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# ‘THE SCOTCH DIABLE BOITEAUX’ OR, THE LAME SCOTTISH DEVIL: MASONIC REBELLION AND THE RISE OF THE WHIGS

DR MARK C WALLACE

Wartski argues that the majority of the “misfortunes that befell Scottish Freemasonry in 1807 had their origins in the smouldering discontent which followed the formation in 1736 of the Grand Lodge of Scotland.”<sup>1</sup> As we will see, Wartski is partially correct in his analysis. However, he fails to underscore the significant impact of masonic and national politics on late-eighteenth and early- nineteenth-century freemasonry.

Historically, Scottish freemasonry has been characterized as a “pro-Hanoverian body” which “ensure[d] loyalty for the organization as a whole.”<sup>2</sup> Indeed, as Newman says, it is “impossible in eighteenth-century terms to discount the significance of politics and the impact upon...Freemasonry.”<sup>3</sup> Other historians have commented that freemasonry was principally a convivial association; indeed, lodges may have had a “political colouring” but nothing more.<sup>4</sup> More recently, however, historians such as Money have argued that the society retained radical associations “which almost from the start drew it into opposition politics.”<sup>5</sup> Therefore, it “corresponded more to the populism of patriot politics than to the hierarchy of king, church, and aristocracy.”<sup>6</sup>

It would be too convenient and simplistic to conclude that all Scottish freemasons were bitterly divided along shades of political loyalty. During the early 1800s, however, a polarization of party allegiances occurred within the Grand Lodge of Scotland which ultimately spilled over into several Edinburgh lodges and resulted in the Masonic Secession of 1808. Considering the demise of operative freemasonry, it is not surprising that social and fraternal connections established strictly for trade and building purposes gradually collapsed,

eventually replaced by Whig or Tory affiliations. Certainly, traditional operative freemasonry was dealt a damaging blow by the establishment of the Grand Lodge of Scotland and eventually expired with the advent of the French Revolution. Thus liberated from the narrow conservative views and political reservations of the operatives, and bolstered by the new measure of power granted by the Secret Societies Act, the Grand Lodge attempted to absorb all lodges into a highly politicized agenda.

Peter Clark argues that the discord which resulted from competing political ideologies during the eighteenth century created a “need for a neutral arena.”<sup>7</sup> This came in the form of clubs and associations such as the freemasons, where political discussions were in theory prohibited, although Clark maintains that “the sound of politics was not so much excluded from...societies as admitted with the volume turned down.”<sup>8</sup> Despite one lodge’s tenuous and questionable fraternization with the Friends of the People and several masons’ associations with radical clubs, for the greater part of the 1700s freemasonry was particularly successful in excluding politics from lodge meetings.

Certainly, rules and regulations were put into place which banned political discussion. However, this “did not always work perfectly, since intense bouts of party conflict could rock even the most stable societies, leading on occasion to their dissolution.”<sup>9</sup> The Speculative Society was one such society which cast a wary eye upon all things political. McElroy claims that in the “revolutionary atmosphere, feeling ran high and the fear of an explosion which would wreck the society was well founded as ensuing events proved.”<sup>10</sup>

In 1794, several older Tories were offended by the revolutionary attitudes and opinions expressed by the younger Whig members. An attempt to have the Whigs expelled failed and fortunately for the Speculative Society the matter ended without incident. Five years later, however, another dispute erupted over party politics. Cautious-minded Tories threatened to “spy upon the conduct of the Society” in order to “take down the words of [the] night’s debate if they interfered with questions of modern politics...as such discussions being permitted were likely to produce within the wall of the [Edinburgh] University a political Society, perhaps a Jacobin Club.”<sup>11</sup> The uproar caused by such an accusation created a storm of controversy; such a “high Insult to the honour of the Society” led to the resignation of many leading members and further magnified the fears of being associated with radical clubs.<sup>12</sup> By 1802, Scottish freemasonry was also “fragmenting and reforming into contesting structures,” due largely to the politicization of the Grand Lodge.<sup>13</sup> Despite the leadership of distinguished loyalists such as Sir James Stirling<sup>14</sup> and George Gordon, Earl of Aboyne,<sup>15</sup> it is clear that the Grand Lodge was rapidly becoming a Whig body. Indeed, as Clark argues, associations without a clear political agenda – especially the freemasons – might easily “be drawn into political activity during periods of national upheaval.”<sup>16</sup> With the election of the Hon. George Ramsay, 9<sup>th</sup> Earl of Dalhousie<sup>17</sup> as Grand Master in 1808, the Grand Lodge remained under Whig control until the election of James, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Roslin, a Tory, in 1810.

Notably, there were several Whig leaders affiliated with the Grand Lodge who were either directly responsible for or played a key role in the Masonic Secession of 1808. Francis Rawdon-Hastings, the Earl of Moira, joined the opposition in 1789 and became a close personal friend of the Prince of Wales. By 1805, he was the Acting Grand Master of both Scotland and England. As will become clearer, Moira’s interest in the Masonic Secession was directly related to his position in freemasonry and his relationship with the Prince of Wales.<sup>18</sup>

The Whig Grand Lodge of Scotland was also supported by William Inglis of Middleton, Substitute Grand Master from 1805 to 1828. According to Lindsay, Inglis was a staunch Whig who attended the Bastille Dinner in 1789 and was “one of the most widely known Scottish Masons of all time...who

weathered one of the worst storms” in the history of Scottish freemasonry.<sup>19</sup>

Indeed, the Whig element was intimately connected to another Edinburgh Lodge, No. 44 St Luke’s Lodge Holyrood House. According to Lindsay, the connection between No. 44 and the Grand Lodge cannot be understated. Between 1807 and 1860, “the Whigs of St Luke exerted a preponderating influence there, for the reason that its senior members were the leaders of the Whig party in Scotland.”<sup>20</sup> The presence of senior Whig leaders in each of these lodges suggests that although the “government of the country might be denied to the Whigs, there were many bodies... where they could get a footing” and “rapidly acquire control.”<sup>21</sup> Indeed, Whig bodies such as St Luke’s and the Grand Lodge of Scotland “gradually attracted to themselves the more talented and ambitious men of the rising generation, who could not see openings for ability without backing in the dominant party.”<sup>22</sup>

Both the Grand Lodge of Scotland and No. 44 witnessed a marked intensification of Whig supporters following the Napoleonic Wars. Ultimately, their positions in the masonic hierarchy would be determined by the strength and the “success or failure of that political party.”<sup>23</sup> Lindsay maintains that

from 1761 the number of Whigs admitted into [No. 44 St Luke’s]...had been steadily growing, and this fact, in the days when the demarcation between Whig and Tory extended even into Masonry, was enough to ensure that sooner or later St Luke’s Lodge would be almost entirely composed of Whigs...In 1785 the day of the Whigs had not come...The exhaustion of the country after the Napoleonic wars, and the economic conditions which followed them, broke the long Tory domination. The Whigs came in with Reform, and in Scottish Masonry, as in the other contemporary spheres of Scottish life, the Whigs carried it entirely after 1807.<sup>24</sup>

#### POLITICAL EXPLOITATION AND MASONIC COMPROMISE

After the dispute over precedence in 1737, Lodge Kilwinning refused to relinquish its power to grant charters, thus creating a rift between itself and the Grand Lodge. These differences, though not a central issue for almost fifty years, resurfaced in 1794. On 4 August of that same year, the Grand Lodge – perceiving Kilwinning to be in contempt of its authority and “pretending to have an equal right of Granting Charters”<sup>25</sup> – adopted a policy of “non-

recognition and extrusion."<sup>26</sup> In no uncertain terms, it was resolved that "none of the Lodges holding of them ought either to visit or receive visits...from any of the Lodges holding of the Kilwinning Lodge; although at the same time an individual member may visit a Lodge holding of the Grand Lodge [but] no compliment ought either to be paid to or received from such members."<sup>27</sup>

By 1802, the Grand Lodge renewed its effort to "compell the Kilwinning Lodge to return to her duty as a Constituent Member of the Grand Lodge and in future to desist from granting Charters and other acts and deeds which none but the Grand Lodge herself is intituled to exercise."<sup>28</sup> At least initially, the Grand Officers were quite adamant in their demands: forcing Kilwinning to relinquish any powers solely reserved for the Grand Lodge, namely the right to grant charters. Such claims were based on the argument that the resignation of William St Clair of Roslin in 1736 as the hereditary Grand Master effectively empowered the Grand Lodge of Scotland to assume complete and full control of all masonic matters. As the patron and overseer of Scottish freemasonry Roslin, upon resigning as Grand Master, gave all power and authority to the central governing body; therefore, no other lodge in Scotland could legally – according to the Grand Lodge – grant charters.

A committee was created for the special purpose of settling the issue. From August until November 1802, a Grand Committee searched the Register Office for "Grants or Charters by the King of Scotland [James VI] in favour of [the] St Clairs of Roslin appointing him Hereditary Grand Master."<sup>29</sup> However, a search of the Register House in Edinburgh for any documents providing incontrovertible proof that gave the Grand Lodge exclusive authority to warrant new lodges was unsuccessful. As a result, the Substitute Grand Master recommended that the "committee appointed upon that business to take what other steps might appear necessary for attaining the objects remitted to them by the Grand Lodge and at [the] same time renewing their powers to that effect which was agreed to."<sup>30</sup>

Between the years 1 November, 1802 and 3 November, 1806, there were no Grand Lodge minutes regarding the dispute.<sup>31</sup> In 1805 William Inglis had been elected Substitute Grand Master and his influence is clearly evident during the reconciliation between the Grand Lodge and Kilwinning over the lingering issue of masonic precedence. Within two

years of Inglis' election the deadlock had been broken and each lodge had appointed representatives to discuss the terms for a final settlement.<sup>32</sup> As Lindsay argues, it was "evident that secret pourparlers had been opened between Inglis and his Whig supporters in Grand Lodge, on the one side, and the Lodge of Kilwinning on the other."<sup>33</sup>

The Whig presence in the Grand Lodge and the problems with Kilwinning were not the only factors which contributed to the schism of 1808. Only twelve new lodges were chartered between the years 1795 to 1808. New charters had fallen over fifty per cent during this period compared to the previous fifteen years when twenty-seven new lodges were established. Significantly, there were no new charters between 7 August, 1799 and 3 December, 1806. This suspension of lodge expansion coincides not only with the Secret Societies of 1799 but also with the Maybole Trial and the beginning of the Masonic Secession. Thus it may be argued that this period of masonic stagnancy, combined with the increased Whig presence and a polarization of party loyalties within the Grand Lodge, weakened the institution of Scottish freemasonry and ultimately opened the door for a split.

