NETWORKS AND NETWORKING IN SCOTTISH STUDIES: ESSAYS IN HONOUR OF ELIZABETH EWAN

5.

FURNISHING THE FAMILY: JOHN CLERK OF PENICUIK AND HIS NETWORK OF INTERDEPENDENCIES AND INFLUENCES

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John Clerk of Penicuik (1611–1674) was a Montrose-born merchant whose commercial activities in France between 1634 and 1645 placed him at the centre of an extensive network, one that connected him to a vast array of producers of art and luxury items as well as merchants and elite clients from across western Europe.[1] His economic dealings garnered him a reputation, at home and abroad, for fair trade

Previous: Women, Kinship, and Violence in Scotland.
Next: Noblewomen, Kinship Networks, and Power

and an eye for quality goods. In turn, this helped Clerk to earn considerable wealth and to establish associations that would lay the foundation for his family's social ascension over the next two generations. As Siobhan Talbott noted, the key to Clerk's success in business during this early period was the trust he earned and the relationships he cultivated.[2] Returning to Scotland and establishing himself in Edinburgh in 1645, Clerk continued to oversee the commercial network he had developed in France, travelling to wherever his involvement was crucial to his (and his clients') business interests.[3] In 1654, he acquired the barony of Penicuik and began building up his family's position in the region.[4] By the 1660s, Clerk had transformed the family home at Newbiggin into the epicentre of his extensive landholding and commercial activities such that, at his death in 1674, he was able to leave his family in a position of wealth, influence, and stature that ensured their place among Scotland's elite.

From the very start of his career and right up until his death, Clerk's ability to cultivate and maintain strong personal relationships enabled him to accumulate social and economic capital. Although Clerk had amassed a significant amount of wealth by the time he decided to "give over his trade" and settle in Penicuik, his networks (kin, merchant, business, social) and his keen networking abilities were crucial to his being able to establish such a strong foundation in Penicuik. But despite Clerk's vital role in helping to propel the family to a prominent position, far more is known about his illustrious descendants whose accomplishments have cast a long shadow.[5] Contemporaries and modern scholars alike have been drawn to the family's numerous contributions to the arts, science, architecture, industry, law, politics, and economics throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Their remarkable achievements led contemporaries like Sir Walter Scott to acknowledge their "virtuoso genius."[6] More recently, David Forfar has argued that "for two hundred years they produced men of such conspicuous talent and originality … [that] the family occupied a central place in Scotland's cultural history and intellectual life."[7] While scholars interested in the Clerk family have acknowledged him as the 'cultural progenitor' of this family and "the genius behind the eminence of his line," Clerk's life and activities after settling in Penicuik have not yet been fully explored.[8]

This essay aims to provide a starting point for exploring Clerk and his family's roots in and around Penicuik between 1654 and 1674 and the networks he maintained that linked them to central figures in Scotland and abroad.[9] It argues that Clerk's business acumen, skill at cultivating relationships, and keen understanding of the importance of face-to-face transactions were invaluable as he developed his family's standing in the local community. Moreover, Clerk's local nexus, built around his ability to provide loans to many of Scotland's elite families, improve his estate, employ and buy locally while leaning on and propping up his extended kin, was crucial in his family's ascent. Considering the extensive nature of Clerk's networks and each overlapping area within his business, social, and familial groups, it is impossible to thoroughly examine each area of connectivity in an essay of this length. Instead, it identifies critical areas and persons within Clerk's local social system and begins mapping the

lateral and horizontal relationships that established the family in the region and which provided them with the connections and capital that would ultimately help elevate them from a "middle-rank family of little distinction to a central place in the social and intellectual life of their country."[10] While Clerk had the wealth and the connections to help his family, the individuals in his networks (both of low and high standing) helped to establish the family in the region and contributed to their rise. Ultimately, Clerk's local social system, cultivated from (and around) the estate at Penicuik, was the necessary component behind the family's ascent.

Historians are increasingly turning to network analysis to help shed light on early modern communities. Although contemporaries did not characterize their social groups as "networks," most scholars see some utility in using the term to describe a wide range of early modern social relations.[11] In particular, it can help to illustrate the point that most individuals were connected by a web of obligations, duties, neighbourly concern, companionship, and interpersonal support, each of which furnished them with reputation, credibility, information, and social capital while also providing links of friendship and support that provided safety nets.[12] Although debate exists over whether it is appropriate to describe early modern groups and associations as networks, there is some consensus that such connections equipped members with an institutional framework that helped establish for them a sense of identity and place, influenced their decision making, and mitigated ongoing or novel risks.[13] As Kate Davison has argued, "the concept of a network is … flexible enough to account for relationships resulting from either work or play, be that intellectual endeavour, political faction, economic activity, craft guilds, marriage or routine social encounters at the local alehouse."[14]

