour affairs at Leith and Newhaven and a proposal for the Royal Institution at the foot of the Mound,

⁴ Edinburgh Town Council Minutes, 24 July 1822, Edinburgh City Archives, Edinburgh.

⁵ ‘Sir David Wilkie, Incident during the visit of George IV to Edinburgh, 1822’, National Galleries of Scotland <<https://www.nationalgalleries.org/art-and-artists/8208/incident-during-visit-george-iv-edinburgh-1822-group-six-unidentified-figures-including-two-highland>> [accessed 27 November 2018].

⁶ Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, p. 317.

on the south side of the New Town's Princes Street. Borsay comments that Bath 'assiduously cultivated royal patronage', finding '[t]he reflected glory of the monarchy [...] an irresistible attraction'.⁷ There is no evidence Edinburgh's civic leadership pursued, or earlier prepared for, a royal visit, despite an announcement in the *Edinburgh Advertiser* as early as 11 June that 'the report is revived that His Majesty intends to visit Scotland in the course of the present summer'.⁸ Nor is there evidence the Council regarded a royal visit as existentially or economically necessary to Edinburgh as a metropolis, which Borsay asserts was the case for English provincial spa and resort towns. Later, Edinburgh followed Bath in going 'to great lengths to celebrate and publicize a royal sojourn, so that the memory of the occasion would linger' by immortalising the event 'in monumental form'.⁹ In 1831, a twelve foot bronze statue of George IV on a granite plinth was unveiled at the junction of George Street and Hanover Street (see Appendix 3 for the location), a site chosen by the king, with prospects of the Mound and Old Town to the south, and the second New Town and Kingdom of Fife to the north.¹⁰ In 1833, the monumental George IV Bridge structure linking the Old Town with suburbs to the south was completed. While the pattern of royal patronage differed from Borsay at conception, it completely conformed to the model of subsequent memorialisation.

Among those appointed to the Council's committee was Sir Walter Scott, one of two problematic personalities in the historiography of the visit, the other being George IV. Although many well-known Edinburgh figures sat on the committee, the presence of a

⁷ Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, p. 241.

⁸ Prebble, p. 67.

⁹ Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, p. 241.

¹⁰ 'Edinburgh, George Street, George IV Statue', Historic Environment Scotland, Canmore <<https://canmore.org.uk/site/99083/edinburgh-george-street-george-iv-statue> > [accessed 23 December 2018].

celebrity — on his way to becoming ‘the best-known novelist in the world’ — provoked contemporary controversy and hostility over his ‘meddling’.¹¹ An historiographical orthodoxy formed that ‘[t]he task of orchestrating [...] was given, naturally enough, to Walter Scott’ and ‘thanks to Scott [...] the royal visit was planned, from the start, almost exclusively as a Highland affair’.¹² It is established through letters and other documents Scott and George IV were known to each other, and the king admired Scott’s work, knowing *Waverley* ‘almost by heart’.¹³ Their acquaintance likely enhanced the civic organisational structure upon which arrangements depended. Assertions of Scott’s dominance, however, depend on anecdotal evidence, often from partisan or politically motivated sources. ‘Everybody knows’, *The Scotsman* railed, ‘that from first to last Sir Walter Scott permitted himself to be put forward as a director of the most *trivial* [*emphasis added*] matters connected with arrangements for the Edinburgh pageants’ (‘trivial’ implying a minor rather than stage managerial role).¹⁴ His only official appointment was to two of the four Town Council sub-committees. Historians have interpreted Scott’s comment that ‘Highlanders are what he [*the king*] will like best to see’ beyond its literal meaning to imply urban culture was subsumed beneath Lockhart’s ‘plaided panorama’.¹⁵ Similarly, because Scott’s writings had ‘given to Scotland its renewed sense of history and historic unity’, it has been assumed his contribution to the visit was the sole source forging national identity — ‘restoring Scotland’s vanished glory’ — to the exclusion of urban agency as a representation of North British or ‘Scotto-British’ modernity.¹⁶

¹¹ Herman, p. 278; ‘The King’s Visit to Scotland’, *The Scotsman*, 14th September 1822.

¹² Hugh Trevor-Roper, *The Invention of Scotland*, pp. 212-3.

¹³ Herman, p. 297.

¹⁴ ‘The King’s Visit to Scotland’, *The Scotsman*.

¹⁵ *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott* ed. by Sir Herbert Grierson, 12 vols (London: Constable, 1932-37), XII, p. 213.

¹⁶ Herman, p. 298; Alan Macinnes, *Union and Empire: The Making of the United Kingdom in 1707* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), *passim*.