On 14 October 1807 a conference was held in Glasgow to negotiate the terms of the agreement. In exchange for renouncing its charter-granting privileges, Kilwinning would be placed at the head of the Grand Roll of Scotland. Furthermore, any lodges warranted under Kilwinning would be placed at the end of the roll pending authenticated proof of its charter, and the Master of the lodge was appointed as the Provincial Grand Master for the Ayrshire District.<sup>34</sup> Although the Grand Lodge granted several dispensations to Kilwinning, it had achieved what was arguably its prime objective since its creation: the consolidation of masonic authority under one central body.

The entire affair had been conducted without the participation of No. 1 Mary's Chapel. Despite the apparent settlement and willingness on both sides to effect an agreement, Kilwinning's ultimate capitulation and Grand Lodge's acceptance of its proposal were motivated by entirely different reasons. In 1750, after the election of Alexander, Tenth Earl of Eglinton, as the Grand Master of Scotland, the Grand Lodge "directed its daughters to hold no intercourse with any of the Kilwinning

Lodges, and in all processions...The Kilwinning Lodges were rigorously excluded.”<sup>35</sup> Essentially, the exclusionary and marginalization practices of the Grand Lodge “had the effect of circumscribing its rival’s influence...as their position became seriously affected through it, and the prestige of these Lodges was gradually decaying.”<sup>36</sup>

Although these tactics seemed to have the desired effect of forcing Kilwinning into negotiations, Lyon’s assertion that the Grand Lodge of Scotland was more cordial and deferential during the entire ordeal are questionable. He writes that “out of respect for the susceptibilities of its less exalted contemporary, Grand Lodge was the first to propose a conference on the subject of the desired Union.”<sup>37</sup> This claim of pity and understanding is contradicted later when Lyon maintains that

while it must be admitted that it was highly desirable that Grand Lodge should secure the abdication of the only rival Institution in Scotland, it was surely no less important that it should preserve the inviolability of its own Charters. An amalgamation of the two bodies that would have preserved the integrity of Grand Lodge’s prior obligations, and have satisfied Kilwinning for the sacrifice of its independence... But of all mundane institutions, a Chief Court of Freemasonry should have been the last to sacrifice principle to expediency in any of its transactions.<sup>38</sup>

Relegated to the second oldest lodge in Scotland, the members immediately expressed their disapproval over the handling of the situation. On 4 May 1807 the Master of Mary’s Chapel, John Brown, and one of his Wardens, George Cunningham, complained to the Grand Lodge that

the powers formerly granted to the committee on the business of Kilwinning were too Exclusive, that instead of granting to the committee full powers to arrange and finally settle all differences subsisting between the Grand Lodge and the Kilwinning Lodge, the Committee should only be directed to ascertain the claims of the Kilwinning Lodge and to Report leaving it to the Grand Lodge how far these demands were reasonable.<sup>39</sup>

Given its pronounced emphasis on achieving a settlement with Kilwinning, it is not surprising that the Grand Lodge responded to the objections by concluding that Cunningham’s motion “was entirely irrelevant.”<sup>40</sup> After a formal written protest was duly ignored, Cunningham again complained about the proceedings at a Grand Lodge meeting held on 2 November 1807. Clearly governed by political

priorities rather than fairness, William Inglis at once orchestrated a counter-protest and Cunningham’s motion to review the events was discarded.

Realizing that the displacement of Mary’s Chapel as the senior lodge in Scotland was the result of an elaborate scheme, Cunningham resorted to drastic measures in an attempt to disrupt the remainder of the meeting. Blatantly reflecting the growing political divisions within the Grand Lodge, Cunningham rose and objected to the nomination of the Hon. William Ramsay Maule of Panmure – Whig M.P. – as the Grand Master Elect for the ensuing year, maintaining that “though he had been an Office-bearer of Grand Lodge for some years, he had never been within its walls.”<sup>41</sup> Alternatively, Cunningham nominated the staunchly conservative Earl of Haddington, Thomas Hamilton.<sup>42</sup> Despite the dubious behaviour of Maule, Cunningham’s Tory nomination suffered a crushing defeat, confirming the overwhelming Whig presence in the Grand Lodge.<sup>43</sup>

This entire fiasco made it obvious that “politics were to be dragged into the matter and used to inflame the righteous indignation of the Lodge of Edinburgh over the manner in which it had been treated.”<sup>44</sup> Regardless of a warning from Mary’s Chapel that it was determined “neither to be sold nor compelled to resign [its] seniority, to attempt either of which will undoubtedly lead to a secession, in reality much to be dreaded, under the nose of the Grand Lodge, and which will ultimately lead to the fatal consequences which have taken place in England – namely, the formation of a new Grand Lodge,”<sup>45</sup> the threats were dismissed as meaningless at best.

#### THE UNEXPECTED TORY

The Whig presence within the Grand Lodge had forced through the union with Kilwinning<sup>46</sup> and had effectively guaranteed that any Tory candidate nominated for the office of Grand Master would be defeated. Leaving aside the problem of a disgruntled Mary’s Chapel, the Grand Lodge of Scotland alone controlled the right to grant charters. Victory, however, was short-lived. During the negotiations, “a fresh trouble was developing” which became “commingled with the issues of the Kilwinning business.”<sup>47</sup>

As Lindsay argues, the key to this “fresh trouble is to be found in the particular manner in which politics

entered into the daily life of the time.”<sup>48</sup> In March, 1807, seven months before the settlement with Kilwinning, the government introduced the Catholic Emancipation Act. The new legislation was “highly obnoxious to the King, and, as the Whigs were obdurate on its retention, they were dismissed after one short year in office and without any assurance that they would not be similarly treated if ever they were returned to power again.”<sup>49</sup>

Thus counterpoised, an overconfident Grand Lodge and embittered Tory minority, the impending explosion within Scottish freemasonry was finally triggered by a request made to the Grand Lodge of Scotland to express the fraternity’s appreciation for the King’s support of the British people and constitution. Although a misrepresentation to describe masonic political allegiances at this time as hostile to loyalism, it is likely that some masons – especially within the Grand Lodge – retained a suspicion of the uncritical, slavish adherence to every aspect of the constitution that marked the more purblind Tories.

The Whig faction led by Inglis was “suddenly confronted by unexpected opposition from the Crown in a matter touching its politics, and the train was laid in Grand Lodge that required some exulting Tory to touch it off.”<sup>50</sup> On 4 May, 1807 – the same day that Cunningham criticized the handling of the Kilwinning affair – Dr. John Mitchell, Master of the Caledonian Lodge in Edinburgh and a Tory:

submitted to the Grand Lodge the following motion “That a humble address be presented to His Majesty expressive of their thanks, thankfulness and gratitude for the Paternal Solicitude he has been graciously pleased to evince for the happiness of his People in supporting the Established Religion of the Country and the principles of the British Constitution.” Brother Brown [Master of Mary’s Chapel] Seconded and supported the motion. Against the motion many arguments were urged particularly the impropriety of introducing and discussing Religious and Political questions in the Grand Lodge or any Masonic meeting. After a great deal of argument on both sides it was proposed that a vote should be taken. But before proceeding to the vote Brother Millar Proxy Master for the Lodge of St Thomas Arbroath moved that the Laws should be put in force and it was agreed to that Lodges Two years in arrear to the Grand Lodge should not be intitled to vote neither should Brethren be intitled to vote who were not in the Cloathing of their respective Lodges. The Vote was then put “Address” or “Not Address” when the Grand Clerk upon counting the numbers Declared there were 27 Voted “Address” and 28 “Not to Address.” The Grand Lodge therefore negatived the motion for an address. Upon the state of the Voted being declared those Brethren who were in favour of the address in a Clamorous and unmasonic manner demanded a Scrutiny

by again putting the vote but as several of the Brethren who voted and conceived the question decided, had [illegible] the meeting the request could not be complied with, besides the demand being irregular and contrary to all precedent was rejected. The Grand Clerk being a sworn officer and alone intitled to take down and Report the state of the votes which it appeared to the Chair had been done by him with every possible accuracy. The Senior Grand Master thought it his duty therefore to close the Grand Lodge.<sup>51</sup>

Cunningham’s nomination and Mitchell’s proposed address, although occurring on the same day and during a time of heightened political tension in the Grand Lodge, do not necessarily suggest a Tory conspiracy to undermine Whig sentiments. According to Wartski, Mitchell was “attempting to slap the Whig establishment of the Grand Lodge” and his motion was nothing more than a “flagrant piece of politics, which, if passed, would bring Grand Lodge into line with other bodies – Tory orientated, who had applauded the King’s bigotry.”<sup>52</sup> As we have seen, masonic addresses to the King were not uncommon and often sent to congratulate the ruling monarch on a variety of issues. However, as Lindsay argues, “it was a very different matter for a Tory to repeat such a performance, as Dr. Mitchell did, in a Grand Lodge of Scotland under Whig control.”<sup>53</sup>

