



Leighton Letter No. 5a¹

Newsletter of the Leighton Library²

July 2022

There's been a real buzz about the Leighton these days, with development plans forging ahead, an exhibition of our American Atlas in Dunblane Museum in May, and articles in *Scotland on Sunday* and the *Stirling Observer*. In November we had a visit from Joe and Mike's Grand Tours of Scotland. See the video of their visit on Youtube or on the Library website: www.leightonlibrary.org.uk

The Library re-opened after the pandemic in May! It is open Mondays to Saturdays from 11am till 1pm but there may be some days it cannot open because of a shortage of volunteers. The Library will close for a period, possibly in September, for the major restoration work.

Do pass this newsletter on to others, visit our website, and share our Facebook and Twitter pages.

We welcome new Friends of the Library. Email leightonfriends@gmail.com for an application form. Friends receive the newsletter and invitations to events.

News from the Trustees

Exhibition: In May there was an exhibition in Dunblane Museum of the Library's American Atlas, described as "*A geographical description of the whole continent of America composed from numerous surveys by Major Holland et al engraved on 49 copperplates by Thomas Jefferys*" it was printed in 1776, the year of the American Declaration of Independence. Huge thanks to Dr Celia Aitken for leading on the exhibition.

Duke of Edinburgh's Award: This year we have two senior pupils from Dunblane High School working with us for their Gold Award. They produced the e-fliers for the American Atlas exhibition which were seen around the town. They worked on promoting our stand at The Fling and designing further ideas to project the Library into the 21st century!

Donations: We continue to work hard seeking benefactors and donors to provide the monies required for the Library's conservation. Donations of over £172,000 have already been received. Details are on the Library website. We have a JustGiving page and a QR code to streamline donations. The total needed is around £500,000 so please put the word around and help us achieve this!

¹ Shortened version of e-Letter 5 (May 2022).

² Leighton Library Trust, Scottish Charity SC003010.

More Volunteers Welcome!

Dan Gunn has taken over volunteer coordination from Custodian Michael Osborne. Dan writes:

I will be pleased to hear of any potential volunteers. Recent recruits are most welcome additions to our team. However we would greatly welcome more volunteers. Friendly informal induction is on offer and will be arranged to suit.

In addition to guiding, there is a wide range of tasks available. Whatever your talents are we will try to find a place for them. If you are far from Dunblane there is probably something online you can do to assist us.

Dan Gunn, Volunteer co-ordinator degunn@hotmail.co.uk Tel: 07727 220420

Restoration of the Library

An update from Alastair MacDonald, who is leading on the Restoration project.



We hope to start work later this year on Phase 1 of the fabric restoration. The plan is to restore the cartouche, repair the roof, masonry, windows and doors and most significantly remove the cement harling and replace with lime wash. This will involve removal and storage of the collection, a major and expensive operation.

We are currently evaluating tenders, with our retained specialist conservation architect, Rosalind Taylor of Tod & Taylor. We have applied for support from Historic Environment Scotland, who are also statutory consultees in the planning process with Stirling Council.

Phase 2 will involve developing the Undercroft into an exciting and inviting reception centre and multi-purpose area.

The Cartouche on the front of the Library will be removed and restored

Making History – our first booked paid private visit

In March we were pleased to welcome an Israeli family on holiday in Scotland, Tsvika Nir and his wife and daughter. The visit was arranged by Susan Ross of Sublime Scotland. Mr. Nir is an Israeli writer, Poet, Advocate and retired Politician, and the Chairman of the Hebrew Writers Association in Israel.

Custodian Michael Osborne and Gordon Willis, presented a wide range of books from Leighton's significant collection of Hebrew texts.



Leighton's Hebrew Book Collection

Gordon Willis put together this fascinating guide to the Hebrew books in the Library. It demonstrates Leighton's high level of scholarship.

The Hebrew books are a distinctive feature of Leighton's library. All told he had over 50 works (some multi-volume) in various Semitic languages. Their presence in a 17th century Protestant clergyman's library is not an anomaly, but an indication of how amazingly well Leighton measured up to the Reformation ideal of the Christian Biblical scholar, who was expected to have a complete mastery of the Hebrew language and texts.