Borsay argues ‘the town was the crucible of change, providing the cultural artefacts and channels through which status could be acquired and the new and traditional social elements fused together’.¹⁷ Interpreting the visit through Borsay’s framework, the traditional and rural were represented by Highland tropes, shown as not discordant with an urban centre ‘but interrelated parts of the same organism’. Under ‘The Nation’, Borsay describes ‘the various roles played by the town’ as centres of exchange, production and administration, drawing country dwellers to ‘make regular use of urban markets and services’.¹⁸ A similar but more concentrated, extreme phenomenon occurred during the visit, only achievable by expansion and improvements in Edinburgh’s housing and accommodation, public arenas and prospects, and by utilising the metropolis as shared and unifying cultural form. One contemporary observed: ‘It is questionable if any city of Europe possesses four finer halls, than those in which his Majesty was on different occasions entertained’.¹⁹ Mudie quotes contemporary estimates of the number witnessing the king’s arrival as three hundred thousand or ‘about the seventh of the whole population of Scotland’.²⁰ For three weeks, Edinburgh provided ‘the shared physical environment’ for these thousands of visitors.²¹ In scale and meaning, the visit’s impact exceeds anything in Borsay’s contemplation. Edinburgh was the cynosure of the nation and, as such, the city embodied Scotland. This was how the king experienced Edinburgh, as he implicitly acknowledged at a civic banquet: ‘I am quite unable to express my sense of the gratitude which I owe to the people of this

¹⁷ Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, p. 317.

¹⁸ Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, p. 315-17.

¹⁹ J. Simpson, *Letter to Sir Walter Scott, Bart. on the Moral and Political Character and Effects of the Visit to Scotland in August 1822, of His Majesty King George IV* (Edinburgh: Waugh and Innes, 1822), p. 88.

²⁰ Mudie, *A Historical Account*, p. 110.

²¹ Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, p. 314.

country'.²² What inspired his gratitude — thousands of people assembling in urban unity to salute him — was only functionally made possible by seven decades of Edinburgh's Urban Enlightenment.

4.2: The Pursuit of Status

Herman's judgement is representative of portrayals of the visit in secondary literature: 'Most historians and writers poke fun at the royal visit, and for good reason'.²³ Yet so much of the sojourn's 'exaggerated ridiculousness' was composed of beliefs, behaviours and forms Borsay regards as inseparable from 'the pursuit of status'. As Borsay argues, the foundation of prestige lay in public architecture, 'a growing body of investment in the civic image of the town, which was designed to raise its collective status'. This 'civic domain' was the platform for both collective and personal ambition.²⁴ Investment in Edinburgh's Urban Enlightenment followed Borsay's pattern, whereby an ability to accommodate prestigious guests enhanced status and reputation for politeness and civility. Thus, Hibbert describes the king on his procession into the city, 'Obviously delighted [...] by the garlanded beauty of Edinburgh [...] observing more than once, "They are a nation of *gentlemen* [*emphasis added*]"'.²⁵ The principal beneficiaries of the civic domain were the urban patriciate and ruling circle, as Borsay observes: 'One particularly valuable social reward that flowed from the town's rising status was the enhanced opportunity it provided for the urban elite to associate with the traditional gentry'.²⁶ This social consolidation was symbolically enacted during the very first set-piece event of the visit, the king's entrance into the city. In the vanguard of the

²² Hibbert, p. 673.

²³ Herman, p. 302.

²⁴ Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, p. 253.

²⁵ Hibbert, p. 673.

²⁶ Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, p. 254.

procession were Scotland's officers of state and senior judiciary, followed by the royal household and the king. In the rear were the senior Scottish noblemen. At the eastern boundary of the New Town, the procession was greeted by the Lord Provost and Magistrates, representing a new urban elite of mercantile and trade interests, who presented the sovereign with the keys of the city before merging with the procession and continuing to the ancient Palace of Holyroodhouse.

Among those witnessing the procession were members of the Grant family of Speyside in the Highlands, headed by John Peter Grant, Member of Parliament and ninth Laird of Rothiemurchus. Accompanying their father to Edinburgh were Mary and Jane, aged eighteen and twenty-two respectively. The Grants were representative of large numbers of country gentry who journeyed to Edinburgh for the royal visit — among an estimated three thousand 'members of Scottish society' — to frequent social and cultural gatherings, spectate in 'county' grandstands and attend functions at Holyroodhouse.²⁷ The Grants arrived in Edinburgh on 10 August and lodged with relations in a 'handsome house' at 12 Great King Street, the most prestigious street in the second New Town. After five days of Borsay's 'fashionable leisure' of social calls, dinner parties and theatre, the Grant girls witnessed the king's arrival in Edinburgh from a window in Picardy Place: 'It was indeed a splendid scene, and such a magnificent entrance into a town, the streets so wide, the houses so handsome'.²⁸ Under 'time and place', Borsay notes that the infrequency or rarity of an event increased its importance and prestige. Relative to the example of Preston Guild — held every twenty years and 'a huge festival of leisure' — the fact the royal visit produced 'a sensation not to be

²⁷ 'A Contemporary Account', p. 67.