Mitchell’s address also signalled the first rumblings of discontent among the Tories. If the Whigs were to maintain control of the Grand Lodge, any challenges which threatened the balance of power had to be quickly suppressed. Given that the initial proposal was defeated by such a narrow margin, a revote was demanded. On 19 June 1807, the Grand Lodge of Scotland convened to address the issue, stating that it had received a letter from Dr. Mitchell of Caledonian Lodge in Edinburgh requesting a “Scrutiny of the votes given for and against the address moved to His Majesty in the Quarterly Communication of the 4<sup>th</sup>.”<sup>54</sup>

Despite strong objections from Inglis, the Grand Lodge approved Mitchell’s request for a revote.<sup>55</sup> Led by James Gibson, one of the most “vehement of Scottish Whigs,”<sup>56</sup> the motion to address the King was soundly defeated by a margin of 95-47.<sup>57</sup> Gibson was also the originator of the Bastille Dinner and, as Cockburn wrote, one of the “principal leaders of the true Whig party.”<sup>58</sup> Under a strong showing of solidarity, the “Whigs had done their organizing well this time.”<sup>59</sup> It seems as if most freemasons in attendance, upon “seeing the sense of the meeting so completely against the Scrutiny,” confirmed their

approval of the vote and maintained that they “would not agitate the question further.”<sup>60</sup> The records of the initial vote and scrutiny reveal that the Grand Lodge felt it had handled the situation with much aplomb and dignity. The meeting eventually ended “with a vote of thanks from the victorious party to Inglis for the handsome manner in which he had conducted himself in the Chair throughout the business.”<sup>61</sup>

Clearly, political manoeuvring and manipulation had prevented the approval of Mitchell’s address to the King. The Grand Lodge must have been aware of a minority Tory presence but it chose to ignore it. As Wartski says, the “tendency of governments in power for very long periods is to become arrogant, and to disregard the opposition, which on the other hand veers towards resentment and desperation, so the schism between the parties [becomes] marked by tremendous bitterness and ill-feeling.”<sup>62</sup> Indeed, the masonic divide between Whig and Tory would increase during the ensuing political feud, ultimately culminating with a much-publicized court trial and accusations of a Tory conspiracy to destroy the Grand Lodge and defame Scottish freemasonry.<sup>63</sup>

#### DISCREDIT AND POLITICAL DISENCHANTMENT

Having twice defeated the proposed address to the King, it is unclear why the Grand Lodge pursued the matter further. Apparently, it wanted to summarily vindicate itself of any misconduct and, at the same time, blame Mitchell for the entire political discord. Subsequently, he was suspended from all masonic privileges. The Grand Lodge of Scotland had clearly changed its attitude regarding political affiliations. On 1 August 1791, it recorded that

no Lodge shall have in it their power to intrude [upon] any Member of their Lodge merely on account of his differing in sentiments as to political affairs in the town or village where he resides, from the Majority of the Members of his Mother Lodge, or on any pretence of his becoming a Member or attending the meetings of their Lodges, and that the Brother thus aggrieved may immediately apply to the Grand Lodge for redress without petitioning his Mother Lodge for readmission.<sup>64</sup>

Under this statute, Gibson’s actions were illegal. Unfortunately for Mitchell, the Grand Lodge and Gibson were of one mind regarding the situation.

Even so, the Grand Lodge held a meeting on 5 January, 1808 to consider the reasons for Mitchell’s suspension. Significantly, the charges were made by Gibson who alleged that Mitchell had proposed the secession of the Caledonian Lodge from the Grand Lodge of Scotland and had published a pamphlet which was insulting to the Grand Officers and all Scottish freemasons. Roman Eagle Lodge, claiming that the Caledonian Lodge held its monthly meeting on its stated night, chronicled the correspondence between the two lodges. The members of Roman Eagle sought reconciliation: although disappointed with the actions of Lodge Caledonian, certainly Roman Eagle wanted to avoid further conflict. Brother Black, then the acting Master of Roman Eagle, personally visited Brother Mitchell and asked for an explanation of his actions. Despite such overtures, the lodges could not achieve a peaceful resolution.

Clearly, the Grand Lodge and Gibson wanted to pursue the matter further.<sup>65</sup> It appears that the Grand Lodge may have worked in conjunction with Gibson to bring forward the allegations against Mitchell, as this connection was established in Mitchell’s response to the charges and suspension. Firstly, Mitchell attacked Gibson’s character, asserting that he was motivated by “private dislike, individual resentment” and “political hatred.”<sup>66</sup> Possibly referring to other Whig leaders in the Grand Lodge, Mitchell mockingly declared that it “must be obvious to the members of the Grand Lodge, that there are many persons, who, not possessing so much of the ‘milk of human kindness’ as Brother Gibson, may bring forward accusations founded entirely on these motives.”<sup>67</sup> Although there is a measure of sarcasm in his statements, Mitchell is careful not to offend the Grand Lodge. Instead, he made light of the political rivalries and directly implicated Gibson as the mastermind behind the controversy.

Next, Mitchell emphasized the dubious political aims of Gibson, claiming that “the undertrappers of the different parties, more zealous, more violent, and more unprincipled than those who are engaged in the higher departments of politics” and who “disturb the peace of society with their paltry intrigues. Gibson... which he is known to be, is a tool of some party in the town of Edinburgh.”<sup>68</sup> Mitchell’s allegations, however, were quickly dismissed, largely due to their inflammatory nature. In the opinion of the Grand Lodge, his answers were “scurrilous and malicious

towards a Brother, and disrespectful to the Grand Lodge."<sup>69</sup> It is highly significant that, although only Gibson is named as a member of a political party in Edinburgh, the Grand Lodge was visibly insulted by Mitchell's comments. Mitchell condescendingly insinuated that Gibson was not only a pawn of the Whig party but also of the Grand Lodge.

Suggestions of political manipulation, however, were not enough to justify Mitchell's suspension. As such, the Grand Lodge of Scotland required tangible evidence of Mitchell's supposed campaign to undermine Scottish freemasonry, which ultimately appeared in the form of invented lodge minutes and a stolen libellous pamphlet.

Gibson claimed that the respondent "did, at one or another of the meetings of the Caledonian Lodge, propose that the lodge should make a secession from the Grand Lodge."<sup>70</sup> Mitchell argued that the charge was a "*fish*ing accusation, made with the view of giving Brother Gibson the power of fishing for a charge out of every thing which the respondent ever said or did at any of the meetings of the Caledonian Lodge."<sup>71</sup>

Interestingly, the accusation of secession was made at the Grand Lodge of Scotland on 5 January, 1808; however, the minutes of Caledonian Lodge record no motion to secede until 11 March, 1808. During the meeting, Lodge Caledonian recorded that "no proof is adduced to establish that the Right Worshipful Master [Dr. Mitchell] *did make a proposal to secede* from the Grand Lodge."<sup>72</sup> After the apparent fabrication of the secession charges, the members resolved that the "sentence of the Grand Lodge is particularly offensive to the Caledonian Lodge, as, in the whole of the persecution, originating, as they deem, in party spirit...and, with a view to avoid further persecution, they discontinue their connection with the present Grand Lodge of Scotland."<sup>73</sup>

The decision to secede was not confined exclusively to the members of Lodge Caledonian. Other masons, such as the Senior Warden of Mary's Chapel and the Junior Warden of Edinburgh St Andrew, also supported the secession. The presence of an officer from Mary's Chapel is important for it suggests that the lodge, still harbouring resentment over the precedence controversy, was considering separation. Taking advantage of the dispute with Dr. Mitchell, Mary's Chapel now had the support of other lodges which were united in their common dislike of

the Grand Lodge of Scotland.

Most damaging, however, was a pamphlet printed by Mitchell accusing Grand Lodge officers of fraudulent voting practices, intentional falsification of facts, and denying lodges equal representation in masonic affairs. According to Mitchell, only "one imperfect proof copy of this circular letter [existed]," as "no other copy was in print or circulation...[and] a worthy brother and member of the Grand Lodge, had been art and part in pilfering and abstracting copies of that letter from the printing-house."<sup>74</sup>

In the pamphlet, Mitchell argued that "party-spirit...on this occasion, carried the Chairman [Inglis] out of line of his duty. Everyone knows, that the Substitute Grand Master...ought to take no side in a debate. It is only his duty to regulate the debate."<sup>75</sup> As a result – after the proposed address to the King had been debated – Inglis "entered widely into the field of politics:"<sup>76</sup>

We had from him a long dissertation on, and explanation of the Test Act, of the analogy between Roman Catholics and Presbyterians in respect of Episcopalians. He, moreover, talked much of my Lord Howick, and of the views and measure of the late Ministry, &c. In short, his speech was an echo of what 'all the talents' had advanced for themselves in both Houses of Parliament...Mr. Inglis finally concluded, by conjuring the Meeting, as they regarded him, (forsooth!) as they respected their Acting Grand Master, the Earl of Moira, and as they wished to maintain the principles of Masonry, that they should dismiss the motion.<sup>77</sup>

Furthermore, Mitchell maintained that the initial tally of votes yielded 28 in favour of the address and 24 against. However, when the final decision was read from the chair, Inglis declared that the address was rejected by a vote of 28-27. As the Grand Lodge minutes note, a scrutiny was requested and subsequently denied due to the finality of the vote and the impropriety of such a demand. Alternatively, Mitchell asserted that a revote was "peremptorily refused from the Chair, and all...efforts to obtain it were drowned in the noisy shouts of triumph by the Chairman and his party. The Clerk made his escape *quamprimum* from the room, with all his books, paper, &c. and the Chairman would not hear another word on the subject."<sup>78</sup>

