

Cartography and the Kirk: Aspects of the Making of the First Atlas of Scotland

DAVID STEVENSON

In 1654 volume five of Joan Blaeu's great *Atlas Novus* was published in Amsterdam, containing a map of Britain, six maps of Ireland and no fewer than forty-eight maps of Scotland (forty-six of them maps of regions or counties). This was the first attempt to provide a comprehensive set of detailed maps of Scotland, and it remained a standard work of reference for fully a century.

Most of the maps in the Atlas were based on the manuscript maps compiled by Timothy Pont (died c. 1611-14) at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries. Pont was minister of Dunnet in Caithness, and evidently undertook his cartographic and topographical work as a purely private venture, but James VI at one point promised him financial help towards completing his maps. This came to nothing, probably through Pont's death, but in 1629 Charles I agreed to give £100 sterling to help finish and publish the maps. Sir John Scot of Scotstarvit, the Director of Chancery, soon emerged as the main organiser of the project, probably because he already had contacts with the Blaeus—well known as map publishers—as he was negotiating with them over the publication of a collection of Latin verse by Scottish poets. It was agreed that Pont's maps should form the basis of a series of published maps of Scotland, but it became clear that much work was needed to be done on his maps (which were often confused and fragmentary) before they could be entrusted to Blaeu's engravers. Scot therefore recruited Robert Gordon of Straloch to undertake this task of revision. There is no evidence that Gordon had any previous experience in cartography, but he had long taken an interest in topography and was a skilled mathematician. Building on these relevant skills, he soon became deeply absorbed in revising Pont's maps. But progress was slow, and much still remained to be done when the Covenanters' revolt against Charles I broke out in 1637, leading to a period of political upheaval and intermittent civil war.

Both sides in the conflict, however, recognised the importance of Gordon's work, both for the honour and international reputation of Scotland and for more practical purposes. The civil war must have emphasised how useful detailed maps would be for military purposes. In 1641 Charles I wrote urging Gordon on with his work, with vague promises of future reward (Moir 1973:45), and in 1645-9 the Parliaments and Committees of the Covenanting régime issued a series of orders exempting him from taxes, loans, levies and quarterings so that he could concentrate on his map-making

activities (Stone 1981:27).¹ In addition, in 1647 the Scottish Parliament agreed (on a supplication from Blaeu) to try to persuade the English Parliament to give the maps (when published) copyright protection in England, Charles I having already granted such protection in Scotland (*APS*: 736-7). Moreover, it has long been known (and it was acknowledged by Blaeu himself) that the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland also sought to help Gordon (Blaeu 1654: '*Lectori salutem*'; Cash 1901:403, 405; Moir 1973:46). No systematic account of the Church's involvement in the making of the *Atlas* has been attempted previously, but reference to the surviving records of the Church courts indicates that the Church deserves more credit for positively aiding the project than the State, with its negative exemptions, or the King with his vague encouragement. The story of the Church's involvement in the *Atlas* project is, moreover, of interest for the light it throws on some aspects of how material for the *Atlas* was collected (or, more often, how unsuccessful attempts were made to collect such material).

The initiative in gaining ecclesiastical support for Blaeu's *Atlas* came from Sir John Scot, whose enthusiasm remained undiminished by long delays. In August 1641 Robert Baillie wrote to his cousin William Spang, minister to the Scottish congregation at Campvere in the Netherlands, describing the recent meeting of the General Assembly. In the entry under 2 August he noted 'Sir John Scot's petition, to have a description of our Shyredomes, by some in everie Presbytrie, to be sett before the mappes yow have in hand, is granted' (Baillie 1841:1. 368; Snoddy 1968:52). The Assembly's resolution was that each presbytery was 'to sett down the descriptiouns of there severall paroches according to the alphabet then given to the severall commissioners to deliver to there presbyteries and to report the same to the chancellorie' by 1 January 1642 (S.R.O. CH. 2/154/2: folios 39^v—40^r; *Fife Synod*: 131); Scot was the Director of the Chancery.