Central to most studies of early modern networks is the examination of kin connections, where they fit within such groupings, and their relative importance when contrasted with other connective groups like friends, neighbours, colleagues, and clients. Peter Mathias and Steve Murdoch have both argued that kinship networks could help provide entry into business and further commercial alliances.[15] Likewise, T. C. Smout's work on Glasgow merchant communities draws our attention to the importance of "kinship webs," clarifying how the marriage bed brought merchant and landed families together. These family groupings helped limit rivalry, "blunt competition," and provide greater security.[16] Kin also played an essential role in making advantageous introductions for family members and connecting them to social and political opportunities.[17] The Clerks of Penicuik fit well within these kin-based network patterns. However, for lower rank members of society, outside of inheritance and maintenance of family property, kin tended to play a more limited role in providing regular assistance to family members.[18] In this regard, social status and wealth may be a key factor for assessing the importance of kin links to a family's social or commercial network. Recent scholarship has shown us that during the early modern period, "economic, social, and cultural exchanges were often propelled along kinship tracks."[19]

Perhaps it is useful then to consider, as Rosemary O'Day has done, the fact that contemporaries went to some lengths to prove kinship ties (e.g. surety and inheritance) and regularly engaged networks consisting of friends and family members.[20]

It is unclear what prompted Clerk to purchase the barony of Penicuik and to reduce his commercial activities. By the early seventeenth century, a growing number of middle-class merchants and manufacturers began purchasing land as a way of investing their capital.[21] According to the second Sir John, until he purchased Penicuik, Clerk had intended to return to France permanently. He went on to suggest that had his grandfather not "given over his Trade too soon, he might have been immensely rich."[22] Once settled at Newbiggin, Clerk became the node in a patronage network that connected his family to the families living on his estate, to the members of his parish for whom he was an elected elder, and to the surrounding villages that provided Clerk, and those connected to him, with goods and services. The fact that Clerk did not have longstanding ties to the region underscores how important it was for him to strengthen local connections. These groupings provided him with sociability, support, and information while linking him to additional people and resources that proved essential as he transitioned out of a life of commerce into one of landed interests.

Sir John also noted his grandfather's business acumen, the wealth he repatriated to Scotland, and his prodigious bookkeeping. But, his account of Clerk's life comes to a close with his grandfather's decision to abandon his return to France, "give over all Trade, and become a Country Gentleman."[23] Missing from most accounts of Clerk's life and activities are the last three decades of his life, including the period between 1645 and 1654 when Clerk moved between Edinburgh, London, Paris, and Amsterdam, transacting business and putting in place the pieces by which his time as a "country gentleman" came together. In early 1653, Clerk was infeft in the lands of Penicuik by one of its heritors, Sir Robert Innes of that Ilk, for a loan of £6000 Scots.[24] The following year, Clerk purchased the lands from Innes' wife, dame Jean Ross, the daughter of the countess of Eglinton, and her niece, Margaret Hepburn. From that point on, and like most landlords in this period, Clerk generated revenue from rents on his newly acquired estates. Perhaps one reason why Clerk's life as a landlord has not received much attention is the fact that his son, the first Sir John, became a noted improver who saw rentals on the estate rise from £4,596 13s. 4d. in 1685 to £6,080 6s. 8d. in 1696 up from £3,896 in 1664, a decade after Clerk had taken over the Penicuik estate.[25]

While Clerk was slow to improve the land, he worked tirelessly to build up the family home at Newbiggin. In a lengthy letter to the famed Dutch botanist and physician Herman Boerhaave, Sir John described the house his grandfather built as "ample rather than magnificent, useful and convenient rather than sumptuous or splendid." Clerk's book of disbursements identifies sums paid to slaters, masons, plumbers, glaziers, and gardeners to repair and make additions to Newbiggin such that it "became the

best house of the shire of Edin[burgh].”[26] Clerk’s approach to improving his new home followed the same standards he set in his business practice. In July 1657, Clerk paid Wille Gray, Robert Crichtoun, and Edward Lochey £129 2s. 8d. to slate the main house at Newbiggin and “furnish the kirk of Pennycooke.” In a series of notes that Clerk made regarding this work, he elaborated on the protracted dispute over the quality of Gray’s work. Referring to the slater as “that decaiving kobling knaiwe Wille Gray,” Clerk angrily claimed that the “unworthie knawe hath got much more money as his wark cums too. Bot iff it had been weill done I wold have cared the lesse.”[27] The following year Clerk continued to complain that “of the housse of Newbigin how it did rain in severall places.”[28] Rueing the fact that he had ever “seen his theiffs face,” Clerk let Gray and his crew go, hiring Andrew Casse and John Mein to continue the work on the estate.

Some have argued that any significant improvements on the Penicuik estate began with Clerk’s son and heir, John, reaching its fullest potential in the eighteenth century under the second baronet and his heirs.[29] However, throughout the 1660s, Clerk spent a considerable time visiting local estates and conversing with gardeners about possible improvements to the grounds at Newbiggin. In March 1665, he sent one of the two gardeners he employed to meet with gardeners on the estates of Sir John of Grothill, John Inglis of Cramond, and the laird of Livingston. In June 1669, Clerk himself examined the yards and dovecotes in Stony Hill; later that year, he was at Craigmiller, where he bought 206 young ashes, elms, and plains for his gardens.[30] The following spring, Clerk invited Mathew Mitchell, a Dalkeith-based gardener, to come to Newbiggin with additional trees for the gardens. In addition, his account books show him constructing dykes, ponds, and parks, laying the foundation for any subsequent improvements his grandson would make to the grounds in the early 1720s.[31]