Three months later, on 7 March, 1808, the Grand Lodge upheld its initial ruling, asserting that "Brother Mitchell shall...be suspended...from all Masonic Privileges...and the Lodges within



Scotland are expressly prohibited from admitting or communicating with him...with certification that if they act in the contrary, they shall be responsible to the Grand Lodge, for contempt of its authority.”<sup>79</sup>

Despite the best attempts of the Grand Lodge to blame Mitchell for the turmoil, the charges against him were largely contrived in an effort to reassert Whig dominance and assure that any opposition would be “converted either into the partisan or a slave of the faction.”<sup>80</sup> However, the Grand Lodge had overreacted to the Tory challenge; thus, political hatred, lingering resentment over issues of precedence and outrage over the treatment of Mitchell had fuelled the fires of rebellion. Subsequently, its Whig regime and tentative centralized control over Scottish lodges slowly began to crumble. Several Edinburgh lodges published a pamphlet to this effect, claiming that the Grand Lodge had attempted to

confound the cause of masonic liberty which we are supporting, with the private quarrels of Messrs Gibson and Mitchell. This is the artifice which the rulers of the Grand Lodge have all along employed to mislead you, from the general questions not at issue. But it is needless to add, that with the private quarrels of these gentlemen, we have no concern whatever. Our object is, to point out the manner in which the projectors of this masonic conspiracy contrived to sap the laws of the institution, under the pretext of prosecuting crimes.<sup>81</sup>

In addition to negative propaganda emerging from discontented masons, the dispute received attention through the printing of satirical poems, masonic polemics, newspaper articles, as well as the publication of masonic minutes and the verbal and written exchanges among Mitchell, Gibson, and the Grand Lodge of Scotland. The *Petition and Complaint* published by Alexander Lawrie contains several anonymous works, including “The Scotch Diable Boiteaux or Asmodeous in Edinburgh: Edited By Zachariah Cleardoubt.”

“The Scotch Diable Boiteaux” is a satirical account of the feud between Gibson and Mitchell, supposedly narrated by a Scottish freemason. Cleardoubt ridicules not only the dispute among the various parties, but freemasons in general. Offering a ludicrous description of the narrator, the author claims that he is an

old decrepid Highlander, with a hard weather-beaten and wrinkled countenance, cheek-bones so high, that they rendered it broader than long, *beautifully* shaded with

*blood-red hair*, and farther adorned with immense whiskers of the same colour. On his head he wore a huge cocked hat, made of tartan, and his red locks were gathered behind into an enormous *queue*. On his body, he wore a dirty tartan waistcoat, and from it hung a *kilt* of the same chequered manufacture. On his distorted legs he displayed a pair of huzzars, without soles, and this elegant dress was covered by a thread-bare and tattered great-coat, which altogether formed a most ludicrous *tout ensemble*.<sup>82</sup>

The name ‘Cleardoubt’ adds to the absurdity of the Mitchell affair, expressing a frivolous

inability to grasp the reasons for such a feud. In “The Scotch Diable Boiteaux,” the author explains that a “sketch of the following pages was picked up by me at the foot of the rock below Lord Nelson’s Monument on the Calton Hill, where, I have reason to believe they had been dropt by the owner; and in order that neither the world may be deprived of them, I have thought proper to send them to the press.”<sup>83</sup> Cleardoubt characterizes the freemasons as “desperadoes,” and asserts that the entire dispute was “surely unwarrantable in a civilized country.”<sup>84</sup>

This theme of derision was continued in “The Invocation, in an Inquiry Into the Feuds of Brothers M And G.” In this satire, the author unashamedly ridicules masonic rituals and emphasizes the ludicrous conduct of Mitchell and Gibson:

Say, for the business I would fain discuss,  
Whence all thus uproar? whence this mighty fuss?  
What makes the Lodge of Scotland thus to shake,  
And to her very center trembling quake?  
What puts the craft in such a mighty pother,  
And sets one mason upon top of t’other?  
Say, has the secret, word, or sign, been told?  
And does th’ unhallow’d world, withstep profane,  
Presumptuous dare the mystic rites to stain;  
With eye polluted, and with ear untaught,  
Imbibing knowledge at each copious draught,  
And learning secrets none but masons know,  
Without the ordeal masons undergo? –  
Such dire offences well might kindle ire,  
Might set the tamest lodge on earth on fire.<sup>85</sup>

After cynically analyzing the dispute, the author exhorts the Grand Lodge to stand as

A striking proof to every future age,  
How much it deprecates unmanly rage,  
And teach the world for once this noble lesson,  
That every man who is a genuine Mason,  
Harbours an equal love to every brother,  
Nor passes one, where he condemns another,  
Remove the stigma men would now affix,  
And show ‘tis love of justice prompts, not POLITICS.<sup>86</sup>

Crucially, the publications also reveal the influence of Whig politics on the Grand Lodge. For example, the author of the “Address to the Public on a Late Succession” argues that Mitchell’s proposed letter to the King effectively “thanked him [the King] for having dismissed the ministry of Lord Grenville and Charles Fox, and turning out of their employments men who, in the opinion of the friends of Lord Melville, impeded their progress to the sweets of the place.”<sup>87</sup> Moreover, the author asserts that it was “not the duty of the Grand Lodge of Scotland...to approach the throne with an avowal that they are neither rebels nor papists.”<sup>88</sup>

Although the author stresses the Grand Lodge’s unswerving loyalty to the Crown, his declarations smack strongly of Whig sympathies. Highlighting its moral superiority, the author further states that “fortunately, there were in the Grand Lodge of Scotland, individuals who, if they could not prevent the firebrand from being thrown, could at least stop the progress of the intended conflagration.”<sup>89</sup>

#### THE SECESSION

Notwithstanding such affirmations of masonic loyalty, it became apparent that the situation had begun to spiral out of control. Similar to its response during the Maybole Trial, the Grand Lodge adopted a defensive strategy. Realizing that it was unable to successfully settle the dispute, Inglis and others ardently defended themselves against any misconduct and argued that their actions were warranted under the terms of the Secret Societies Act.

On 7 March, 1808, the Grand Lodge of Scotland forwarded transcripts of the case against Dr. Mitchell to the Modern Grand Lodge of England; the solidarity of the masonic governing bodies was affirmed as the Moderns, Ancients, and the ruling body in Ireland all expressed their approval of the actions of the Scottish Grand Lodge. Overall, the Modern Grand Lodge of England is much more vocal than the Ancients in its support of the Grand Lodge of Scotland. Furthermore, language and tone are forthright and direct; in no uncertain terms, the Moderns stated that the Grand Lodge, “representing by regular delegation the Will of the whole Craft, is the proper and unquestionable depository of such Power.”<sup>90</sup> Clearly, the Moderns viewed the Grand Lodge as the sole voice and authority of all masonic matters. The

implications of this communication parallel Bullock’s assertion that the Grand Lodge attempted to impose a “centralist regime” on all constituent lodges.<sup>91</sup>

During the early stages of the trial, the Earl of Moira offered little or no assistance in the case. However, after receiving the transcripts of the case, Moira once again resumed his campaign to make the Grand Lodge the final authority on all masonic matters. It is possible that Moira’s sudden interest in the Masonic Secession arose from his failure to achieve any prominent position in the restructured Scottish government which was mostly controlled by Whig hardliners such as Lauderdale and Erskine. Melville wrote to his son Robert, stating that “I suspect Lord Moira totally overrate[d] his influence in any quarter.”<sup>92</sup> Sensing an opportunity to use the Grand Lodge of Scotland to revitalize his political career, Moira quickly assumed control of the dispute.

It is more likely, however, that Moira’s actions were largely guided by his desire to “please his patron the Prince of Wales.”<sup>93</sup> Both Moira and the Prince had taken a keen interest in the events in Scotland. Aware of the vulnerability of Scottish freemasonry, they hatched a plan in England to “unite the two Grand Lodges under the Prince of Wales.”<sup>94</sup> Although the Whigs in the Grand Lodge of Scotland initially viewed the Prince’s endorsement as an advantage, it quickly became clear that Scotland was being used “as a lever to promote union in England.”<sup>95</sup> Crucially, Moira’s scheme failed. According to Dawson, his

complete misunderstanding of the Mitchell affair must have influenced the Grand Lodge of Scotland against a Union, especially as they would then have had to put up with Moira as the guiding influence on the Prince of Wales.<sup>96</sup>

Although temporarily avoiding the union, Moira’s involvement proved to be an extreme error of judgment. Moira informed the Grand Lodge of Scotland that he had

lately laid the subject before the Prince of Wales. His Royal Highness is of opinion, that the authority of the Grand Lodge should be strictly maintained, not only with the view of preserving Masonry from all those irregularities which would take place without the controul of that body, but because on no other terms will the Government now permit the existence of Lodges... The Grand Lodge should consider... a sentence of expulsion from masonry against Dr. Mitchell for his contumacy, to be followed by a similar sentence against every individual attending what is called a Lodge under him, in case they persevere in maintaining that illegal meeting.<sup>97</sup>

At this stage, the Scottish Grand Lodge had abandoned all attempts to settle the dispute itself. Essentially, until Moira's participation, "the matter was not *entirely* dictated by politics."<sup>98</sup> However, Moira's reference to the Secret Societies Act of 1799, stating that he and the Prince of Wales were of the opinion that the seceding lodges constituted an illegal society acting independently of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, made politics the central issue "to the exclusion of all else."<sup>99</sup> Moira completely misunderstood the situation, as he allegedly knew nothing of the extreme political implications of the case. Indeed, it is inexplicable that those advising the Grand Lodge "should not have considered that the interpretation sought to be placed on the Act, in view of its unambiguous terms in relation to Masonry, could not prevail."<sup>100</sup>