The usual assumption (which Robert Baillie's report supports) has been that what Scot was seeking from the ministers of the Kirk was solely written descriptions (Moir 1973:46), based on answers to the 'alphabet' or list of questions which he had circulated, from which were to be compiled the written accounts of each region or shire accompanying the maps in the *Atlas*. This was certainly a major part of Scot's intention, but there was probably more to it than this. Firstly, as will be argued below, these 'descriptions' may well also have been intended to provide information for insertion on maps. Secondly, it is quite possible that the 'descriptions' were themselves intended to include rough maps. The word 'description' was ambiguous in the seventeenth century, bearing a wider range of meanings than today; as well as denoting written or spoken accounts, 'to describe' could mean 'to set forth in delineation or pictorial representation, to represent, picture, portray, or to delineate, as in geometry' (*OED*). Several references indicate clearly that both Robert Gordon and his son and helper James Gordon (minister of Rothiemay) used the word to denote maps and plans as well as written accounts. James Gordon's map or plan of

Aberdeen is headed *Aberdoniae Novae et Veteris Descriptio. A Description of New and of Old Aberdeen*, the same word being used in the title of the accompanying text (Gordon 1842). In 1647 when the burgh council of Edinburgh requested that James be permitted to leave his parish to come and make a plan of the burgh, the Commission of the General Assembly of the Kirk agreed that he should be employed 'for description of the mappe of this toun' (*Coms. of G.A.*: 191-2). In the *Atlas* itself the captions of two maps provide further evidence that maps 'described' the areas they dealt with. James Gordon states that his *Fifae Vicecomitatus* is '*a se peragratae descriptionem*'; and Robert Gordon says *Scotia Extima* was '*collegit et descripsit*' by him.²

To add to the difficulties of interpretation, just as a 'description' might be a map, so a 'carte' might be a written description or exposition and not a map (*OED*), and therefore (as will be seen below) the Church records use the words interchangeably.

Well-meaning resolutions of the General Assembly were frequently ignored by the lower courts (synods, presbyteries and kirk sessions) of the Church; this point was to be well illustrated in the years that followed the Assembly's first attempt to help the *Atlas* project in August 1641. Reference to those synod and presbytery records which have been published suggests that there was little enthusiasm for Scot's project outside Fife, and even there it was limited. Fife was Scot's home county, and he was evidently determined that it should be well represented in the *Atlas*: as an eminent local man he was in a good position to maintain pressure on dilatory Church courts.

The first indication of action following on the General Assembly's order occurs in the records of Kirkcaldy Presbytery: on 20 January 1642 it is noted 'Anent Sir John Scotts business the brethren promise diligence' (*Kirkcaldie Pres.*: 222). In fact the deadline for sending in descriptions was already past, but at least Kirkcaldy was doing better than the other presbyteries in Fife. When the Synod of Fife met in April, Scot complained to it that none of the ministers of the province had obeyed the General Assembly's orders except for nine in the Presbytery of Kirkcaldy. On 6 April therefore the Synod, 'considering the worthiness of the work tending to the honor of the nation' ordered the moderators of the presbyteries 'to urge the fulfilling of the foresaid act' of the General Assembly by 1 May 1642 (Snoddy 1968:52-3; S.R.O. CH. 2/154/2: folios 39^v—40^r).³

One Presbytery at least responded to this urging: that of St Andrews. On 21 April its records note 'Anent the reference to the severall Presbyteries concerning Sir Johne Scotts Geographic Cart, all exhorted to vse diligence therein' (*St. A. & Cupar Pres.*: 6). Two weeks later the Presbytery was more specific. 'To the end greater diligence may be vsed in drawing vp the bounds of this Presbyterie for Sir Johne Scotts Carte' the parishes of the Presbytery were divided into three groups, and a number of lairds were appointed for each group 'to vse diligence heirin' (*op. cit.*: 6-7). Again on 8 June 1642 those appointed to 'view the bounds of this Presbyterie, for Sir John Scotts Carte, ar appointed to vse diligence therein' (*op. cit.*: 7). These St Andrews records

raise the intriguing possibility that at this point Scot was considering drawing up a map of Fife himself, but this may be to read too much into the references to 'Scot's carte'.