Whatever Clerk’s reasons for purchasing the estate, he understood the importance of his networks for mitigating risk in this new venture. Unlike many other landlords in this period, he does not appear to have employed a factor or baillie to assist in managing his estate (or his ongoing business affairs).[32] On the estate, Clerk relied heavily on one man, John Rob, whose skill set must have been wide-ranging and his loyalty unwavering given the array of tasks he undertook on behalf of Clerk and his family. Although Clerk never identified Rob’s precise role on the estate, he seems to have been one of the family’s most trusted servants.[33] After Clerk’s death in 1674, Rob continued working on the estate serving Clerk’s heir. Clerk also employed a few hinds (skilled farm servants) who provided seasonal labour in exchange for wages and a house on the estate. While William Thomson and William Watson were employed for only a short term, William Stewart and his family remained on the estate until Clerk’s death. Like John Rob, Stewart’s activities on behalf of the Clerk family went beyond what was expected of a hind (though, like so many within Clerk’s social system, he was subject to Clerk’s exacting standards). In a rather scathing entry in Clerk’s book of disbursements, Clerk details a few of Stewart’s missteps in

attempting to purchase livestock for the estate. Noting these actions as "some mementos, triks, and pranks," Clerk concluded that Stewart was "a very fyne merchant without money."[34] Both Rob's and Stewart's families were employed on the estate and, on at least one occasion, they were the only non-family members to attend bride ales as part of the family cohort.[35] Individuals like John Rob and William Stewart were important go-betweens that connected Clerk and his family to labourers, tenants, and other servants. They also helped to reduce the steps between Clerk and those within his network, providing what Kate Davison calls "betweeness," a type of mathematical "centrality" calculation that helps to sustain a network.[36]

At the heart of Clerk's local social system were those within his most immediate nexus: his nuclear family, kin, friends, clients, merchants, and employees, as well as his neighbours and tenants. Even after he purchased the barony of Penicuik, the relationships Clerk forged while in Paris continued to play a significant role in both his social and commercial networks. Michel Mel, a Scottish merchant based in Rouen, continued to connect Clerk with people and goods. One of Clerk's most steadfast clients, the earl of Lothian (and his family), remained close with the Clerks, procuring goods, borrowing money, and providing access to other parts of Scottish society. Clerk's brother, John Anderson, was active in almost every part of Clerk's life, conducting business on his behalf, moving goods, collecting fees, and even providing care for Clerk's children. Clerk also maintained friendships with the family of Sir James Lockhart of Lee and with other prominent merchants like Robert Inglis and John Johnston. It was also in Paris that Clerk became intimate with the Grays of Pittendrum. Sir William Gray was a prominent merchant whose success in foreign trade made him one of the wealthiest traders in Edinburgh in the second quarter of the seventeenth century. By the 1630s and early 1640s, Gray enjoyed considerable influence in Edinburgh (and with Charles I), but his correspondence with Montrose during the Scottish revolution put him in conflict with parliament and led to his temporary imprisonment and subsequent financial decline.[37] During Clerk's first few years in Paris, Gray attracted to him both business opportunities and clients. Gray's wife, Geilis Smith (Lady Pittendrum), his daughters, Margaret (Lady Bagillo), Agnes (Lady Newliston), and Mary were some of Clerk's best customers during this period.[38]

For a merchant of Clerk's standing, an advantageous marriage offered an opportunity to improve his respectability, status, and wealth.[39] It also widened his kin network. These functional aspects of marriage arrangements proved invaluable when accompanied by strong emotional attachments. In May 1645, Clerk wrote "passionately" to a colleague of his affection for Mary Gray, Sir William's daughter, whom he married in 1647.[40] Clerk frequently referred to his wife as his "dear and well-beloved bedfellow" during the two decades they were married.[41] In the early years of their marriage, Mary helped Clerk carry out aspects of his business, particularly when he was away in England or on the Continent. Mary's records indicate her having received sums that her brother-in-law John Anderson had [42]

collected from Clerk's clients while he was away from Scotland "in the name of my husband." Clerk himself noted that "at my being in London and Holland" in 1650, John Anderson delivered to Mary Gray £9,544 11s. 4d. "acording to hir with in wreatten recepts … which money was receaved be John Anderson for the said Jon Clarkes behowe."[43] In a memo dated 1650, Clerk acknowledged that Anderson had actually collected £15,724 11s. 4d. but had on Clerk's behalf loaned the earl of Abercorn £6,180. A later account shows Mary Gray going to Edinburgh to purchase three gold ducat pieces for Clerk weighing five ounces, eleven drops and negotiating a better price, "keiping the od 5-15s." before going on to purchase items for the family home.[44] In his book of disbursements, Clerk noted that Mary Gray also kept her own accounts. His mention of her keeping written receipts of the monies Anderson gave her in 1650 supports that point. Sadly, those records have not been identified in the Clerk of Penicuik papers. Nonetheless, there is sufficient evidence in Clerk's accounts to highlight the crucial partnership that developed within their marriage.