²⁸ 'A Contemporary Account', p. 100.

described' in Edinburgh seems, as urban history, neither surprising nor disproportionate.²⁹

On the evening of the day following George IV's entrance, 'the citizens of Edinburgh did honour to the King's arrival by a most brilliant and even gorgeous illumination'.³⁰ The sub-committee charged with this occasion comprised entirely members of Edinburgh civic middling orders. It did not include Sir Walter Scott, and the king was not present, remaining at Dalkeith House seven miles away. The illuminations showcased the night spectacle of Edinburgh and depended on extensive participation by institutions, businesses and private households. It was one of the most socially inclusive, accessible and participative set-pieces of the visit. Borsay comments that the perceived quality of public spaces partly depended on the degree of artificial light available.³¹ Jane Grant wrote of 'one of the finest and strangest sights I ever saw'; 'Every spot light as noon-day, each house illuminated with splendour'; the 'broad pavement held a moving mass whichever way you went'; 'With their clean best clothes, the common people seemed to have put on their politest manners'.³² The entire city had become an extensive arena of display in which all ranks appear to have behaved with the *Proposals*' 'politeness and refinement of every kind'.

The first levee was held on 17 August, when 'not less than 2,000 persons' qualified by 'rank or station [*emphasis added*]' were presented to the king, mirroring Borsay's assessment of new emphasis 'on acquired rather than inherited attributes.'³³ Borsay

²⁹ Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, p. 143; Mundie, *A Historical Account*, p. 18.

³⁰ Mudie, *A Historical Account*, p. 120.

³¹ Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, p. 72.

³² 'A Contemporary Account', pp. 107-11.

³³ Mudie, *A Historical Account*, pp. 128 and 130; Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, p. 227.

notes mere admission to certain facilities bestowed prestige. A banquet in Parliament Hall given by the Lord Provost and Town Council of Edinburgh was among the most exclusive ‘public’ events, with only two hundred and ninety-five guests. Fine gradations of status were represented by proximity to the king. As Borsay comments: ‘One reason people deferred so readily to superiors was that it enhanced their own image to do so’. The king’s table mostly consisted of members of the Scottish nobility, but at the most prestigious place, on his right, sat civic leadership in the person of the Lord Provost. In a ‘pursuit of status’ *par excellence*, after dinner George IV there and then conferred on the Lord Provost the honour of a baronetcy, proposing a toast to ‘Sir William Arbuthnot, Baronet, —and the Corporation of the city of Edinburgh’. Loud cheering followed from the exclusive invitees, evincing Borsay’s wry observation: ‘Status by association was an inexhaustible pleasure’.³⁴

No single issue dominates the historiography of George IV’s visit to Edinburgh more than the ‘mania for tartanry’ it allegedly inspired.³⁵ A representative example is Herman, who in eight pages discussing the visit’s ‘air of phoniness’, devotes seven to the issue of Highland dress and tartan.³⁶ Primary source evidence does not support interpretations that ‘King George IV [...] left Scotland with the impression that it was inhabited solely by clans and clansman’.³⁷ In eighty-six pages of the Grants’ correspondence about the visit, Highland dress is mentioned just three times. Yet the Grant daughters were typical of an age preoccupied with ‘personal accoutrements’, when, as Borsay observes, ‘personal appearance was central to the pursuit of status’.³⁸

³⁴ Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, p. 243.

³⁵ Devine, *The Scottish Nation*, p. 235.

³⁶ Herman, pp. 297-304.

³⁷ Buchan, p. 340.

³⁸ Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, p. 237.

Their letters are littered with references to the clothing, hair and accessories of men and women. In the correspondence of an unrelated young female, there is not a single reference to Highland dress.³⁹ The Peers' Ball on Friday 23 August was 'the greatest social event of the visit' and a chance for the city to show off its Assembly Rooms in the New Town's George Street. As Borsay explains, 'assemblies arranged to mark special occasions were often brilliant spectacles, stage-managed to create a ritual splendour'.⁴⁰ Yet Prebble characteristically selects a critical tone, predicated on a false premise of exceptionalism regarding the ball, describing decoration of the Assembly Rooms as 'a shameless touch of theatre — Scotland's lion shield of scarlet and gold, surrounded by the banners of its history'.⁴¹

In isolation, many of the personal accoutrements described by Borsay in an English provincial context lend themselves to caricature. However, when contextualised within the pursuit of status, what to some contemporaries may have seemed 'absurd and nauseous', and to modern eyes ridiculous or anomalous, is capable of rational, historical explanation.⁴² This broader Urban Enlightenment context is wholly lacking in the historiography of the 1822 visit, characterised as 'falsification', 'hypocrisy', 'hallucination', 'fraud', 'charade' and 'bogus'.⁴³ It is arguable that such value-loaded epithets suggest authorial deflection of important aspects of urban cultural history that Borsay would classify under the pursuit of status: 'The effectiveness of dress in conveying prestige was largely due to the mediating offices of fashion, which helped ascribe inherently worthless pieces of attire with recognisable social value. Fashion,

³⁹ Caroline Johnstone, Letter to Elizabeth Cholmeley.

⁴⁰ Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, p. 156.

⁴¹ Prebble, p. 304.

⁴² Lord Cockburn cited in Kelly, *Scott-Land*, p. 178.