By May, 1808, Dr. Mitchell and his supporters were not adhering to the stipulations of the initial suspension.<sup>101</sup> Backed by the Grand Lodge of England and taking the advice of Moira, Mitchell was expelled from Scottish freemasonry for openly seceding from the Grand Lodge of Scotland. Additionally, members of several Edinburgh lodges were suspended for communicating with Mitchell.<sup>102</sup>

Although it had no constitutional authority to hand down punishments of expulsion and could not legally bar freemasons from communicating with one another, the Grand Lodge was intent on forcing lodges to comply with its demands and imposing its authority on all Scottish freemasons. Certainly, Moira seized this opportunity to secure Grand Lodge dominance over all masonic matters. Unfortunately, his involvement would ultimately result in the failure of the Grand Lodge to prevent The Masonic Secession of 1808.<sup>103</sup>

#### THE DOWNFALL OF THE GRAND LODGE

Scottish lodges reacted differently to the actions of the Grand Lodge. No. 25 St Andrew, for example, recorded on 27 June, 1808, that "from all Circumstances of the case taken together, this meeting cannot help regretting much that ever this Strife and Contention should have been meddled with or that it had been checked effectually in its Origin...It would have saved the waste of a considerable sum of the public money...and it would

have tended to the peace and harmony of all the Lodges in Scotland."<sup>104</sup> Other lodges, however, such as No. 27 St Mungo's, supported the Grand Lodge. In a minute dated 27 July 1808, No. 27 expressed its approval of the

conduct of the Grand Lodge, in Suppressing every thing that may tend to prejudice the Brotherhood & most Cordially agree with them in all their late transactions and resolutions, as far as they have been communicated to us; and are determined to adhere to, and stand by our Mother Lodge, in support of her rights, which go hand and hand with our own. As On Our Admission we are all bound to Support the Grand Lodge & of course must do it.<sup>105</sup>

Not surprisingly, in a minute dated 24 June 1808, St Luke recorded that its members

had witnessed, with grief and indignation, the conduct of certain individuals belonging to several of the sister Lodges of this city, who, finding it impossible to render the Grand Lodge of Scotland subservient to their political views, have, with a zeal worthy of better cause, exerted themselves to overturn the controuling power of the Grand Lodge, and subvert the Masonic constitution...Under these circumstances, the Brethren of St Luke's consider it their bounden duty, to declare their unshaken fidelity towards the Grand Lodge.<sup>106</sup>

Despite varying opinions, it is clear that such actions were consistently alienating masons. For example, on 18 May, 1808, Lodge Edinburgh St Andrew passed a series of resolutions stating that the suspensions were an "infringement upon their rights."<sup>107</sup> On 13 June, 1808, the Grand Lodge of Scotland expelled all freemasons involved or associated in any manner with Dr. Mitchell. As a result, these masons – who were led by No. 1 Mary's Chapel – officially seceded from the Grand Lodge and formed the Associated Lodges Seceding from the Present Grand Lodge of Scotland.

Historians have noted that the mishandling of the Mitchell Trial caused further friction among Scottish freemasons. Furthermore, the issue of precedence that had dogged the Grand Lodge from its inception in 1736 once again resurfaced, this time in a more rancorous and bitter form. Indeed, the establishment of the Associated Lodges effectively signalled the end of Grand Lodge's pursuit of complete constitutional and masonic authority over all freemasons in Scotland. As Wartski maintains, it is obvious that

the situation in Grand Lodge had reached the point of near hysteria. Spite and rancour [were] rampant, where fact and discretion might have saved the day. The cavalier handling of the matter of precedence shows a lack of feeling towards the former premier Lodge, which naturally deeply resented its displacement after so many years. One would not have expected this sort of behaviour from Freemasons, let alone those entrusted with the government of the Craft. The actions of the Grand Lodge put the final touches to the revolt that followed, which, though it had been brewing, could have been prevented.<sup>108</sup>

Confronted with a masonic rebellion, one final attempt was made to suppress the rising tide of revolt. In a gross misunderstanding of its powers, the Grand Lodge emphatically declared that

the power of controuling the proceedings of every Lodge and Brother in Scotland, has always been vested in, and uniformly exercised by the Grand Lodge. The charters to all the Lodges in Scotland have been granted by it, under the express condition of obedience to the Grand Lodge; and every Brother becomes bound, at his admission, to obey its orders...If the power is not to be vested in the Grand Lodge, where can it be placed? There is no other body which can hold it; and if there is no superintending power to administer the laws of the body, the Craft must be annihilated.<sup>109</sup>

The passage of the Secret Societies Act in 1799 resulted in the indefinite suspension of charter-granting privileges. During the Maybole Trial, the Grand Lodge of Scotland resumed its campaign to have this right restored. In a letter to Robert Dundas on 2 March, 1803, it raised the questions of new warrants and, referring to Kilwinning, whether lodges were legally and constitutionally bound to obey the Grand Lodge.<sup>110</sup>

Dundas’ response is significant because in no uncertain terms he asserted that not only was the Grand Lodge expressly prohibited from issuing charters but also that it could not force Lodge Kilwinning to relinquish its authority of warranting new lodges. Crucially, Dundas declared that “nothing is said in the above [Secret Societies] act with regard to the authority or control of the Grand Lodge of Scotland or indeed of any other Grand Lodge [and] that the Grand Lodge of Scotland has ever been recognised as a corporate Body so as to have a...right of bringing an action before a court.”<sup>111</sup>

It is unclear why the Grand Lodge assumed the right to “superintend the conduct of all the Lodges in Scotland”<sup>112</sup> when such extraordinary claims of authority were emphatically denied by Dundas. The wording of the exclusion clause specifically referred

to “any such Society or Lodge which shall, before the passing of this Act, have been usually holden under the said denomination and in conformity to the Rules prevailing among the said Societies of Freemasons.”<sup>113</sup> The amendment to the original Secret Societies makes no mention of the authority of the Grand Lodges; essentially, the amendment asserts the authority of masonic lodges as determined by their individual laws and regulations, not those enforced by the Grand Lodge of Scotland. Thus, the Grand Lodge assumed an unconstitutional measure of authority as it was not definitively guaranteed in the masonic exclusion clause.<sup>114</sup> Perhaps the Grand Lodge was genuinely unaware of these stipulations. However, it is more likely that its actions were ultimately influenced by the pervading sense of confusion among freemasons and Moira’s misinterpretation of the Secret Societies Act.

The Grand Lodge of Scotland also attempted to justify its actions by stressing the charitable aims of the organization. In very similar terms used during the controversy over granting charters, it asserted that the Seceding Lodges were preventing the distribution of charitable funds.<sup>115</sup> It appears as if the Grand Lodge sensed that political accusations could do nothing to bring about a satisfactory conclusion to the ordeal; thus, Mitchell was blamed (tacitly for the political upheaval) and overtly for the destruction of the Grand Lodge and masonic charity.

If the Grand Lodge is to be annihilated, how is the charity, hitherto so faithfully distributed by it among the indigent Brethren, their widows and children, to be continued? It must fall; and the objects of the charity must be left to lament in unavailing sorrow. The destruction of the Craft, and consequent failure of the charity, must have been the consequences, if the Grand Lodge had permitted the proceedings of Dr. Mitchell and his adherents to pass unnoticed.<sup>116</sup>

Intent on upholding the sentences of expulsion and punishing the Seceders, the Grand Lodge of Scotland warned that masonic meetings were permitted only in legally constituted lodges in accordance with the Secret Societies Act and the laws of the Grand Lodge of Scotland. Furthermore, it threatened to withdraw the charter of any lodge that “interfere[d] with politics,”<sup>117</sup> and all meetings would then be “interdicted by the civil magistrate.”<sup>118</sup> Lulled into a false sense of confidence through the assurances of Moira, the Grand Lodge concluded its resolution by stating that “it is impossible to conceive, that the laws

of any country could permit meetings of persons, bound by an oath of secrecy, were even a suspicion to be entertained, that politics were discussed at them."<sup>119</sup> The decision to expel all members of the newly formed Associated Lodges and the subsequent referral of the case to the Civil Magistrate were the direct result of Moira's involvement. Eventually the case went to court, although it ended in an embarrassing defeat for Moira and the Grand Lodge of Scotland.