Clerk's marriage to Gray undoubtedly brought him status, connections, and influence; for Gray, the marriage was equally prudential. Before his political troubles, William Gray's wealth had been second only to Andrew Ainslie's within the Edinburgh merchant hierarchy.[45] He provided his eldest son, William, a sizeable endowment of 232,000 merks upon his marriage to Anne, the only daughter of the seventh Lord Gray. As noted above, Gray was also able to arrange suitable marriages for each of his daughters. After his release from imprisonment, Gray was forced to pay a fine of 35,000 merks and provide an additional £10,000 loan that was never repaid. His subsequent financial difficulties were offset to some degree by Clerk's ability to provide support to the family through gifts and loans. As early as 1644, Clerk had loaned Sir William £7,000 Scots and Gray's brother-in-law, Sir John Smith of Grothill, an additional £11,000 Scots. Smith would continue to borrow from Clerk over the next few decades, leading Clerk to have to take out an inhibition and arrestment against Smith in 1663 to recover close to £20,000 Scots.[46] In 1644 alone, Clerk was able to make loans amounting to nearly £63,000 Scots to several Scottish clients.[47] In the years that followed, Clerk made loans to Sir William, as well as his daughters Agnes, Isobell, and Margaret Gray. Such support was not unusual within kin networks. Outside of the business with Sir John Smith, the Grays' reliance on Clerk's ability to provide loans does not appear to have caused tension within the family. On the contrary, Clerk's connection to the Grays formed the foundation of his local social system right up until his death.

At least two of Clerk's children were fostered in Gray family households, while Jean Gray, daughter of the Master of Gray, lived for a while at Newbiggin. In May 1562, Mary Gray received a letter from her sister Margaret, the wife of Sir William Blair of Bagillo, advising her that she would not be sending home Mary's daughter, Margaret, as she believed her niece to be thriving "and larning as wiell as sho wold do with you."[48] Clerk noted an expense of 30s. the following June when Lady Bagillo's servant brought Margaret Clerk home.[49] Two months earlier, Clerk had sent John Rob to deliver to another

sister-in-law, Catherine, a "packit" containing 40 merks to be given to Geilis Smith for "Marie Clerks boord – 3 month."[50] After Mary Gray's death, Clerk tasked Marie with giving her aunt Catherine a gold double sovereign worth £24 as a token of his wife's affection. Marie Clerk gave a similar token on her mother's behalf to Jean Gray, the daughter of Mary Gray's brother, William, master of Gray. Jean spent considerable time in the Clerk household and accompanied her cousin on several outings, including bride ales for household servants.[51] As Chris Langley has pointed out, elite children frequently moved between relatives and friends in a sort of "lifestyle" fosterage that provided a type of education or conveyed some political or economic advantage.[52]

In 1663, Clerk's heir left the home of a Widow Bell to "boord" with his aunt Isobell Gray and her husband Walter Hamilton. Two years later he was staying in the home of Alexander Simpson before moving on to the home of William Hamilton, where he and his younger brother, James, would live until May 1670.[53] Simpson and Hamilton were Edinburgh-based merchants with whom Clerk had strong professional relationships. Clerk's other children all lived outwith the family home for a time. In November 1667, Alexander and William Clerk were sent to live with Mr. William Hamilton, the minister in Penicuik. The following year, the pair, along with their sister Janet, had moved into the home of George Bell, a local mason.[54] By 1670, both boys were living in Archie Gemill's home in nearby Dalkeith where they attended school before returning to Bell's home the following year. Clerk was clearly quite comfortable with Bell and his wife, Margaret Hopkirk, as he continued to entrust them with the care of not only William, Alexander, and Janet Clerk, but also their siblings Robert and Helen. Another sibling, Agnes, may have also lived in Bell's home, but this is inconclusive due to a possible error in Clerk's account book.[55] Helen and Janet Clerk would both go on to live in the house of Katherine Sinclair in Preston, where they attended John Brown's school. On multiple occasions, Clerk, his sons John and James, or trusted associates, travelled to Dalkeith or Preston to enquire after the Clerk children.[56] Fosterage reinforced the connections and links formed through familial relations and friendships. Individuals like Bell and Hopkirk, also formed the "betweeness" that linked households in the community with Clerk and his family. In November 1669, Clerk "delivert" to Bell three merk pieces to give to widow Dow in Penicuik "for 4 or 5 month hir sone George Clerk wes at Neubiging in sum[m]er 1669."[57]