Such knowledge was hard won, particularly in Scotland, where there was no Jewish community to provide a pool of instructors. Some grammar schools taught the rudiments of Hebrew, but the universities had great difficulty in finding staff qualified to teach the language at an advanced level. For a few years in the 1640's, the Edinburgh College employed a converted Viennese Jew, Professor Otto – believed to be the first person of Jewish heritage ever to have settled in Scotland. However, Otto seems to have died in 1649, and the teaching of Hebrew languished at Edinburgh for many years, even with Leighton as Principal.

Only a handful of Leighton's Scottish contemporaries could rival his Hebrew scholarship. One who possibly did was the politician John Maitland, 1st Duke of Lauderdale (1616-1682), Secretary of State for Scotland; while another, more certainly, was Professor (briefly Principal) Robert Baillie (1602-1662) at Glasgow University. Neither man's library has survived, making Leighton's collection the more precious.

It should not come as a surprise that most of Leighton's Hebrew books were the products of Christian (more specifically Protestant) scholars and printers. Naturally, Protestants seeking to study the Hebrew language and texts for a better understanding of the Bible preferred books that were doctrinally sound. Jewish and Catholic editions were approached cautiously.

The foremost Christian Hebraists of the 17th century were two legendary professors at Basel University, Johann Buxtorf (father and son), who over several decades issued newly edited texts, as well as a stream of authoritative dictionaries and grammars. One-third of Leighton's Hebrew books are by the Buxtorfs, an extraordinary collection for a personal library. Their works were used extensively by Bishop Walton and his collaborators in preparing the London Polyglot Bible (1657), which as we know is one of the Leighton Library's most prized possessions.



The earliest Hebrew book in the library is a folio edition of *Sefer ha-Shorashim* ("Book of Roots"), an important Biblical Hebrew lexicon by the 13th-century rabbi David Kimchi, printed in Venice in 1529 by Daniel Bomberg. In his day Bomberg was the foremost Christian printer of Hebrew books, publishing in Venice by papal permission. He created Hebrew types and employed a scholarly staff of rabbis and converts.

The Old Testament in Hebrew, edited by Johann Buxtorf the elder, printed in Basel by Ludwig König, 1618-1619 (2 folio volumes), is known as the Sixth Rabbinic Bible. Important because Bishop Walton adopted its Aramaic text for the London Polyglot Bible.

At first sight it is startling to see a Hebrew work by Jean Calvin: "*Sefer hinnuk behire yah*", printed in Calvinist Geneva in 1554 by Robert Estienne ("*Stephanus*" in Latin). This rather strange publication is a translation of Calvin's catechism and was intended to provide students with practice in reading Hebrew in a form that was doctrinally irreproachable. It evidently sold well, for a great many copies survive.

A question that often arises is: "how rare?" As a personal collection of its period in Scotland, as already noted, Leighton's Hebrew books are unparalleled. Individually, there are several that are probably not to be had in another Scottish library. In the British Isles, the single location where copies of all of them will certainly be found is Cambridge University, the 17th century centre for the study of oriental languages. Even there, one needs to count the university's many libraries as one location.

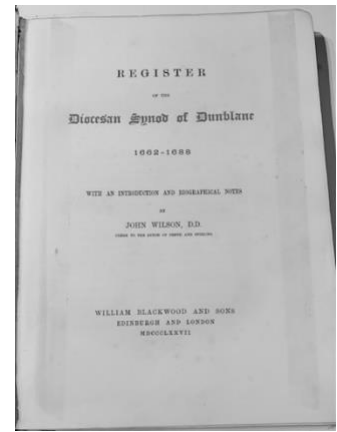
The Register of the Synod of Dunblane, 1662-1688

Thanks to Mary Birch for tracking down the words of Bishop Leighton himself in the accounts of the Synod of Dunblane, which she found on the shelves at ref. 15-D-3:

This is a transcription of the original register, with an introduction and biographical notes, made by John Wilson, D.D., Clerk to the Synod of Perth and Stirling, published by Blackwood in 1877. This copy is inscribed "from J. Stirling of Kippendavie", so must have been given to the Library some time between 1877 and the donor's death in 1882. The original register was held in the Library at least until 1959, when it was sent to the Bodleian Library to be examined by the retired Minister of Dunblane Cathedral from 1918 to 1945, Rev. James Hutchison Cockburn. He checked the transcript against the original, finding it "quite perfectly done and greatly to Wilson's credit" in a note stuck into the front of the book.