⁴³ Herman, p. 302-3; Lockhart, *New Popular Edition*, p. 485; Trevor Roper, *The Invention of Scotland*, p. 216; Devine, *The Scottish Nation*, p. 235.

because of its protean nature, also facilitated freer access to status'.⁴⁴ In the context of epochal royal patronage, social prestige was linked to national prestige and in Edinburgh this was expressed through personal accoutrements with *de facto* national connotations. Interpreted as a personal accoutrement with an assigned, urbanised association, questions as to the legitimacy or 'invention' of tartan — a subject with its own historiography — become less important in assessing the cultural forms of the royal visit.⁴⁵ This is linked to more recent scholarship on tartan: 'This was not an invented tradition; it was the reinscription of [...] the discourse of Scottish particularity'.⁴⁶

4.3: Cultural Differentiation

As described in Chapter 3, Edinburgh's Urban Enlightenment followed the pattern Borsay describes as '[t]he spatially divisive impact of the fashionable new building projects', with the aristocrats, gentry, professional and middling orders progressively moving from the vernacular, socially mixed housing of the Old Town to the classical New Towns.⁴⁷ The New Town itself was 'segregated into class-coded streets'.⁴⁸ Social segregation during the royal visit is evidenced by Mary Grant's account of the night of the illuminations: 'Papa had made us promise we would not go there [*the Old Town*]', that district having by 1822 become socially differentiated as poorer, darker and more dangerous home to the lower classes.⁴⁹ The Grants also manifest Borsay's 'preserving exclusivity' and the risk 'the lower orders might attempt to gain unauthorised access,

⁴⁴ Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, p. 240.

⁴⁵ Sally Tuckett, 'Reassessing the Romance: Tartan as a Popular Commodity, c. 1770-1830', *The Scottish Historical Review*, XCV, 2.241, 182-202.

⁴⁶ Pittock, p. 43.

⁴⁷ Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, p. 295.

⁴⁸ W. A. Brogden and others, *The Neoclassical Town, Scottish Contributions to Urban Design Since 1750* (Edinburgh: Rutland, 1996), p. 40, cited in Carley and others, p. 149.

⁴⁹ 'A Contemporary Account', p. 109.

either to ogle, or to pursue more nefarious activities'.⁵⁰ On the night of the Peers' Ball, 'There was a terrible fight when we got off. Soldiers, menacing with their bayonets; the mob hissing and groaning'.⁵¹ This suggests social tensions were heightened around more exclusive gatherings, whereas inclusive, accessible occasions like the illuminations were marked by good behaviour. The possibility of criminal elements infiltrating events during the visit had been anticipated when civic authorities arranged 'to have some of the London police officers in Edinburgh during the visit'.⁵² Borsay notes the most over-subscribed balls were those linked to incidents of local and national importance, such as in Bath in 1738 for the Princess of Wales' birthday, when rooms with a capacity of one thousand hosted a ball with fifteen hundred tickets.⁵³ The Peers' Ball was hyper-exclusive and guests required invitation from a Scottish peer, meaning even people of rank like the Grants found it difficult to obtain tickets. Such events during the visit were exemplars of polite urban culture looking 'outwards towards London and the continent'.⁵⁴ Mary Grant wrote: 'Lord Roseberry [*sic*], who is a great Court man, says he never saw so well dressed or so orderly a drawingroom [*sic*], and that the ladies wore their feathers and looked as if they had been at Court all their lives'.⁵⁵

'One vital way in which the provincial town provided access to cosmopolitan attitudes', Borsay notes, 'was through its production and distribution of print'.⁵⁶ With the exception of London, nowhere in early nineteenth century Britain was a greater centre

⁵⁰ Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, p. 292.

⁵¹ 'A Contemporary Account', p. 145.

⁵² Mudie, *A Historical Account*, p. 40.

⁵³ Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, p. 156.

⁵⁴ Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, p. 286.

⁵⁵ 'A Contemporary Account', p. 144.

⁵⁶ Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, p. 287.

of literary, publishing and print industry — ‘the material foundations of cultural diffusion’ — than Edinburgh.⁵⁷ As Borsay observes, the influence of print depended on levels of literacy. Edinburgh was ‘an environment with high levels of basic literacy and abundant education provision from the late seventeenth century’.⁵⁸ Printing and education were given prominence in the royal visit in two forms, one ceremonial and one cultural. On 22 August, incorporations and public bodies lining the High Street for the royal procession included the Society of Journeymen Printers, the Society of Bookbinders and the Booksellers of Edinburgh (‘consisting of about 100’). Edinburgh’s reputation as a city of educated producers and consumers of print was represented on the route by learned societies, medical colleges, judiciary and legal profession, university students and teachers and pupils from the city’s three main schools.⁵⁹ Literary and publishing interests were embodied among ‘several respectable citizens’ on the Town Council’s committee organising the royal visit: William Blackwood, city Baillie and ‘the leading Scottish publisher of the period’; James Skene, literary figure; and Sir Walter Scott, best-selling author.