Based on references in his numerous account books, between 1654 and 1674, Clerk interacted more regularly with his affinal kin than with any member of his natal kin except John Anderson. Apart from fostering some of Clerk's children or taking out loans, Mary Gray's siblings often made social calls at Newbiggin, entertained the family in their homes, and connected Clerk with other members of the local elite. More frequently, they regularly furnished the Clerk household with both durables and consumables. On several occasions, John Gray of Crichie and his wife, Alison Troup, delivered an

assortment of linens and cloths for the household, as did the Lady Bagillo. Clerk's mother-in-law, Geilis Smith, often provided the household with meal and malt.[58] In March 1665, Clerk gave Mary Gray £9 to give to her brother Alexander for an old suit of clothes "off his which Thomas Andersone got which he took for 9 lib. in part off peyment of his first half yeirs fie."[59] This was one of many different strategies Clerk employed to outfit his household. Clerk also looked to those lower in standing within his network, like George Bell or Margaret Dow, to provide the household with such items.[60] As noted above, Bell and his wife, Margaret Hopkirk, took the Clerk children into their home; they also regularly provided Newbiggin with eggs, butter, linens, shoes, herring, and oil.[61] In this way, Clerk returned some of the wealth he took out of the community as a landlord. After the children had moved on to the school in Dalkeith, Clerk often asked Hopkirk to make the journey to check in on them or bring them needed supplies. These lateral and horizontal relationships continued to develop throughout this period and were crucial in establishing the Clerk family in Penicuik.

Even after Mary Gray's death, her family played a prominent role in Clerk's life and that of his children. Isobelll Gray, Mary's younger sister, featured regularly in Clerk's letters and book of disbursements. Isobell had accompanied her sister to the Tower of Penicuik to visit the family's youngest son, Archibald, when Mary fell ill. At the time, Archibald was living in the house of Archibald Craig whose wife was "nourishing" the child.[62] Over the next seven years, Isobell continued to provide the family with various goods, but also spent time at Newbiggin, and attended bride ales in the community with the family. She routinely sought out clothing for the children in Edinburgh, finding materials for mutches, hoods, and cloaks. In May 1671, Isobell paid the tailor James Telfeir in the Canongate £23 to "furnish" gowns for Marie and Margaret Clerk.[63] The week prior, Clerk's son John had travelled to Edinburgh to escort his sister Margaret to her aunt Isobell's house. There, he took the opportunity to discuss with his aunt the prospective marriage between his sister, Marie, and Andrew Brown of Dolphinton.[64] While playing a central role in the life of his family, Isobell Gray was part of the connective tissue within Clerk's network, linking him to merchants and tradesmen, as well as other members of the family. In January 1670, Isobell attended her brother-in-law's wedding to Elizabeth Johnston, the daughter of a London-based merchant with whom Clerk had a lengthy professional relationship. In his account of "charges occasioned" at his marriage to Johnston, Clerk noted the gift of gloves to thirty-five attendees. Of the thirty-five who received gloves on that day, fifteen were members of Mary Gray's family, Isobell and her mother Geilis Smith, seven other siblings, and her uncle Sir John Smith of Grothill and his son, Robert.[65] Their continued presence in Clerk's personal and business affairs is a testament to the importance of the Gray family to Clerk's networks.

The role of Scotland's merchant elite in the land market during the seventeenth century has only slowly piqued the historian's interest. Ian Whyte has shown that in the decades leading up to the Covenanting Wars, which drastically altered the economy and ruined a great many of Edinburgh's merchant elite,

merchants were far more active in investing and diversifying their wealth through land procurement or by investing in industry than they were after 1660.[66] Even during the first half of the seventeenth century, the merchant class was more likely to gain access to the benefits and profits from estates by lending money on wadset to landowners than through outright purchase. Some merchants who did acquire land gave over their trade and embraced their new identity and status, while others maintained their mercantile activities, transitioning slowly into their new role as a laird. Clerk falls into the latter category. His ability to not only weather the storm during the tumultuous 1640s and 1650s but also benefit both financially and socially through the generous loans he made to well-positioned and influential Scots sets him somewhat apart from his peers who did not fare as well. Until his death, Clerk maintained a chamber in Edinburgh from where he continued to conduct trade, providing loans and luxury items to those within his network. Clerk's book of bonds lists Lady Newliston (Agnes Gray), later Lady Primrose, as continuing to borrow money from Clerk throughout the 1660s. In 1667, Isobell Gray and Walter Hamilton borrowed 2,000 merks guaranteed by an assignation of a bond granted to Hamilton by James, 2nd marquess of Montrose.[67] At the previous Whitsunday, Clerk made a loan of 10,000 merks to Sir John Hume of Blackadder who provided security on the loan by infefting Clerk in "lyferent" and his "2 dochters Jennet and Katherin Clerks in fie equally betwixt them -ilkane of them 5,000 merks in yeirlie anuelrent and dewtiw" from the lands of Johnscleuch and Westmuir.[68] As with the band made with Hume of Blackadder, Clerk often made sure to name his children in such contracts as a way of providing for their future. Into the 1670s, Clerk continued to lend money to some of Scotland's elite including the earls of Haddington, Moray, Seaforth, Southesk, and Northesk, as well as his brother-in-law, Sir Archibald Primrose, the Lord Clerk Register until 1676.[69]