Seventeenth-century Scottish ecclesiastical history is complicated, unedifying, and beyond the scope of this article. The transcript of the minutes of the Synod runs from 1662, two years into Charles the Second's reign, until six months before William the Third's invasion in November 1688. Four Scots bishops, Robert Leighton, James Sharp, Andrew Fairfoul and James Hamilton, were consecrated in Westminster Abbey on 15th December 1661. Robert Leighton was Bishop of Dunblane for only a decade: he was appointed Archbishop of Glasgow in 1671. James Ramsay, his successor as Bishop of Dunblane, first presided at the Synod in September 1673.

Leighton was by nature a peacemaker, seeking to reconcile opposing factions, and remarkably liberal in his ideas of religious toleration. An entry in the journal of his friend, the Laird of Brodie dated 22nd November 1661, shortly before Leighton's consecration, says that when urged to guard against Poprie (sic), "He had not ani thing he mor desird than that they (Papists) might have more liberti also, and not for their consciences to be prest; he would indulge them, and Anabaptists and Quakers.... These opinions wer dangerous, but good man he does not perceav or suspect it."



The first synod at which Leighton presided was held in Dunblane in 1662, and subsequently met twice yearly. All parish ministers were expected to attend, unless excused by illness or infirmity, or having notified the Bishop in advance, stating why they were absent. From the outset, "It was declared by the Bishope that the Synod and each member of it hath now as full and free libertie of voting and declaring their assent and dissent in all things that occur as ever they had in former tymes." Episcopacy might have been imposed upon them, but Leighton was not going to oppress or dictate: rather he was thought to be "straiking their mouths with cream."

At this first synod, "The Bishope propounded some few particulars, which by the unanimous voyce of the Synod were approved and enacted." These dealt with church discipline - "the advancement of solide pietie and holiness", censuring "not onlie scandalles of unchastitie, but drunkenness, swearing, cursing and mocking of religion." "Profane and evidentlie impenitent persones" should not be admitted to Communion "till their better conversation and obedience to the Gospel be more apparent." Family prayers are to be encouraged, and for those able to read, the study of Scripture. At public worship, the Lord's Prayer, Doxology and Creed should be "restored to more frequent use," and "ane whole chapter at least of each Testament and Psalms shall constantlie be read." Preaching should be "plain and useful for all capacities, not entangled with useless questions and disputes, nor continued to a wearisome length."

Perhaps some individual ministers were not entirely in agreement, but these particulars were "by the unanimous voyce of the Synod approved and enacted." Leighton, ever irenic, urges his colleagues to live exemplary lives, "that we be meek and gentle, and lovers and exhorters of peace, private and public, among all ranks of men - endeavouring rather to quench than to encrease the useless debates and contentions that abound in the world; and be always more studious of pacific than polemic divinitie, that certainlie being much diviner than this, for the students of it are callit the sons of God."

Everyday matters dealt with by the Synod, and the picture they give of seventeenth-century life locally, will be described in a subsequent article.

Books & Borrowing: Analysis of Scottish Borrowers' Registers, 1750-1830

In *Leighton Letter 4* we summarised the project aims and introduced researchers Jacqueline Kennard, and Joshua Smith, and how they would be using the Leighton's 'Water Drinkers borrowing register.' Jacqueline's findings were exhibited at the University of Stirling in late 2021. The register contains details of visitors who came to take the mineral waters at Dunblane and used the Leighton to borrow books during their stay. Here are a couple of Jacqueline's findings about our water drinkers which were exhibited last year.