All these signs of activity in St Andrews Presbytery produced no parish descriptions, and few other presbyteries did any better. As a result when the General Assembly met in August 1642 it was presented with a new supplication by Scot, recalling that the previous Assembly had ordered the preparation of descriptions by presbyteries 'according to an Alphabet drawne and given to every ane of them for that effect'. But, Scot continued, no presbyteries except those of Carrick, Galloway, East Lothian, and eight parishes in the Presbytery of Kirkcaldy, had sent in any reports. This 'is a great hinderance to the setting furth of the whole cairts of this Kingdome now almost perfected, and which can not be brought to an end without these descriptions'. He therefore desired that the Assembly's orders for descriptions be renewed, and also requested that James Gordon (Robert Gordon of Straloch's son) be given permission to leave his parish of Rothiemay and go to Fife 'for expeding of the Shyre of Fife, which is altogether deficient'. If Scot had ever thought of producing a Fife map himself he had now abandoned the idea and was calling in outside help. The Assembly proved sympathetic to Scot's pleas. Having failed to get obedience from presbyteries, it now ordered all synods to send in descriptions of their parishes to 'the Chancellarie Chamber'; and James Gordon was given permission to go to Fife for two months (S.R.O. CH. 1/1/9:1642, pp. 81-2).

The Synod of Fife was prompt to act on these orders. On 5 October 1642 it recorded that it had 'done diligence' in providing parish descriptions; some had been delivered (to the Synod), and others were ready for delivery (S.R.O. CH. 2/154/2: folios 44^r—45^r).⁴ But, as before, most synods evidently ignored the General Assembly's orders, forcing Scot to renew his former complaints to the August 1643 Assembly. It was probably he who, trying a new approach, presented a petition from William Jansone, printer in Amsterdam, desiring that 'Letters of Recommendation' be written to those presbyteries which had failed to provide descriptions 'of their severall schires'. The Assembly duly ordered the Presbyteries to send descriptions to the Synods when the latter met in April or May 1644, so they could be forwarded to the chancery chamber (S.R.O. CH. 1/1/9:1643, p. 74; *Records of G. A.*: 361). But by this time the General Assembly had less patience with repeated petitions on a matter marginal to its main responsibilities, and Robert Baillie reported to William Spang that 'Sir John Scot's bill, for pressing Presbyteries to describe their own bounds, was not so much regarded' (Baillie 1841-2:II. 88; Snoddy: 53; Moir: 46). Nonetheless, three years later (June 1646) the Assembly issued a further recommendation 'of the Printer in Amsterdam his Bill concerning the charts of this Kindom' (*Records of G. A.*: 454), and the following year this was followed up (1 September 1647) by a 'Warrant for Master James Gordon to come to Sterling-shire, for drawing the mappe thereof' (*op. cit.*: 483). Finally, in June 1649 the Assembly passed an 'Act

recommending to the Brethren to make out the descriptions of these parts of the Kingdom not yet described' (*op. cit.*: 555).

Thus in its nine annual meetings in 1641-9 the General Assembly showed its interest in the *Atlas* project six times; and the three years in which it neglected the issue were those in which the political turmoil of the time reached peaks in open civil war (the Montrose campaigns in 1644 and 1645; the Engagement crisis in 1648).