Among his most prominent clients, William Ker, 1st earl of Lothian remained one of Clerk's closest business and personal associates.[70] During Clerk's time in France, the earl relied on Clerk to help sate his increasing appetite for the latest fashions and luxury goods like candlesticks, beds, and bed hangings, but most importantly for acquiring books and pictures.[71] Like many of Clerk's other clients, Ker trusted his agent to know him sufficiently well enough that he could instruct Clerk to use his discretion in finding the perfect item that would suit the earl's taste.[72] By the 1650s, the earl's fortunes had shifted. Cromwell's occupation of Scotland caused Ker to retire to his home at Newbattle Abbey which was, from the earl's perspective, far too close to the occupying army's headquarters. Ker claims to have lost close to £20,000 due to taxes and forced loans and by 1658 was in jeopardy of losing his estates.[73] He refused to take the abjuration oath and was fined £6,000. As a result, he sold his Ancram estates and by 1665 he had resigned the rest of his lands to his eldest son, Robert. Following the earl's sale of the Ancram estate and resignation of his other lands, Clerk granted to the earl's sons Robert, William, and Charles a band of corroboration making them liable for their father's debts. The earl's financial situation may account for why a loan of £5,000 Scots that Clerk made to him in 1649 continued to be paid until

Clerk's death in 1674 and thereafter by the earl and his heirs to Clerk's sons William and Alexander.[74] Both Robert and William Ker borrowed money from Clerk at various points over the next decade.[75] While Clerk regularly provided goods and loaned money to the earl, their relationship (and his family's place in Clerk's network) was much more than commercial in nature. Clerk regularly made the twelve-mile trip from Newbiggin to visit Ker at Newbattle. "At [his] desyre," Clerk also provided food gifts to the earl after receiving an invitation to his daughter, Margaret Ker's, wedding in June 1666, covered the expense of the masons who were making repairs at Newbattle in July 1666, and attended the funeral of Lady Lothian a few short weeks before Mary Gray's death in April 1667.[76] Clerk's relationship with Lord Ker, and with other members of Scotland's social elites, formed out of his ability to provide goods and to extend credit. Those elites reciprocated by enhancing Clerk's social credit and extending an invitation into their social circles. As Craig Muldrew has argued, "people were constantly involved in tangled webs of economic and social dependency based only on each other's word, or the words of others, which linked them together."[77] Clerk's reputation and his ability to earn trust and provide credit were crucial to sustaining his networks. Ultimately, they were as important to his success as a laird as they had been during his time in trade.[78]

Clerk's local social system in and around Penicuik developed out of his business and kin networks and from his understanding of the importance of face-to-face, personal interactions. As a landowner, Clerk invested in his estate, improved the family home, and ensured that his tenants were positioned to contribute to their own success and that of the estate. His decision to purchase the barony of Penicuik and "give over all Trade, and become a Country Gentleman," seems to have caused confusion even amongst his family decades after his death. But that decision, coupled with his business acumen, attention to personal relationships, and sustainment of his social and business networks laid a foundation on which his son and grandson could continue the family's ascension. Armed with a considerable inheritance, connected to some of the most important Scottish families, educated at Edinburgh, and established in the barony of Penicuik, the first Sir John was able to further advance the family's interests by purchasing the barony of Lasswade, introducing improvements on his estates that would increase rents, and developing the coal mines at Loanhead.[79] His marriage to Elizabeth Henderson, the daughter of the noted physician Henry Henderson, resulted from her father having treated Clerk and members of the family at Newbiggin in 1672.[80] Clerk had also been able to position his other children in apprenticeships and advantageous marriages. Margaret and Catherine Clerk married into the Aikman and Forbes families respectively, extending and enhancing the family's connections. Margaret's son, William, became a noted artist while Catherine's son, John Forbes, was an Edinburgh advocate and friend of the poet Allan Ramsay. Aikman's painting of the "Worthies" captures Forbes, Sir John Clerk, and Ramsay in a Leith tavern listening to a recitation of the poet's "Gentle Shepherd."[81] But while John Clerk was the node in the family's network, the records he left behind provide a map to those

individuals who provided connectivity, who were the 'betweenness' that linked Clerk to the individuals whose contributions are seldom acknowledged in the histories of this family. In highlighting aspects of Clerk's local social system, and of its crucial role in establishing the family both locally and nationally, it is hoped that this brief essay has provided a useful starting point for understanding the importance of his network and his networking abilities.

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4. National Records of Scotland [hereafter NRS] GD18/174 Renunciation, and extract copy, by Sir John Prestoun [Preston] of Airdrie [7 August 1654]; See J. Wilson, *The Annals of Penicuik: Being a History of the Parish and of the Village* (Edinburgh: T. A. Constable, 1891), 147–149. ↲
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6. I. G. Brown, *Clerks of Penicuik: Portraits of Taste & Talent* (Penicuik House Preservation Trust, 1987), 3. ↲
7. D. O. Forfar, "Origins of the Clerk (Maxwell) Genius," *Bulletin of the Institute of Mathematics and its Applications* 28, no. 1/2 (1996): 4–16; I. G. Brown, "Critick in Antiquity: Sir John Clerk of Penicuik," *Antiquity* 51, no. 203 (1977): 201–10. ↲
8. Brown, *Portraits of Taste and Talent*, 3. In his *Memoirs*, Sir John Clerk noted that his grandfather was "an excellent occonomist" and "a man of great sense and great application to business." Gray, *Memoirs*, 7. ↲
9. I am currently working on a monograph-length study of Clerk that will examine in greater detail many of the topics introduced in this essay. ↲
10. Laura Stewart and Janay Nugent, *Union and Revolution: Scotland and Beyond* (Edinburgh