Typically, they were wealthy people who had the time and money to travel – made up of 35% Military, 31% Ministers, 13% Members of the Gentry, with the remainder being Professors, Provosts, Teachers, and Writers to the Signet. Interestingly our first water drinker was a woman who appears in the registers as "Mrs Dalzell". In fact, a staggering 41% of our water drinkers were women, which is a high number for this time-period. Borrowers were mostly interested in travel books. Out of the 10 most borrowed volumes by the water drinkers, five were travel books. More info from the exhibition can be found here <https://borrowing.stir.ac.uk/leighton-exhibition/>

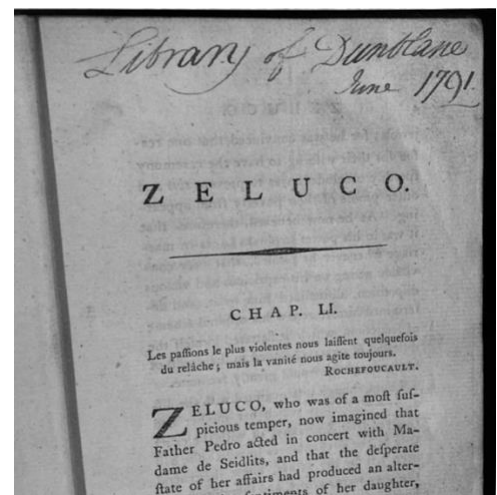
The most borrowed book was John Moore's novel *Zeluco* (1789).

A 'forgotten best-seller' – John Moore's 1789 novel, *Zeluco*

(article and photograph by Jacqueline Kennard)

Zeluco was the most borrowed single title by the Leighton Library's Water Drinker borrowers between 1815 and 1828, despite being published at least two decades earlier. *Zeluco* was acquired by the library in 1791, and its battered physical appearance bears tribute to its popularity with borrowers from then on.

The first, and perhaps most important, thing to say about the book is that it is an absolutely cracking read. It's an exceptionally fast-paced novel, which whirls the reader across Europe, to the West Indies, and back again, in the wake of its deliciously evil villain, the eponymous *Zeluco*, and a large cast of supporting characters of different nationalities. Equally interesting to scholars of the eighteenth-century and Romantic-period novel, though, is the way in which this work speaks directly to so many of the most important debates of its time.



Wrapped up in a semi-Gothic narrative about a wicked Sicilian aristocrat, we find firm opinions on education, improvement, religious tolerance, national stereotypes, slavery, the rights of men and women, the hazards and benefits of sensibility, and the dangers of a credit-based economy. The novel thus presents us with both a rattling page-turner and serious opportunities for moral reflection.

The book begins, conventionally, with a description of Zeluco's childhood. He is spoiled by a foolish mother who neither can, nor wishes to, restrain his 'violent and overbearing disposition'. Instead, she 'applaud[s] the blusterings of petulance and pride as indications of spirit', and so 'his temper became more and more ungovernable, and at length seemed as inflammable as gunpowder.'

The narrative then depicts his headlong rush into every kind of vice and tyrannical behaviour, his bankruptcy and subsequent financial recovery, the sufferings he brings upon himself and others, including two wives, one rich, the second lovely and virtuous, and finally his mortal wounding at the hands of his equally-wicked mistress's servant-lover, and his death-bed repentance. [...]

We shouldn't forget that the novel's subtitle is 'Various Views of Human Nature, Taken from Life and Manners, Foreign and Domestic'. From this perspective, Zeluco's own story is rather less important, and the 'various views of human nature' with which we are presented allow us some more insights into the author's concerns.

[...] The narrative voice itself is cultured, tolerant, worldly, and amusing, much like that found in Moore's own personal correspondence and travel writings. (He in fact made his name as a travel writer, and his 'A view of society and manners in France, Switzerland, and Germany' (1786) and 'A view of society and manners in Italy' (1781) feature not only in the collections of the Leighton, but in partner libraries' records as well).

There are many humorous moments in the novel. These are sometimes provided by the two comic Scots characters, Targe and Buchanan, both servants of Zeluco's acquaintances, who represent respectively Highland and Lowland Scots, and who on one occasion fight a comic duel over Mary Queen of Scots's honour.

On other occasions the venality of the Catholic priest, Father Mulo, provides opportunities for comedy, as do the sayings of Mr Transfer, a retired city merchant. These are all, to a greater or lesser degree, familiar comic stereotypes of the period, deployed here presumably to provide comic relief among the darker Gothic scenes of abduction, murder and deceit.