What do these references in Church records tell us about the process of compiling the *Atlas*? Above all, perhaps, they bring into prominence the attempt to exploit the unrivalled national network provided by the ministry of the Kirk for the systematic gathering of information. Relatively little attention has been given to the collection of 'descriptions' (But see Cash 1901:405, 406; Moir 1973:46), and (as indicated above) the assumption has been that their purpose was exclusively that of providing information for the written texts accompanying the maps. But the ambiguities of the word 'description' raises the possibility that they may have been intended to include maps. Even if this was not the case (and certainty is impossible), it seems likely that it was intended that some of the information included in *written* descriptions should be put to cartographic use. It has been demonstrated that some of the published *Atlas* maps, and some of Robert Gordon's manuscript maps, are basically Timothy Pont's work with a scattering of additional place names added by Gordon (Stone 1981: 18-20). It is hard to believe that these additions arise from attempts by Robert Gordon literally to follow in Pont's footsteps, systematically checking Pont's maps and adding to them by touring the country: he was too old for such a task, and, had he undertaken it, it would surely have enabled him to improve (or at least alter) Pont's maps more than by just adding handfuls of new place-names. Where then did the new names come from? The most plausible answer is from written accounts, detailing places and their distances and bearings from each other. Evidence that his son, James Gordon, used such information for cartographic purposes survives. In 1646 he drew up 'Demandes tuoching the discriptions of the two tounes of new and Ould Aberdein'; the list of questions to which he required answers includes both historical information for his written description and (headed 'Concerning the Topography of the Toune') place names and distances which could be of use only in drafting his map of the burghs (*Abdn. Letts*: 62-4). Further light is thrown on how James Gordon collected topographical information evidently intended for use in map-making (probably in this case for passing on to his father rather than for use himself) by the survival of some of his notes on the Highlands. Most of the material is taken from Pont; but he records, of his 'Noats of Distances of Places about the Head of Lochtay, Loch Erin, L. Dochart, Glen Urquhay etc.', 'This I had from [Sir Robert Campbell of] Glenurquhay himself in June 1644 at Abirdeen'. Similarly his 'Noats of Lennox & Stirlingshyr' were 'gotten fra gentlemen of that countrey 15 May 1644' (MacFarlane 1906-8:II. xliv-xlv, lxxix, lxxx, 537, 578). Here we see James Gordon making the best of random chances to acquire information while frustratingly unable to stray far from

his Banffshire parish: Glenorchy and the Stirlingshire gentlemen were probably in the North East in connection with military operations against the royalist Marquis of Huntly, and Gordon eagerly pumped them for topographical information.

There is no direct evidence that the written information which parish ministers were asked to supply in answer to Scotstarvet's 'alphabet' was similarly intended for cartographic purposes, but this seems highly likely. If Scot's intention was merely to gather material for the brief regional descriptions which were to accompany the maps in the *Atlas*, would he have sought detailed descriptions of all the parishes (nearly a thousand of them) in Scotland? It is possible; but it would seem that such an approach would complicate his task by providing far more information than he would need—and by making the process far more ambitious than it need have been. But if one of the prime purposes of the 'descriptions' collected through the ministers was to provide place-names and details of their locations for inclusion on the draft maps (mainly based on Pont) that Robert Gordon was working on, then parish 'descriptions' would be the obvious approach.

In the event, however, the parish descriptions failed to appear (with a few exceptions). From most areas Scot received nothing at all in the way of descriptions, and it is therefore not surprising that when in a few instances he received descriptions of much wider areas than parishes he was content with them: they could at least be published in the *Atlas* even if they were of no help to Robert Gordon in eking out Pont's pioneering work. When Scot told the 1642 General Assembly that the Presbyteries of Galloway had provided the descriptions required, he probably referred merely to the general description of the province of Galloway by John M'Clellan (minister of Kirkcudbright) that eventually appeared in the *Atlas* (*Fasti* II:417; Blaeu 1654:49-50). Similarly the description of East Lothian he had received may well have been a general one by William Forbes (minister of Innerwick, East Lothian), who was to contribute a description of the Lothians to the *Atlas*, rather than individual parish accounts (*Fasti* I:410; Blaeu 1654:41-2). Again, it may be guessed that Carrick provided a general account, perhaps by James Bonar (minister of Maybole in Carrick) who is known to have helped Robert Gordon (MacFarlane 1906-8:II. xx).¹ If this is the case, then the only *parish* descriptions Scot ever got may have been those from eight or nine parishes in the Presbytery of Kirkcaldy. From other areas he was glad to receive even regional descriptions, accepting them as better than nothing.