University Press, 2021), 3. ↲

11. A. Shepard and P. Withington, "Introduction: Communities in Early Modern England," in *Communities in Early Modern England: Networks, Place, Rhetoric*, eds. A. Shepard and P. Withington (Manchester University Press, 2000), 1–15. David Hancock has argued that scholars only began to use networks to describe groups of humans in the 1940s. See Hancock, "The Trouble with Networks: Managing the Scots' Early-Modern Madeira Trade," *Business History Review* 79, no. 3 (2005): 467–91, 471. ↲

12. I. Archer, "Social Networks in Restoration London," in *Communities in Early Modern England*, 76–95; P. Mathias, "Risk, Credit and Kinship in Early Modern Enterprise," in *The Early Modern Atlantic Economy*, eds. L. M. Cullen and T. Sutton (Cambridge University Press, 2000), 15–35; S. Murdoch, *Network North: Scottish Kin, Commercial and Covert Associations in Northern Europe, 1603–1746* (Leiden: Brill, 2005); E. Smith, "The Social Networks of Investment in Early Modern England," *The Historical Journal* 64, no. 4 (2021): 912–39. ↲

13. Mathias, "Risk, Credit, and Kinship"; Smith, "The Social Networks of Investment"; S. Haggerty, ""'You Promise Well and Perform as Badly': The Failure of the 'Implicit Contract of Family' in the Scottish Atlantic," *International Journal of Maritime History* 23, no. 2 (2011): 267–82. ↲

14. K. Davison, "Early Modern Social Networks: Antecedents, Opportunities, and Challenges," *AHR* 124, no. 2 (2019): 456–82, 466. ↲

15. P. Mathias, "Risk, Credit and Kinship," 3. ↲

16. T. C. Smout, "The Glasgow Merchant Community in the Seventeenth Century," *Scottish Historical Review* 47, no. 143 (April, 1968): 53–71. See also, J. Kermode, *Medieval Merchants: York, Beverley, and Hull in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 16–7. ↲

17. Archer, "Social Networks in Restoration London," 87. Conversely, Sheryllynne Hagerty and Siobhan Talbott have shown that kin networks could have limited value, in large part because family members could take advantage of the implicit trust placed in them. Haggerty, "'You Promise Well and Perform as Badly,'" 268–9; Talbott, *Conflict, Commerce, and Franco-Scottish Relations*, 42. ↲

18. K. Wrightson, "Kinship in an English Village: Terling, Essex 1500–1700," in *Land, Kinship, and Life Cycle*, ed. R. M. Smith (Cambridge University Press, 1984), 313–2. ↲

19. N. Tadmor, "Early Modern English Kinship in the Long Run: Reflections on Continuity and

Change," *Continuity and Change* 25, no. 1 (2010): 15–8, 33–4. ↲

20. R. O'Day, *An Elite Family in Early Modern England: The Temples of Stowe and Burton Dassett, 1570–1656* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2018), 43–5. ↲
21. See Smout, "The Glasgow Merchant Community in the Seventeenth Century," 66–7; I. D. Whyte, *Scotland's Society and Economy in Transition, c.1500-c.1760* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), 125–26. ↲
22. Gray, *Memoirs*, 7. ↲
23. Ibid., 4, 7. ↲
24. Wilson, *The Annals of Penicuik*, 148–49. ↲
25. NRS GD18/707, Rental of the barony of Pennycooke [Penicuik] when purchased by John Clerk [1654]. ↲
26. Gray, *Memoirs,* 6, 237. ↲
27. NRS GD18/1749, Papers (8) relating to the slating of the house at Newbiging [Newbigging] [6 July 1657]. ↲
28. NRS GD18/1749 [1 July 1658]. ↲
29. B. M. W. Third, "The Changing Rural Geography of Scottish Lowlands (1700–1820)," Vol. 2, PhD diss. (University of Edinburgh, 1953), Appendix, A8–A9; S. Cooper, "Sir John Clerk's Garden Buildings at Penicuik," *Architectural Heritage* 13, no. 1 (2002): 47–62. ↲
30. NRS GD18/2186, General account book (household, personal and estate) of John Clerk ofPenicuik and his son, Sir John Clerk of Penicuik, bt [1663–1720], 83, 88. ↲
31. NRS GD18/2186, 10, 25; Cooper, "Sir John Clerk's Garden Buildings at Penicuik". ↲
32. I. D. Whyte, "Agrarian Change in Lowland Scotland in the Seventeenth Century," PhD diss. (University of Edinburgh, 1974). ↲
33. Falconer, *The General Account Book of John Clerk of Penicuik*, 11. ↲
34. NRS GD18/2186, 6. ↲
35. NRS GD18/2186, 138. ↲
36. K. Davison, "Early Modern Social Networks," 12. ↲
37. R. Chambers, *Edinburgh Papers: Edinburgh Merchants and Merchandise in Old Times*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: W. and R. Chambers, 1859), 15; W. Harrison, *Memorable Edinburgh Houses* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, 1898), 9–10; A. Heron, *The Rise and*