In the early nineteenth century, Edinburgh printed three annual almanacks, five learned quarterly publications, six monthly and fourteen thrice, twice or once weekly newspapers.⁶⁰ Borsay outlines that provincial newspapers of the English Urban Renaissance had a cultural impact on three levels: news, education and entertainment, and advertising. The Edinburgh newspapers during the visit had multi-layered

⁵⁷ Raymond Birn, Book Review of Sher, Anthony, *The Enlightenment and the Book*, *History*, 93.311, 433-4 (p. 434).

⁵⁸ R. A. Houston, ‘Literacy, Education and the Culture of Print in Enlightenment Edinburgh’, *History*, 78.254, 373-92 (p. 392).

⁵⁹ Mudie, *A Historical Account*, p. 190-2.

⁶⁰ *Edinburgh in the Nineteenth Century from Original Drawings* by Thomas H. Shepherd (London: Jones & Co., 1829; repr. Newcastle: Frank Graham, 1969), p. 13.

functions. They were newspapers of record, exhaustively listing the composition of processions, levees and balls. These were important to elites both in the pursuit of status and as cultural differentiation. Jane Grant recalls an acquaintance on their journey to the city telling the Grants, ‘that she would look for all our names in the papers’.⁶¹ These lists — reproduced in Mudie’s account— evidence that the differentiating hierarchies of Scotland’s ancient offices of state, heraldic and ceremonial officers, judiciary, aristocracy, military, volunteer regiments, civic and professional bodies and incorporated trades were at least as prominent as those of Highland chiefs and followers, or their urban Highland society counterparts.⁶² Jane Grant remarks on the accuracy of reports of the visit in *The Scotsman*, demonstrating how the newspapers were being instantly analysed and discussed. Newspapers provided a forum for often vituperative exchanges in the correspondence sections among participants in the royal events. Immediately following the visit, *The Edinburgh Observer* published a series of letters which set off such a controversy that Sheriff Duff (a member of the Town Council’s organising committee) summoned editors from all Edinburgh newspapers to warn against stirring controversy: ‘the Editors know well that if they inserted paragraphs of a provoking tendency from one quarter, they could not easily refuse to receive paragraphs on the same subject from the opposite party’.⁶³ Thirdly, the royal visit was an ideological and political resource that publications could mould to their own agendas. The Tory *Blackwood’s Magazine* devoted an entire monthly edition of one hundred and thirty-nine pages to describing the visit, when ‘Scotland and all her hills rejoiced’.⁶⁴ In contrast, *The Edinburgh Review*, a Whig publication, did not mention the visit once. In the pamphlet *Hints*, published immediately before the king’s

⁶¹ ‘A Contemporary Account’, p. 76.

⁶² E.g., Mudie, *A Historical Account*, pp. 131-149.

⁶³ Prebble, p. 362.

⁶⁴ *Blackwood’s Magazine*, 68.12 (September 1822), 253-392 (p. 257).

arrival, Sir Walter Scott appealed for unity among Edinburgh's 'rancorous adherents' of Tory and Whig parties: 'Both parties have erred. Both parties have carried matters too far. [...] I express my deep and sincere desire that the presence of our King may be the signal for burying in oblivion that which is past'.⁶⁵ Particular care is required by historians not to treat contemporary comment on the visit as representative of collective public opinion, when newspapers and journals would have been consumed at the time precisely for a preferred, politically opinionated stance.

Moderately radical, *The Scotsman* identified itself in opposition to all other Edinburgh newspapers, decrying them as 'Edinburgh government scribes' for their favourable treatment of Sir Walter Scott. Prebble quotes an opinion article from *The Times*, eagerly reprinted in *The Scotsman*, containing an unsubstantiated attack on Scott for presumption and self-promotion during the visit.⁶⁶ Borsay observes, 'vanity, pride and ambition' were prevalent in the Georgian character and print in this period was a highly charged arena, shaping reputations.⁶⁷ As Jane Grant testifies, *The Scotsman* enjoyed an influential reputation for being 'particularly accurate' in its news reporting, and therefore its commentary may have been formative in negative representations of Scott and the visit.⁶⁸ In the *Hints* pamphlet, Scott appeals to what Borsay calls 'the more elevated aspects of the new urban culture', and a close reading of his text reveals a complex and nuanced guide to the visit, urging citizens to observe the civility and sociability of 'a virtuous and enlightened people'. *Hints* reflects Borsay's observation that 'culture was seen as the principal agent for promoting change', and hence the

⁶⁵ [Sir Walter Scott], *Hints Addressed to the Inhabitants of Edinburgh, and others, in Prospect of His Majesty's visit. By an Old Citizen* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1822), p. 2.

⁶⁶ Prebble, p. 360; 'The King's Visit to Scotland', *The Times*, 7 September 1822; *The Scotsman*, 14 September 1822.

⁶⁷ Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, p. 255.

⁶⁸ 'A Contemporary Account', p. 101.

occasion represented ‘the pledge of better things in the time to come’.⁶⁹ In a city especially dense in literate culture, the pamphlet positioned the visit as the pivot for a heightened cultural differentiation specific to Edinburgh’s Urban Enlightenment: modern Scottish identity within a British pan-identity.