The evidence from the Church records confirms the date of one of the maps in Blaeu's *Atlas*, *Fifae Vicecomitatus*, and in doing so reveals that one piece of evidence about dating some of the maps on which reliance has been placed hitherto needs to be used with caution. It has been argued that *Fifae Vicecomitatus*, like *Fifae Occidentalis* and *Fifae Orientalis*, must date from before 1642 (Stone 1981:18; 1970:17), as Blaeu wrote to Sir John Scot in March 1642 listing the parts of Scotland for which he lacked maps (Moir & Skelton 1968:155; Moir 1973:46); as he did not list Fife it has been assumed that he already had all three Fife maps. Yet the Church and other evidence

makes it clear that the *Fifae Vicecomitatus* was not drawn until 1642, and that it was some years after that before it reached Blaeu. In 1642 Scot was actively collecting material in Fife for his 'geography carte', and James Gordon was sent to the shire in the same year to work on the project. Moreover Gordon's manuscript map for Fife survives and is dated 1642 (Cash 1907:590, no. 53), and his manuscript map of Kinross is dated even more precisely; 'Keanrosseshyre descrybed Oct. 25 1642. Be James Gordon at Keanrosse' (*op. cit.*: no. 52).⁶ However James Gordon did not send the map to Blaeu until 1645. On 2 September of that year Sir John Scot (then visiting the Netherlands) reported that a privateer from Dunkirk had captured the ship carrying the map, and undertook to try to retrieve the map from the privateer's captain, though he held out little hope of success. 'You did wysly' he wrote to Robert Gordon, 'that caused your son keip a doubill of it vtherways all had been gone', and he urged that James 'drau it over agane, that it may be ioned [joined] with the rest' (*Spald. Misc* 1:52). Blaeu asserts the Scot succeeded in recovering the map from the privateers, but this seems unlikely and therefore James Gordon probably did 'draw it over again' as Scot had urged.

Why did James Gordon produce his map of Fife in 1642 though Blaeu had not requested such a map? The explanation appears to be that Blaeu had by 1642 two maps of Fife, *Fifae Occidentalis* and *Fifae Orientalis*, based on the work of Pont.⁷ He was content with them, and therefore did not include Fife among the areas for which he lacked coverage. But Robert Gordon and Sir John Scot evidently believed that these two maps did not do justice to the latter's native shire, and Scot therefore arranged that James Gordon should provide a replacement.⁸ James did so, drafting a map greatly superior to the other two,⁹ and this was sent to Blaeu. The obvious thing for Blaeu to have done would have been to scrap the two Pont maps and publish James Gordon's; but instead he published all three. Perhaps the reason for this absurdity was that he had already had the Pont maps engraved and was reluctant to waste the plates!

The history of *Fifae Vicecomitatus* (the best documented of all the Scottish maps in the *Atlas*) indicates that the assumption that Scot and the Gordons were (at least by the 1640s) solely concerned with filling gaps in the coverage of the maps which Blaeu had already accepted, is invalid. They were also endeavouring to produce replacements for maps which Blaeu was content with, but which they considered to be inadequate. The case of Nithsdale provides further evidence of this. The *Atlas* map *Nithia Vicecomitatus* is attributed to Pont, and is taken from Pont's work without any discernible intervention by the Gordons. Yet there exists a manuscript map of Nithsdale by Robert Gordon, dated May 1644 and based (as Gordon himself states) on Pont's work, though Blaeu had not asked for further work to be done on the area and Gordon's map is in fact inferior to Pont's (Cash 1907:591, no. 62; Stone 1968: 160-71). Stirling provides a rather similar case. The map *Sterlingensis* in the *Atlas* is attributed to Pont, and it has been demonstrated that it is in fact a map drafted by

Robert Gordon but based entirely on information derived from Pont. Blaeu evidently had this map by 1642 as he did not list the shire as an area for which he lacked coverage (Stone 1981:18). Yet, as the General Assembly records indicate, James Gordon undertook to map the shire in 1647, presumably hoping to improve on Blaeu's map, but either the new map was never completed or, if it was, Blaeu refused to accept an unnecessary additional map at so late a stage in his project.