Progress of the Company of Merchants of the City of Edinburgh, 1681–1902 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1903), 6–7. ↲

38. Talbott, *Conflict, Commerce, and Franco-Scottish Relations*, 38, 45, 48, 82–5. See Figure 2. ↲
39. M. Rothery, "Communities of Kin and English Landed Gentry Families of the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," *Family & Community History* 21, no. 2 (2018): 112–128; Smout, "Glasgow Merchant Community," 66–8. ↲
40. S. Talbott, "The Letter-Book of John Clerk of Penicuik, 1644–45," in *Miscellany of the Scottish Historical Society* XV (Woodbridge, 2014), 37–8. ↲
41. NRS GD18/2186, 51–4, 62, 111. ↲
42. NRS GD18/2472, Accounts, receipts and other papers regarding financial transactions between John Clerk, merchant in Paris, France and Edinburgh, and his 'brother' John Anderson merchant in Edinburgh, [March–June, 1650]. ↲
43. NRS GD18/2472, [1650]. ↲
44. NRS GD18/2472, [1662]. ↲
45. J. K. McMillan, "Study of the Edinburgh Burgess Community and its Economic Activities, 1600–1680" PhD diss. (University of Edinburgh, 1984), 150. ↲
46. NRS GD18/2472; NRS GD18/2185, Memorandum book containing notes of bonds granted to John Clerk of Penicuik and subsequent payments and transactions relating thereto [1659–1674]. ↲
47. NRS GD 18/2472. ↲
48. NRS GD18/5168, Letter from Margaret Gray [spouse of Sir William Blair of Balgillo] to her sister Mary, spouse of John Clerk of Pinicok [Penicuik] [19 May 1662]. ↲
49. NRS GD18/2186, 13. ↲
50. NRS GD18/2186, 11. ↲
51. NRS GD18/2186, 51, 69. ↲
52. C. Langley, *Cultures of Care: Domestic Welfare, Discipline and the Church of Scotland, c. 1600–1669* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 44; Murdoch, *Networks*, 27–8. ↲
53. NRS GD18/2186, 13, 16, 17, 29, unnumbered page following 34, 41. ↲
54. NRS GD18/2186, 73. ↲

55. NRS GD18/2186, 73. Clerk made an error documenting the expense of boarding his children in the Bell household. He listed 'Agnes' in the body of the account and 'Janet' in the margins. Subsequent entries show that it was likely Janet who lived in the Bell home and not Agnes. A note in the printed transcription suggests otherwise, but additional research suggests that Agnes may have never lived outwith the family home. See Falconer, *The General Account Book of John Clerk*, 246. ↲
56. NRS GD18/2186, 145. ↲
57. NRS GD18/2186, 88. ↲
58. See for example, NRS GD18/2186, 59, 105. ↲
59. NRS GD18/2186, 28. ↲
60. NRS GD18/2186, 40, 54, 67, 150, 153. ↲
61. NRS GD18/2186, 122, 141. ↲
62. NRS GD18/2186, 65. ↲
63. NRS GD18/2186, 118. ↲
64. NRS GD18/2186, 117. ↲
65. NRS GD18/2186, 94. ↲
66. Whyte, *Scotland's Society and Economy in Transition*, 125–26. ↲
67. NRS GD18/2185, 39. ↲
68. NRS GD18/2185, 33. ↲
69. NRS GD18/2185, 25, 33, 36, 39, 40. ↲
70. Ker is sometimes listed as the 3rd earl of Lothian as he was granted the earldom by James VI following Ker's marriage to Anne Ker, daughter of the 2nd earl of Lothian. ↲
71. NRS GD 18/2499, Letters from [William, 3rd] Earl of Lothian to John Clerk in Edinburgh [1649–1650]. ↲
72. NRS GD 18/2440/9, Letters from (William, 3rd) Earl of Lothian to John Clerk in France and Edinburgh [undated]. ↲
73. R. M. G. Wenley, "William, third earl of Lothian: covenanter and collector," *Journal of the History of Collections* 5, no. 1 (1993): 32–3. ↲
74. NRS GD18/2185, 16. ↲

75. NRS GD18/2185, 18, 31. ↲
76. NRS GD18/2186, 39, 49. ↲
77. C. Muldrew, “Interpreting the Market: the Ethics of Credit and Community Relations in Early Modern England,” *Social History* 18, no. 2 (1993): 163–83, 174; C. Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: the Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1998). ↲
78. T. Paul, *The Poverty of Disaster: Debt and Insecurity in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019). ↲
79. On some of Sir John’s activities see R. A. Houston, “Coal, Class and Culture: Labour Relations in a Scottish Mining Community, 1650–1750,” *Social History* 8, no. 1 (1983): 1–18. ↲
80. NRS GD18/2186, 136, 146. ↲
81. I. G. Brown, “Allan Ramsay’s Rise and Reputation,” *The Volume of the Walpole Society* 50 (1984): 209–47; C. Lamont, “‘Some Few Miles from Edinburgh’: Commemorating the Scenes of *The Gentle Shepherd* in Ramsay Country,” *Studies in Scottish Literature* 46, no. 2 (2020): 40–60. ↲

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