In Borsay’s analysis, the theatre met ‘an explosion in the demand for, and provision of publicly available high-status leisure’.⁷⁰ An adaptation of Scott’s *Rob Roy* at the Royal Theatre fittingly marked the king’s final public appearance in Edinburgh, the historical drama a reconciliatory blend of high and low rank, polite and popular culture, fact and fiction, urban and rural, centre and periphery, past and present, rebellion and order, native and outsider, Lowland and Highland. Social exclusivity was maintained, ‘[t]he boxes were filled with the rank, wealth and beauty of Scotland’, yet there was inclusivity too with the pit and gallery a popular lottery as a ‘vortex, in which hundreds whirled about, scrambling and jostling and floundering’ to gain admission.⁷¹

‘A capital should naturally become the centre of trade and commerce, of learning of the arts, of politeness, and refinement of every kind’.⁷² Civic self-satisfaction at realising this vision during the 1822 visit is prevalent in the language of an exchange of letters between the Lord Provost and the Lord President (Scotland’s most senior judge) after the king’s departure. Echoing Borsay’s ‘civility and sociability’, the Lord Provost wrote the arrangements would have ‘failed of their intended effect, had they not been seconded by the Enthusiasm of their Fellow Subjects, tempered as it was by that decent and respectful behaviour so strongly characteristic of a *virtuous and enlightened People*

⁶⁹ Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, p. 257; *Hints*, p. 2

⁷⁰ Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, p. 117.

⁷¹ Mudie, *A Historical Account*, p. 273.

⁷² *Proposals*, p. 1.

[*emphasis added*].⁷³ In repeating Scott's phrase, the Lord Provost affirms attainment of the ideal of citizenship envisaged by the *Hints*. Decades of urban expansion and improvement created an environment capable of hosting magnificent spectacles and vast numbers of people. *The Scotsman* complained of 'judicial blarney', decrying public expense and the exclusivity of the banquet, a forerunner of disparaging historiography that reached a twentieth century apogee of its own with *The King's Jaunt*.⁷⁴

4.4: Summary

This chapter has found support in primary sources for treating the cultural forms of George IV's visit as integral to Edinburgh's Urban Enlightenment. In respect of the relation between city and nation, pursuit of status, arenas of display, civility and sociability, fashionable leisure, cultural differentiation, spatial segregation and personal accoutrements, the visit conformed to Borsay's paradigm, with the distinguishing feature of Scotto-British consciousness infusing cultural forms. The effect was indeed that 'Scotland could not be the same again', and new identities were signified after a 'pursuit of status' enacted on an urban 'arena of display' had been endorsed by British royal patronage.

To counter-balance disparaging abridged accounts in the historiography of George IV's visit, a more proportionate interpretation of urban achievement is supported by the primary sources examined. Such a representation finds corroboration in the 'memorialising' of the George Street statue and George IV Bridge. These monuments reflect a prevailing institutional bias oppositional to *The Scotsman's* pervasive

⁷³ Letter from Lord Provost to Lord President dated 28 August 1822, Edinburgh Town Council Minutes, 28 August 1822, Edinburgh City Archives, Edinburgh.

⁷⁴ 'Judges and Councillors', *The Scotsman*, 31 August 1822.

ideological bias. An accumulation of authorial preferences over nearly two centuries has determined that the former is explicitly discredited in the historiography while the latter is implicitly endorsed.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The research question of this dissertation was to enquire whether evidence supports the proposition that George IV's visit to Edinburgh in 1822 is best interpreted within the context of the preceding seven decades of Edinburgh's urban improvement.

Supplementary issues considered were: what was distinctive about Edinburgh in a British context; why does historiography isolate George IV's visit; and why has the visit been interpreted as myth-making? These questions stem from the hypothesis that histories of Edinburgh's urban form and George IV's visit have each acquired an isolating inflexibility through a disconnection from urban cultural context. This observation emanates from awareness that, divorced from a broader socio-cultural context, a local history study may obscure what it would otherwise illuminate and devalue sources it would otherwise inform. The research questions have therefore been considered by applying to primary sources the rigour of a contextualising analytical framework derived from Borsay. This methodology acknowledges such sources originate among elites and are partial, with representations of those lower in the social hierarchy being second hand and reflecting authorial opinion and purpose. Core to the research was an awareness that the visit has never been contextualised in existing historiography as an intense infusion of 'irresistible' royal patronage within an overarching urban cultural renaissance.⁷⁵

Chapter 2 examined three relevant historiographies, dominated by three corresponding modern texts reflecting markedly different authorial preferences. Each strand of historiography was shown to transmit a variant of exceptionalism in its approach to

⁷⁵ Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, p. 241.