[...] But the Gothic mode was the victim of its own success; at the turn of the new century, writers and critics were already beginning to mock the sensational and melodramatic tropes of the Gothic, as well as what had quickly become its formulaic character. Zeluco still has much to offer a twenty-first century readership, though, and fortunately it is now available in a modern edition [Pam Perkins, ed.].

The Leighton Library Foundation Document

Alastair MacDonald has been researching the foundation of the Library.

We are fortunate to have a manuscript from 1691, signed by Robert Douglas, Bishop of Dunblane, which outlines the foundation of the Library. The £100 left by Bishop Leighton was paid by the executors to a Mr Fowles, merchant factor of London and sent to Edinburgh by bill whence it was given to "James Robertson, master of work, who received and disbursed all the moneys that were expended upon the work".

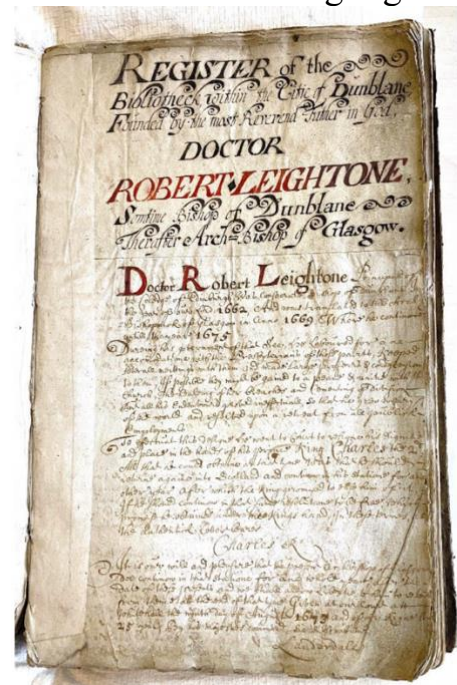
With winter approaching, work was held over till the spring, but the work was “much retarded throw the unquietness of the country”. Those overseeing the project were concerned the family might be upset by the delays. There was also the matter of a salary for the Keeper. £200 was sent to the commissary clerk in Dunblane “in whose hands it was kept until the Bishop should find out some good security for it”, which he did, in the hands of the Magistrates in Stirling. The books were carefully packed in trunks and chests, corded and sealed, and were received at Leith and conveyed to my Lord Strathallan’s lodging until the presses and shelves were fitted.

James Robertson’s accounts were found faithful and exact and well detailed. The total came to £162, 2/6d. The costs included the buying of ground for the enlargement of the foundation of the house, the payment of masons, wrights, slaters, carpenters and all other tradesmen, smiths, glaziers etc, “the furnishing of the house with a deazone of turkie leather chairs, thrie wanscott desks for reading, iron chimneys etc. and yet everything at the lowest rate could be hade and trulie it would have swelled to a greater sum, had not my Lord Strathallan caused furnish all the carriages gratis”.

Leighton’s nephew also “sent doune a verie rich marble stone, of oval figure, weill cut, having on it Bishop Leightones arms, with this inscription BIBLIOTHECA LEIGHTONIANA, and a gilded mitre on the top of it which is sett upon the frontispiece of this house towards the streets”.

A further ten pounds sterling was ordered by the Bishop to be “appoynted as a gratuitie to be bestowed on those who had attended the work”

After “full and mature deliberatione”, the Bishop determined the Keeper should be a student of divinity, designing for the holy ministry, pious and sober, trusty, of good behaviour and be appointed for three years, but not above four.



The librarian was required to give an annual discourse every April upon such suitable subject as the Bishop determined. He was to attend the library constantly every day of the week from 10-12 and 2-4pm. He was to make clean the shelves from dust, moths and cobwebs and set a fire at least once a week. He was to suffer no man to touch any book but what he delivers with his own hand and he was to suffer no persons to haunt the Library but such as come with a purpose to read.

The Keeper was required to take the following oath: “I do faithfully promise, in the presence of God, that I shall with all carefulness and circumspection, use my best endeavours for the good and preservation of the Library and all in it contained, committed to my charge and trust, that nothing therein be spoyled, lost or imbazled through my default and negligence, and that I shall duly observe the orders and institutions prescribed thereanent. So help me God.”