The application for the interdict resulted in an interlocutory against the officers of the Associated Lodges and the Grand Lodge of Scotland. Feeling that a minor victory had been achieved, Moira sent a letter to James Clerk, Sheriff Depute of Edinburgh. Assuring Clerk of his intentions, Moira stated that he had ordered the Substitute Grand Master of Scotland to present a complete list of all masons expelled in connection with the Associated Lodges. Drawing authority from the Secret Societies Act, Moira asserted that he "spoke...with decisive confidence because the exemption in favour of Masonic meetings was admitted into the Act in consequence of my assurance to Mr. Pitt that nothing could be deemed a Lodge which did not sit by precise authority from the Grand Lodge and under its direct superintendence."<sup>120</sup>

On 30 November, 1808, the Grand Lodge of Scotland submitted an application for an interdict against the meetings of the Associated Lodges and a Bill of Suspension.<sup>121</sup> Additionally, the Bill of Suspension stated the intentions of the Grand Lodge to establish itself as the "only legal, in its fullest meaning, body in Freemasonry in Scotland."<sup>122</sup>

In December 1808, the Courts granted the interdicts. However, the Associated Lodges appealed to the Second Division of the Court of Session on 11 February, 1809. During the appeal, Lord Justice Clerk Hope stated his disapproval over the admission as evidence of a letter written by Moira which implicated the Prince of Wales. According to the Lord Justice, "a most serious improper attempt had been made by the complainers to influence the decision of the Court, by production of, and founding upon, the letter from the Earl of Moira, containing the opinion of the Prince of Wales."<sup>123</sup> Subsequently, Moira's letter was removed from the Court. On 7 July, 1810, Hope handed down the following judgment:

The Lords having resumed consideration of this process and advised the mutual memorials for the parties in respect the Suspenders insist in the Character of Office bearers of a Self-Constituted Society which is not entitled to the privileges of a Corporation Repel the Reasons of Suspension Refuse interdict and Discern.<sup>124</sup>

The decision of the Courts hinged on the defence of the Associated Lodges. Asserting their rights as explained in the Secret Societies Act, the Seceders maintained that their meetings were not seditious and the Grand Lodge had distorted the provision of the original Act. Characterizing this interpretation as a "gross perversion," the Associated Lodges noted that the Act, "from beginning to end, never once made any mention of the *Grand Lodge*, or of any disputes that might exist between one Lodge and another, [or] about their internal regulations or rules of management."<sup>125</sup> Perhaps more importantly, a "certificate upon oath by two of the Members of the mason Lodge called Mary's Chapel Lodge... in terms of an Act of Parliament pass'd in the year seventeen hundred and ninety nine" was submitted.<sup>126</sup> Contained in this sworn declaration was the assertion that politics were prohibited from lodge meetings, according to stipulations set forth by masonic and national law:

It is a fundamental and fixed principle amongst all regular Free Mason Lodges in this Country that they shall at no time enter upon or discuss any political subject regarding either church or State and this restriction is now also made apart of the law of the Kingdom, by an act of Parliament passed the Twelfth day of July Seventeen hundred and ninety nine which specially Statutes and Declares That from and after that date no Mason Lodge in Scotland shall be allowed to meet buy on the express condition that two of the Members of each Lodge do annually make oath in presence of a Justice of Peace that they continue to meet for the purposes of Free Masonry only. Notwithstanding these wise and salutary laws, both of the Legislature and the Grand Lodge of Scotland as well as certain instructions given and obligations come under at admission into the Craft (which cannot be explained).<sup>127</sup>

The success of the Associated Lodges was due in large part to their common resentment of the Grand Lodge.<sup>128</sup> In a politically charged address on 14 February, 1809, the Grand Secretary of the Associated Lodges addressed the lodges, stating that

It has fallen to our lot to live in eventful times – times as eventful in the annals of Masonry, as they are in the history of Modern Europe. We have lived to see a despotism newly akin to the system of a neighbouring Tyrant, attempted to be established among the British Masons. But we have resisted

the odious usurpation with a Spirit the Masons of future ages will commemorate...They sought to enslave us, by debarring individual Masons from the privilege of going where they pleased...We spurned the ignoble bondage...[and] most just, my friends, is the punishment which has overtaken the destroyers of the order.<sup>129</sup>

were eventually revoked on 31 March, 1813, with the exception of Dr. Mitchell’s, the Associated Lodges achieved their goal of preventing the Grand Lodge of Scotland from gaining complete masonic authority over Scottish lodges. Ultimately, the Grand Lodge had been “defeated on every point.”<sup>130</sup>

It is clear that the Seceders felt that the Grand Lodge had overstepped its authority. Although all expulsions

#### CONCLUSION

The court finally ruled that the entire dispute was a “mere controversy in Masonry and, being the chief subject discussed by the complainers, was sufficient to satisfy the Court that the whole of this business, in its form and merits, was a mere Masonic dispute, which never should have been made the subject of a discussion at law.”<sup>131</sup> Fortunately, the Seceders returned to the Grand Lodge and, according to Lyon, this decision avoided the “erection of a multiplicity of rival Grand Lodges.”<sup>132</sup>

The political address intended for the King was ultimately transmitted to the Secretary of State for the Home Department but the King refused to accept it.<sup>133</sup> Had the Grand Lodge of Scotland sanctioned the address, it is likely that the Masonic Secession of 1808 would have never occurred. Alternatively, the Grand Lodge could have retained the right to withdraw its support from the motion while still permitting Dr. Mitchell to send the address to the King without its approval. Yet it was precisely these pretended powers that were the focal points of the seceding lodges. Lyon succinctly emphasizes the

mistakes made by the Grand Lodge of Scotland, stating that “the Secession, though precipitated by Grand Lodge’s unconstitutional interference in a petty quarrel between the Lodges Caledonian and Roman Eagle, was doubtless the result of several combined motives, in which politics and personal antipathies had a share.”<sup>134</sup>

Significantly, the prominent Whig members of both St Luke’s and the Grand Lodge of Scotland did little to positively influence the outcome of the trial. Party politics wavered and the initial solidarity and strength of the Whig party disintegrated. Although Wartski questions whether or not the Grand Lodge “hoped to bulldoze its way through in the hope of frightening the Seceders into submission,”<sup>135</sup> it is clear that such aggressive tactics and the use of the Secret Societies Act both failed. Inevitably, political ambition conflicted with the age-old pragmatism of Anderson’s *Constitutions* and not surprisingly, the Secession resulted in the public humiliation of Scottish freemasons and an embarrassing defeat for the Grand Lodge of Scotland.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

- 1 Wartski, "Secret Societies," 43.
- 2 Newman, "Politics and Freemasonry in the Eighteenth Century," *AQC*, 104(1991), 32.
- 3 Ibid, 40.
- 4 Ibid, 44, comments by Douglas Vieler.
- 5 Money, "Freemasonry and Loyalism," 256.
- 6 John Money, "The Masonic Movement; Or, Ritual, Replica and Credit: John Wilkes, the Macaroni Parson, and the Making of the Middle-Class Mind," in *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 32 No. 1(January 1993), 372.
- 7 Clark, *British Clubs*, 180.
- 8 Ibid, 181.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 McElroy, *Age of Improvement*, 112.
- 11 Ibid, 113.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Steve Murdoch, *Network North: Scottish Kin, Commercial and Covert Associations In Northern Europe 1603-1746* (Leiden, 2006), 332.
- 14 See McFarland, *Ireland and Scotland*, 159. Stirling was Lord Provost of Edinburgh from 1790 to 1800 and Grand Master Mason of Scotland from 1798 to 1800.
- 15 See Thorne, *House of Commons Vol. 4*, 36. George Gordon, 5<sup>th</sup> Earl of Aboyne, whose mother "lionized Pitt," was "consequently on good terms with the statesman." Although he was "inconspicuous in both houses of Parliament," he was president of the Edinburgh Pitt Club, thus leaving "no doubt about his politics."
- 16 Clark, *British Clubs*, 461-462.
- 17 Ramsay, brother of Hon. William Maule (Grand Master 1808-1810 and devoted Foxite), was put up for Aberdeen Burghs in 1806. Thorne writes that the "Scottish Whigs worked strenuously for Ramsay, whose success was assured when the key burgh of Montrose declared for him," Thorne, *House of Commons Vol. 5*, 7.
- 18 See Lindsay, *Holyrood House*, 269-270.
- 19 Ibid, 269-270. Referring to William Inglis, Lindsay writes that "after he left [the Master's Chair of St Luke's] in 1805, he dominated the Craft for the next twenty-three years as Substitute Grand Master in a manner unparalleled before or since. He could and did formulate the policy of Grand Lodge throughout his long tenure of office there; but he required for its successful issue a constitutional support on which he could rely. The way had to be prepared amongst the Lodges. Ears and eyes were essential in places where the Substitute Grand Master could only be received in his official capacity...Inglis, then, needed a spy...to see what things were on his side and what o' the other. Naturally he chose for the purpose his own Lodge of St Luke, and so long as he governed the Craft he worked in closest co-operation with its Masters and Proxy representatives for other Lodges in Grand Lodge, and they reaped in his time, and after it, the fruits of Grand Office as the reward of their allegiance," 280.
- 20 Lindsay, *Holyrood House*, 299.
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 Ibid, 269-270.
- 23 Ibid, 250-251. See pages 251-253 for a list of notable Whig leaders, including Charles Hay, Lord Newton; John Wilde, "Advocate and Professor of Civil Law, 1792; author of *The Question Solved, or the Right of the Prince of Wales to be Sole Unlimited and Immediate Regent, et., etc.* (Edinburgh, 1788); *Address to the Society of the Friends of the People* (1793) and *Sequel to Said Address* (1797); The Rt. Hon. Sir James Mackintosh, "P.C., Whig Philosopher; Secretary of 'The Friends of the People,' and author of *Vindiciae Gallicae* in reply to Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution* (1791)." See Cockburn, *Memorials*, 223-226 for a description of Charles Hay.
- 24 Ibid, 250-251.
- 25 Ibid, 2 August 1802.
- 26 Lindsay, *Holyrood House*, 294.
- 27 Grand Lodge of Scotland Minutes, 3 August 1794.
- 28 Ibid. The minutes further stated that "it is evident that it would be a matter of the greatest importance to the Grand Lodge as well as honourable and advantageous to the Kilwinning Lodge were the Lodges holding of her received into and under the protection of the Grand Lodge of Scotland concurring as we must do that it would be for the honor, the dignity and the welfare of the Craft in general that Masonry in Scotland should be only practised in the Bosom of the Grand Lodge."
- 29 Ibid,
- 30 Ibid, 1 November 1802.
- 31 On 3 November 1806, the Grand Lodge asserted that "it had long been the wish of the Grand Lodge that the differences subsisting between her and the Kilwinning Lodge should be settled and accommodated and in a very forcible manner pointed out the advantage that would result to both were the Kilwinning Lodge with the Lodges holding of her to return to their duty and allegiance and become subject to the controul of the Grand Lodge. Sir John mentioned that he had had several conversations with W. Blair the present Master of Kilwinning Lodge and others and from what he could learn Sir John had no doubts but a reconciliation might be brought about on terms not only honourable and advantageous to the Grand Lodge but to the cause of Masonry in general. Sir John therefore proposed that a Select Committee be named by the Grand Lodge with authority to open a Communication with the Kilwinning Lodge either by letter or by a meeting with the Master and a Committee of that Lodge in order to ascertain their views and demands. The Grand Lodge having taken this matter into consideration agrees to the propriety of opening a communication with the Kilwinning Lodge," Grand Lodge of Scotland Minutes.
- 32 Grand Lodge of Scotland Minutes, 14 February 1807.
- 33 Lindsay, *Holyrood House*, 294.
- 34 Gould, *History of Freemasonry Vol. 2*, 395.
- 35 Lyon, *Mary's Chapel*, 265.
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 Ibid.