local history, with the result that synergies are unexploited. Notwithstanding its implicit exceptionalism, the conceptual apparatus of *The English Urban Renaissance* was found by reviewers to offer a *British* model of urban cultural development, encompassing cultural revival, classicism and ‘diverse but integrated’ cultural forms.⁷⁶ Youngson’s *The Making of Classical Edinburgh* entrenched exceptionalism in the urban historiography of Edinburgh, partly explicable by the intellectual achievement of the Scottish Enlightenment. By omitting urban cultural context, Youngson cemented the segregation between Edinburgh’s urban development and George IV’s visit. The historiography of the royal visit itself was shown to be dominated by the transmission of contagious abridgements of its history, predominantly representing the visit as myth-making ‘stage managed’ by Sir Walter Scott. It was suggested that these abridgements are impaired by present-day opinions and agendas of their *originating* authors who extrapolated intention and agency beyond what the primary sources evidence. Lockhart is less than objective; Trevor-Roper’s scholarly superstructure barely conceals his Unionist standpoint; and, in the concluding words of *The King’s Jaunt*, Prebble literally associates George IV’s visit with a present-day moral debt owed to Scotland.⁷⁷ Ironically, Prebble and Trevor-Roper demonstrate the flexible utility of the royal visit as history capable of being recast in support of mutually conflicting opinion. Both overlook seven decades of localised urban achievement, implying the ascendancy of undiluted political and national history over urban cultural history in the historiography of the visit.

Chapter 3 explored the distinguishing characteristics of Edinburgh’s development in the period, using primary sources. Textual analysis of the *Proposals* reveals a close

⁷⁶ Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, p. viii.

⁷⁷ Prebble, p. 367.

correlation with conditions and processes Borsay identifies as giving rise to the Urban Renaissance. Edinburgh was distinguished by singular purpose, central co-ordination and rational coherence of civic vision, in addition to periodisation, urbanisation, functional specialisation and national meaning. That said, Chapter 3 concluded that primary sources reveal conformity with Borsay's urban cultural patterns, particularly 'arenas of display', 'social differentiation' and the 'pursuit of status'. In the context of Edinburgh, the pursuit of status was stratified, with at one level the personal and social, and at another the urban and national. It was suggested Edinburgh's urban environment played a more significant role in communicating national status and identity than historians have acknowledged.

Using Edinburgh's Urban Enlightenment as an explanatory model, Chapter 4 interrogated primary source material to assess where the royal visit of 1822 reveals conformity in cultural patterns. Council minutes disclosed that ongoing work planning and managing urban improvement and economic growth were prioritised over the visit in the order of business. Collective rather than individual responsibility was evident in a hierarchical committee structure suggestive of mature local government administration. Sir Walter Scott's appointment to two of four sub-committees suggested his formal role may not have been as extensive as Lockhart and *The Scotsman* maintained. The 1753 ceremony to lay the foundation stone of the Exchange demonstrates civic Edinburgh was quite capable of putting on a show infused with classicism and national identity without Scott's 'stage management'.

Borsay's treatment of 'personal accoutrements' to convey prestige and rank through 'the mediating offices of fashion' was used to contextualise tartan and Highland dress as

urbanised signifiers of Scottish national distinction, relegating debates around their legitimacy to secondary importance. George IV's own words, as a newcomer to the city, were cited to suggest that the scale and achievement of Edinburgh's urban environment was just as significant in communicating meaning as 'Highlandism' may have been. Contextualised within Edinburgh's Urban Enlightenment, key events during the visit were shown to reveal manifestations of Borsay's 'pursuit of status', 'fashionable leisure', 'arenas of display', 'civility and sociability', 'personal accoutrements' and 'cultural differentiation'. Far from being extraordinary or 'daft', as Prebble suggests, these cultural forms and behaviours seem both predictable and proportionate for an epochal royal visit to Scotland in the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

Chapter 4 answers the main research question with a qualified affirmative: To give a balanced interpretation of George IV's 1822 visit, it is necessary to contextualise its impact within the narrative arc of decades of planned urban and cultural resurgence, here referred to as Edinburgh's Urban Enlightenment. The meaning of the visit and the role of the metropolis in resolving dualities — ancient and modern, darkness and light, rural and urban, rebellion and order, Highland and Lowland, Scottish and British — are inseparable from the cultural forms of the Urban Enlightenment. Exceptionalism and lack of contextual framework were proposed to explain the subsequent isolation of George IV's visit in historiography. Without the discipline of a conceptual apparatus such as Borsay's, derived imaginatively from an aggregation of local urban histories, a discrete local urban history risks representing as exceptional what is rather a manifestation of broader cultural trends and meanings. Equally, an urban apotheosis — inducing thousands to travel from peripheries into a centre and generating a wealth of material culture — is a resource rich in possibility for micro-historical scholarship.

Rather than being ‘one and twenty daft days’, this perspective suggests the intensity of the visit as a temporally and spatially compressed series of urban spectacles raised a newly integrated consciousness of ‘Scotto-British’ national possibilities as an outcome of seven decades of urban achievement.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Macinnes, *passim*.

