THE GORDONS OF HUNTLY: A SCOTTISH NOBLE HOUSEHOLD AND ITS EUROPEAN CONNECTIONS, 1603–1688

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Introduction

It is plain to see that in recent years there has been a vast surge in academic studies devoted to examining the experiences of those British and Irish emigrants and exiles who made their way to continental Europe during the seventeenth century.1 This seems particularly apparent from a Scottish point of view. Literally within the last decade or so there has been a veritable explosion of new and exciting research that has looked to uncover the extensive links that existed between Scotland and the countries that lay across the North Sea and beyond. This, for example, has confirmed just how prevalent the Scots were as soldiers in the armies of countries such as Sweden, Denmark-Norway, the United Provinces, France and Poland-Lithuania during the major armed conflicts of the period.2 It has also revealed the presence of Scots in a range of other capacities, from governors, diplomats, scholars and political exiles right through to high-profile merchants and

1 See, in particular, a number of the essays contained in S. Murdoch ed., Scotland and the Thirty Years’ War (Leiden: 2001); T. O’ Connor ed., The Irish in Europe, 1580–1815 (Dublin: 2001); T. O’ Connor and M.A. Lyons eds., Irish Migrants in Europe after Kinsale, 1602–1820 (Dublin: 2003); A. Grosjean and S. Murdoch eds., Scottish Communities Abroad in the Early Modern Period (Leiden: 2005); T. O’ Connor and M.A. Lyons eds., Irish Communities in Early Modern Europe (Dublin: 2006). See, also, the important online database created by Steve Murdoch and Alexia Grosjean: S. Murdoch and A. Grosjean, Scotland, Scandinavia and Northern Europe, 1580–1707 (www.st-andrews.ac.uk/history/ssne).

common tinkers. The scope of all this work has been vast and has collectively succeeded in presenting an increasingly detailed picture of the world of emigrants and exiles during the years in question. And there is still more that can be done. Much of the existing work has quite understandably concentrated on the links between Scotland and the other Protestant states of Northern Europe. As a result, relatively little detailed research has been conducted on Scottish emigrants and exiles in Central Europe, Spain, the Italian states and the Mediterranean world. It is also the case that little has emerged in the way of in-depth studies of key individuals and families and their links to the Continent. Famous soldiers such as Alexander Leslie and Robert Monro remain popular as subjects but more could be covered.

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4 David Worthington’s ongoing work on Scots in the Habsburg territories will of course do much to correct this imbalance. Also very welcome is the emerging work of Tom McInally on Scots in the Catholic colleges of Southern Europe. See, for example, his chapter in this volume.