- 38 Ibid, 274.
- 39 Grand Lodge of Scotland Minutes, 4 May 1807.
- 40 Ibid. The Grand Lodge justified its actions by asserting that “the Committee formerly named had acted upon the powers granted them, by opening a correspondence with the Kilwinning Lodge stating the powers given them. That the Kilwinning Lodge had named a Committee with equally ample powers and had agreed to meet the Grand Lodge Committee at Glasgow for the purpose of adjusting all matters,” Ibid.
- 41 Lindsay, *Holyrood House*, 296. Maule, a Whig M.P., was known to be the “ringleader of a group of wild young men addicted to gambling, heavy drinking, destructive horseplay and sexual licence,” Thorne, *House of Commons Vol. 4*, 571-572. He hardly seemed the ideal candidate for Grand Master. After coming into possession of his great-uncle’s estates in 1792, Maule became one of the richest men in Scotland. According to Thorne, “he sustained this extravagant and dissipated lifestyle...into which he probably fell the more readily in the absence of paternal discipline, to the end of his days, long after more decorous standards of behaviour had become the norm among his peers...Maule, who joined the Whig Club in 1798, became an enthusiastic Foxite” and “supported his Whig friends in power,” Ibid.
- 42 Lord Melville wrote of Thomas Hamilton, Lord Binning that “Mr. Pitt had a sincere attachment to him, and there never was a more enthusiastic worshipper of Mr. Pitt’s memory than Lord Binning,” Quoted in Thorne, *House of Commons Vol. 4*, 135.
- 43 Lindsay maintains that the “Master of St Luke’s and several other Whigs...had seen him acting there as Grand Warden on several occasions, when his brother, The Earl of Dalhousie, was Grand Master. ‘Notwithstanding these incontrovertible facts and even although he saw it to be almost the unanimous wish of the Grand Lodge that Mr. Maule be appointed,’ Bro. Cunningham proposed in opposition The Earl of Haddington, and...this nomination was defeated by 110 votes to 7,” *Holyrood House*, 296-297.
- 44 Ibid, 296-297.
- 45 Ibid, 271.
- 46 Ibid, 299.
- 47 Ibid, 298.
- 48 Ibid.
- 49 Ibid, 299. King George, a Tory, decided to strike down a request from the government to allow Roman Catholics to join the army and he refused to grant Catholic relief. The King, “...implacable in his opposition...demanded that a written assurance be furnished to him that the Catholic question in any form would never again be brought up,” Wartski, “Secret Societies,” 45. See also Dickinson, *Britain and the French Revolution*, 113.
- 50 Lindsay, *Holyrood House*, 299.
- 51 Grand Lodge of Scotland Minutes, 4 May 1807. Interestingly, the *Petition and Complaint* contains more Grand Lodge minutes, including transcripts that are unavailable in the Grand Lodge archives.
- 52 Wartski, “Secret Societies,” 46.
- 53 Lindsay, *Holyrood House*, 300.
- 54 Grand Lodge of Scotland Minutes, 19 June 1807.
- 55 In response to the letter from Dr. Mitchell, Inglis – on behalf of the Grand Lodge of Scotland – replied: “Though I have great doubts of my right to call such a meeting as you require which I rather think is vested in the Grand Master alone and though I continue decidedly of my former opinion that the demand of a Scrutiny is unconstitutional, conceiving that the Grand Clerk as the legal sworn officer of the Craft is the person who is regularly intitled to declare the state of any vote in the Grand Lodge being of course held from his official situation as beyond all suspicion of partiality. Yet notwithstanding the doubt I entertain and the opinion I have expressed the respect which I bear to the subscribers of the letter which I have had the honor of receiving... induces me to comply with your request of convening the Grand Lodge,” Grand Lodge of Scotland Minutes, 19 June 1807.
- 56 Lindsay, *Holyrood House*, 253.
- 57 Cockburn, *Memorials*, 84. Other key figures in the Whig party affiliated with St Luke’s were Adam Gillies, David Cathcart, and Malcolm Laing.
- 58 Ibid.
- 59 Wartski, “Secret Societies,” 46.
- 60 Ibid.
- 61 Lindsay, *Holyrood House*, 300.
- 62 Wartski, “Secret Societies,” 45.
- 63 Grand Lodge of Scotland Minutes, 25 May 1808.
- 64 Ibid, 1 August 1791.
- 65 Lindsay writes that “unfortunately, Dr. Mitchell nor Gibson could leave well alone, and their differences were followed up outside Grand Lodge until 5<sup>th</sup> January, when Gibson laid before Grand Lodge a Petition against Dr. Mitchell, in which he alleged: (1) That Dr. Mitchell persisted in holding his Monthly Meetings on a date already expressly forbidden to him as belonging to Lodge Roman Eagle; (2) That at one of the Meetings he had suggested secession from Grand Lodge; (3) That when on the way to the annual Masonic Service in the Tron Church on St Andrew’s Day, 1807, he had prevailed on his Lodge to leave the procession and to adjourn to Oman’s Tavern, and further, though expected by the Acting Grand Master [Hon. William Ramsay Maule], he had sent neither apology nor Deputation to the Grand Festival, showing by these actions contempt for the religious Service in which his Brethren were engaged, disrespect to the Acting Grand Master, and, to the world, that there was a schism in the Fraternity; (4) That contrary to Masonic custom, he had, on 28<sup>th</sup> December 1807, refused to receive a Deputation from Lodge St David, Edinburgh, of which the Petitioner was Past Master,” *Holyrood House*, 300-301. The actual petition was received by the Grand Lodge of Scotland on 1 January 1808. The petition and complaint asserted that “Brother Mitchell has done every thing in his power to disturb the peace of



- the Grand Lodge, and of the craft, by printing a libelous pamphlet, and by most disrespectful and improper conduct to the Grand Lodge, insomuch, that at the meeting of the quarterly communication of the Grand Lodge, held in the month of November last, a motion was made and seconded...to expel him from the Grand Lodge,” Grand Lodge of Scotland Minutes, 1 January 1808. Mitchell ignored Grand Lodge’s edict to discontinue meetings on the same evening as Roman Eagle and challenged James Gibson to a duel, for which he was suspended from all masonic privileges. See Seemungal, “The Edinburgh Rebellion,” 322-325.
- 66 C. Stewart, printer. *An Exposition of the Causes Which Have Produced the Late Dissensions Among the Free Masons of Scotland, Addressed to the Brethren of the Order by the Edinburgh Lodges that Have Found it Necessary to Separate from the Grand Lodge of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1808), 9-11.
- 67 *Ibid.* Furthermore, Mitchell maintained that the accusations were made “with the view of harassing and distressing the accused, and disturbing the harmony and tranquillity of the lodges before whom these accusations are brought,” *Ibid.*
- 68 *Ibid.*, 11.
- 69 Grand Lodge of Scotland Minutes 13 June 1808. Grand Lodge also stated that the pamphlet contained matter “highly injurious to the character and dignity of the Grand Lodge; and, upon the whole, that the conduct of Brother Mitchell had been in an eminent degree derogatory to the honour, and prejudicial to the interests of Masonry.”
- 70 Stewart, *Exposition*, 17.
- 71 *Ibid.*
- 72 Caledonian Lodge Minutes, 11 March 1808.
- 73 *Ibid.*
- 74 John Mitchell, “Pamphlet Referred to in the Substitute Grand Master’s Deposition,” cited in *Petition and Complaint at Brother Gibson’s Instance Against Brother Mitchell* (Edinburgh, 1808), 83-84. The identity of the “worthy brother” is not revealed, though it is likely that Mitchell is referring to either Gibson or Inglis.
- 75 *Ibid.*, 80.
- 76 *Ibid.*
- 77 *Ibid.*
- 78 *Ibid.*, 83-84.
- 79 Grand Lodge of Scotland Minutes, 7 March 1808.
- 80 Stewart, *An Exposition*, 31.
- 81 *Ibid.*, 34. The authors further assert that the Grand Lodge, “when spurred on by party-zeal... imagine[d] that it would be better to sacrifice masonry altogether, if they could not get it converted into an engine to extend the principles of their party,” *Ibid.*, 40. Realizing that the Tories were not satisfied with the defeat of Mitchell’s address, the Grand Lodge, “after exhausting every artifice to establish their power... [had] at length thrown off the mask, and [began] to deal forth in the way of *terror*... Not only are those who attempt[ed] to remonstrate, deprived of their *masonic* privileges; but as *citizens*, too, they [were] threatened with the vengeance of the *party*,” *Ibid.*, 51.
- 82 Cleardoubt, Zachariah, ed. *The Scotch Diable Boiteaux; Or Asmodeus In Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1808), 7.
- 83 *Ibid.*
- 84 *Ibid.*, 27-28. Cleardoubt offers a final explanatory note, stating that “the world has been *favoured* with this production, chiefly for the purpose of preventing a mutilated copy, which, after having laid *fifteen thousand years* in the College Library, was intended to be published with such interpolations as might suit it to a more recent purpose, and it was the intention of the editor of that publication *even to have caricatured the dramatic personae*, which, after the *faithful* account here given of them, the world will perceive to be really *unnecessary*,” 28.
- 85 “The Invocation, in an Inquiry Into the Feuds of Brothers M And G,” printed in *Petition and Complaint*, 4.
- 86 *Ibid.*, 11.
- 87 “An Address to the Public on a Late Secession of an Edinburgh Lodge of Free Masons and Some Events Therewith Connected,” printed in *Petition and Complaint*, 15.
- 88 *Ibid.* The author declares that it was also not fitting “that they, through the same Grand Master... should be graciously pleased to say, that he, in common with the greatest Ministers the country ever saw, the most accomplished orators the councils of state ever listened to; the most illustrious statesmen and most amiable of men that ever adorned humanity; that, in a word, the heir apparent to the Crown... and Fox, were rebels, traitors, and atheists... Was it decorous to the head of the Scottish Masons... to make him declare to the world, that the friends of his heart, and the companions of his councils, were traitors to royalty and enemies to God?” *Ibid.*
- 89 *Ibid.*, 22.
- 90 Modern Grand Lodge of England Minutes, 6 April 1808. Appendix 12 contains a full transcript of the minutes.
- 91 Bullock, *Revolutionary Brotherhood*, 15.
- 92 See Fry, *Despotism*, 280-281.
- 93 P.J. Dawson, commenting on Hamill’s “The Earl of Moira,” 45.
- 94 *Ibid.*
- 95 Hamill, “The Earl of Moira,” 40.
- 96 Dawson, commenting on “The Earl of Moira,” 45.
- 97 Grand Lodge of Scotland Minutes, 25 April 1808.
- 98 Lindsay, *Holyrood House*, 302, my italics.
- 99 *Ibid.*
- 100 Wartski, “Secret Societies,” 50.
- 101 *Ibid.*
- 102 Wartski writes that “on the 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 1808, Grand Lodge expelled Dr. Mitchell and all those in his Lodge who were party to the secession. Likewise, the Senior Warden and the Treasurer of Mary’s Chapel, together with a member of Lodge Edinburgh St Andrew and one from Royal Arch Edinburgh, were suspended for attending one of Dr. Mitchell’s meetings on the 11<sup>th</sup> March, 1808, and failing to apologise,” *Ibid.* It is unclear as to the party affiliations of the other suspended masons. The main reason, however, for their suspension was communicating with Mitchell.