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 John Home, 'Verses on laying the foundation of the Exchange of Edinburgh, September 13, 1753'.
- Appendix 2 Plate 1. Patrick Begbie,, *James Craig's Plan of the new Streets and Squares intended for the City of Edinburgh*, 1768, 46.00 x 65.70 cm, National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh.
- Appendix 3 Plate 2. John Wood, *Plan of the City of Edinburgh, including all the latest and intended improvements* (Edinburgh: T. Brown, 1823), 54.30 x 76.40 cm, National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh.
- Appendix 4 Plate 3. John Wilson Ewbank, *The Entry of George IV into Edinburgh from the Calton Hill*, 1822, oil on canvas, 150.5 x 240 cm, City Art Centre, City of Edinburgh Museums & Galleries, Edinburgh.
- Appendix 5 Extract from Edinburgh Town Council Minutes, 27 August 1823, Edinburgh City Archives, Edinburgh.

Appendix 1

Home, John, 'Verses on laying the foundation of the Exchange of Edinburgh,
September 13, 1753'.

This day, fair aera of *EDINA*'s fame,
The muse, exulting, joins the loud acclaim
Of *SCOTLAND*'s glory; hails the patriot band,
Auspicious guardians of their native land!
Dejected long pale *CALEDONIA* lay,
And wrapt in darkness, scarce durst hope for the day;
Her sons, despairing, saw her hapless plight,
And fled, impatient of the painful fight,
To climes remote; unsheathe'd the conqu'ring sword,
Or plann'd dominion for a foreign lord.
Let *Belgian* annals tell who sav'd their state;
Let *Sweden* say, who made *Gustavus* Great.
Whilst thus thro' Europe's fields the wand'ers roam,
Weak and forlorn, decay'd the hive at home;
The rights of all, the few, the strong invade,
An barb'rous chiefs with iron sceptre sway'd.
Now *SCOTLAND*'s youth with better omen born,
Salute the dawning of a brighter morn.
Already *COMMERCE*, and her sweeping train
Of polish'd Arts, in *CALEDONIA* reign;

Her seas, her mines, exhaustless treasures yield,
And CERES smiles on the once barren field;
O'er her fierce floods imperial arches bend,
And *Roman* ways her steepest hills ascend.
When PHOEBUS lights the land beneath the *Bear*,
He sees BEHEMOTH on the *SCOTTISH* spear,
And rolling back to where the citron blooms,
Beholds his Indians cloth'd from *SCOTTISH* looms.
Last of the Arts, proud ARCHITECTURE comes,
To grace *EDINA* with majestic domes.
BRITONS, this day is laid a PRIMAL STONE,
Firm may it be! — But trust not that alone!
On public virtue found; his favour gain,
Without whose aid *the builders build in vain.*

Appendix 2

IMAGE REDACTED

Plate 1. Patrick Begbie, *James Craig's Plan of the new Streets and Squares intended for the City of Edinburgh*, 1768, 46.00 x 65.70 cm, National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh. Image reproduced with the permission of the National Galleries of Scotland.

Appendix 3

IMAGE REDACTED

Plate 2. John Wood, *Plan of the City of Edinburgh, including all the latest and intended improvements* (Edinburgh: T. Brown, 1823), 54.30 x 76.40 cm, National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh. The oval in red shows the approximate footprint of Edinburgh (including Canongate) in 1752. The blue cross marks the location of George IV's statue, unveiled in 1831. Image reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.

Appendix 4

IMAGE REDACTED

Plate 3. John Wilson Ewbank, *The Entry of George IV into Edinburgh from the Calton Hill*, 1822, oil on canvas, 150.5 x 240 cm. City of Edinburgh Council, City Art Centre, Edinburgh. Image reproduced courtesy of the City Art Centre, City of Edinburgh Museums & Galleries, Edinburgh.

Appendix 5

Extract from Edinburgh Town Council Minutes, 27 August 1823, Edinburgh, Edinburgh City Archives.

‘[...] a Report by the Committee appointed on 24th July 1822 for the reception and Entertainment of His Majesty: Edinburgh, October 1822. The Committee of the Town Council appointed on the 24th July last with full power to make the best arrangements that the time will permit for the reception and Entertainment, of His Majesty, beg leave to report to the Council that having called to their assistance several respectable Citizens, they proceeded in the matter remitted to and for the more easy accomplishment of the object, divided themselves into the following Sub Committees, viz

1. The Ceremonial of the landing of HM, His entrance into the City and Procession to His Palace of Holyrood were committed to the charge of the Lord Provost, Sheriff Duff, Sir William Forbes 13th, Sir Walter Scott Bt, William Clerk and James Skene Esquires.
2. Fireworks, Illuminations, etc upon this happy occasion were committed to the charge of Bailies Alexander Henderson and John Lyall, Merchant Councillors Dallas and Cockburn and James Skene Esquire.
3. His Majesty’s Progress from the Palace of Holyrood to the Castle was committed to the charge of Bailies Blackwood and Smith, Convener Wishart, Merchant Councillor Kinnear, Trades Councillor Crombie, Sir Walter Scott, Baron Clerk Rattray and George Forbes Esquire.

4. The Banquet to be given to His Majesty by the City was committed to the charge of the Lord Provost, Merchant Councillor Cockburn, Baron Clerk Rattray, William Clerk, William Trotter and James Skene Esquire. [...]

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