- 103 According to O’Gorman, “it was during these years that the party and the heir to the throne began to drift apart. The watershed was the ‘Talents’ ministry, when the Prince resented what he took to be the ministers’ neglect of him. Grenville, in particular, disliked and distrusted him and was unwilling to fawn over him. After the death of Fox relations between the Whig party and the heir were never the same. Consequently, the Whigs were unable to take advantage of no fewer than four opportunities to enter governments between 1809 and 1812. The events of...1806-07, and the mythology to which they had given rise, had taught the Whigs that they should never again be victims of the court that, therefore, they should only serve in a completely new administration; that the old one must be declared at an end; and that they should have ultimate control over men and measures in the new one,” *The Long Eighteenth Century: British Political & Social History 1688-1832* (London, 1997), 265.
- 104 No. 25 St Andrew Lodge Minutes, 27 June 1808.
- 105 No. 27 St Mungo’s Lodge Minutes, 27 July 1808. The Master all stated, “Sir & Brother, The Communications from the Grand Lodge of the 10<sup>th</sup> of March, 10<sup>th</sup> May, 17<sup>th</sup> June & 16<sup>th</sup> July 1808, intimating their proceedings, I duly received and beg leave to return my grateful thanks for the honour done me. All these proceedings have been laid before the Brethren of the Lodge St Mungo No. 28 over which I have the honour to preside, and while we lament the Schism that has arisen among the Craft (viz. that when One Misunderstanding is as accommodated, a Wider One has broke out). We Most Sincerely approve of the Conduct of the Grand Lodge, in Suppressing every thing that may tend to prejudice the Brotherhood & most Cordially agree with them in all their late transactions and resolutions, as far as they have been communicated to us; and are determined to adhere to, and stand by our Mother Lodge, in support of her rights, which go hand and hand with our own. As On Our Admission we are all bound to Support the Grand Lodge & of course must do it.”
- 106 No. 44 St Luke Lodge Minutes, 24 June 1808, cited in *Petition and Complaint*, Appendix No. II, 3.
- 107 Lodge Edinburgh St Andrew Minutes, 18 May 1808, cited in *Petition and Complaint*, 6-7.
- 108 Wartski, “Secret Societies,” 51.
- 109 *Ibid.*, 13 June 1808. The Grand Lodge further stated that “so very numerous a body of men as the Masons of Scotland, must be under laws and regulations, and there must be a power vested somewhere to enforce these laws and regulations. Where can this power be vested, but in the Grand Lodge, by which the Lodges are constituted, under the condition of obedience to its orders, and the Members of which are delegated by the whole Craft, where it has always been lodged, and whose decisions have always hitherto been cheerfully acquiesced in by the Brethren,” *Ibid.*
- 110 The Grand Lodge wrote to Robert Dundas in an effort to determine if it was able to “resume [its] former powers of granting charters” and if it was “practicable for the Grand Lodge to compel the Kilwinning Lodge and the Lodges Erected to her to return to the bosom and become Members of the Grand Lodge,” Grand Lodge of Scotland Minutes, 2 March 1803.
- 111 *Ibid.*
- 112 *Ibid.*
- 113 Lambert, *House of Commons Sessional Papers*, 33-35.
- 114 *Ibid.*
- 115 See above Chapter 4, pages 170-171.
- 116 Quoted in *Petition and Complaint*, Grand Lodge of Scotland Minutes, March 7 1808
- 117 Grand Lodge of Scotland Minutes, 29 June 1808.
- 118 *Ibid.*
- 119 *Ibid.*
- 120 Grand Lodge of Scotland Minutes, 11 August 1808.
- 121 Wartski, “Secret Societies,” 54. The Grand Lodge submitted the application “on behalf of certain interested individuals.” As Wartski writes, the Grand Lodge of Scotland “had no *locus standi in judicio* due to its status as a voluntary organization. Thus the Bill of Suspension had to be issued in the name of specific masons,” *Ibid.*
- 122 *Ibid.*, 55.
- 123 From the *Edinburgh Star*, quoted in *Petition and Complaint*, 6-7. The Lord Justice asserted that if the “letter alluded to had been authorized by the Prince, and written by the Noble Earl, with the view of inducing their Lordships to decide the cases before them in one way or another, he would certainly move...that the letter should be burnt by the hands of the common executioner,” *Ibid.* Lindsay notes that “as, however, it was a confidential letter to Mr. Inglis, the Agent responsible for its inclusion in the Process would appear at the Bar to give an explanation. Inglis...offered to accept the whole responsibility, although he submitted that the letter formed part of the Record for the Grand Lodge party, and was, therefore, a proper production. On the top of this the three Whig Counselors for the minorities (John Clerk of Eldin, John Greenshields and The Hon. Harry Erskine) lodged a Minute in which they stated they had advised its production,” *Holyrood House*, 308.
- 124 National Archives of Scotland, West Register House CS/235/M39/2.
- 125 Printed in the *Petition and Complaint*, and quoted in the *Edinburgh Star*, 5-6. The Seceders argued that the act “was passed at an alarming period in the history of this country...[but] by a strange perversion, however...the complainers supposed that all Masonic meetings that did not conform to the rules of the Grand Lodge, that did not recognise its supremacy, and act according to its orders, were *sedition meetings* in the sense of the act,” 5. See also *Exposition*, 63-70. The Seceders also stated that the Grand Lodge is “neither more nor less than a masonic committee, appointed by some of the Scottish lodges for the purpose of presiding over and representing them in public processions, &c. and for managing the distribution of the funds collected for charitable purposes. It has likewise been

- in the use of settling matters of precedence and masonic etiquette among the several lodges holding under it but on no occasion till now has it presumed to interfere with the radical rights of individual masons, much less to abridge or curtail them," *Exposition*, 63.
- 126 National Archives of Scotland CS/235/M39/2, "Certificate of [Illegible] Mary's Chapel Lodge 25 March 1809. The sworn declaration lists four members of Mary's Chapel lodge, not two.
- 127 Ibid.
- 128 Lyon writes that "there were...common grounds upon which the Secessionists were united, viz., First, a resistance of the aggression upon their rights that was involved in Grand Lodge passing sentences of suspension and expulsion without affording to the Brethren implicated the opportunity of defending themselves in the way provided by its Constitution; second, the vindication of the right to meet as Freemasons, and as such to be recognised by law, independent of Grand Lodge, and in defiance of its alleged authority over them," Lyon, *Mary's Chapel*, 309.
- 129 Mary's Chapel Lodge Minutes, 14 February 1809.
- 130 Lindsay, *Holyrood House I*, 310.
- 131 Printed in the *Petition and Complaint*, and quoted in the *Edinburgh Star*, 5-6.
- 132 Lyon, *Mary's Chapel*, 309.
- 133 As Fry Arugues, "all public bodies of any standing were urged to send in loyal addresses to George III. More than 400 immediately did so, and many continued to at every excuse: by 1796 the King was sick of the sight of them, and ordered that they should be sent straight to Dundas without bothering him," Fry, *Despotism*, 168.
- 134 Lyon, *Mary's Chapel*, 306.
- 135 Wartski, "Secret Societies," 61