Certainly it must have seemed to Blaeu that his Scottish collaborators lacked any clear understanding of priorities. They provided him with a map of Fife, and may have sought to provide him with maps of Nithsdale and Stirling, which he had not asked for; meanwhile they failed to provide maps to fill in some of the gaps in the coverage of the maps he already had. One of these gaps was the shire of Angus, and here at least there is evidence of good intentions on the part of the Gordons. Early in 1647 James Gordon completed his great plan of Edinburgh and was paid for it (*Edin. Recs*: 116). His intention, it seems, was to proceed to map Angus: the nobility of the shire had sent for him 'to descryve' it (*Spald. Misc* 1:55). That here 'describe' means 'map' is made clear by a letter of Scot to Robert Gordon on 2 February 1648. Scot related that the earl of Southesk intended to send for James Gordon in the spring to map Angus, adding tartly that James 'aught in reason so to doe seeing the lost M Timothies [Pont's] mapp and I hope ye will be a councellor of him to come that the work may be the soner perfected and brought to a wished end and not be left defective in the want of so good a shyre' (*op. cit*: 53).¹⁰ Thus Gordon's attempt to map Angus had evidently begun with his borrowing Pont's map of the shire from his father and then losing it! He failed to make good the results of his carelessness, and the *Atlas* therefore appeared with a description of Angus (Blaeu 1654:84; Stone 1971:2 & map 3), but no map.

The collaboration of Sir John Scot and the Gordons in revising Timothy Pont's maps and providing new ones for Blaeu's *Atlas* has usually been told as a success story. But it has been demonstrated recently that their limited contribution has often been greatly exaggerated. Of the forty-six regional maps in the Scottish section of the *Atlas* thirty-one were engraved directly from Pont's manuscripts; eleven represent Robert Gordon's editing of Pont's manuscripts, either with no additions at all or relatively minor ones. Thus Dr Stone concluded, only four out of the forty-six regional maps can be attributed to the Gordons. *Fifae Vicecomitatus* is the work of James Gordon; *Aberdonia & Banfia* is by Robert Gordon; and *Fifae Occidentalis* and *Fifae Orientalis* are 'possibly' also Robert's work (Stone 1981:18-19). In fact the latter two maps are also based on Pont, so all the efforts of Scot and the Gordons produced only two totally new regional maps for the *Atlas* out of forty-six—though a number of the other maps were edited by Robert Gordon from Pont's manuscripts. The *Atlas* would be poorer without the Gordons' contribution, but the great majority of the maps would probably have been published from Pont's manuscripts even without their intervention. Robert Gordon's years of work produced surprisingly little so far as the

published maps are concerned. Some of the reasons for this have been noted by Dr Stone: his advanced age; the fact that cartographic work may well have been something new to Robert Gordon, his previous work having been mainly concerned with written descriptions or chorography; and the fact that latterly he was struggling to continue his work in a period of disorder and civil war (Stone 1981:14-15, 17, 21-2). To this may be added lack of clear priorities. Scot and James Gordon worked to provide Blaeu with maps the latter had not asked for, and it is clear that Robert Gordon similarly failed to give first priority to Blaeu's needs. Many of his manuscript maps (like that of Nithsdale) show him at work on areas for which Blaeu already had coverage. It may well be that he, like his son, wished to provide Blaeu with better maps, but it may also be that, having become fascinated by Pont's maps, he had wider ambitions. He had become involved in cartographic work to aid Blaeu and ensure that Scotland was well represented in the *Atlas*, but the range of his manuscripts may well indicate that he had moved on to a wider dedication to the better mapping of Scotland: helping Blaeu was an important part of this, but not the whole of it. It is true that by the time volume five of the *Atlas* was published in 1654 Robert Gordon was too old to complete many of the maps he had begun, but he clearly did not think the work on which he had been engaged was over now that the *Atlas* had appeared; had he done so his draft maps would have now become worthless. But his will, written in 1657, indicated that he regarded them as of considerable importance. He left to his son James 'all mappes, papers and descriptions, the most part writen and drawn with my hand, which condusce to the description of Scotland, and hee to bee countable therefore to the publique, but because they are all imperfect, that they be weil corrected or [before] any use [be] made of them' (Gordon 1841:I. xlix). He had been engaged in a project of national importance supported by both Church and State, and therefore the manuscript maps were in a sense public property entrusted to him. In the event James Gordon evidently did no further work on his father's maps, though he made them available to Sir Robert Sibbald when the latter was planning a Scottish atlas (Moir 1973:51).

Apart from sponsoring a single map, *Fifae Vicecomitatus*, by giving James Gordon permission to leave his parish to map the shire in 1642, the Kirk's support for the *Atlas* project had little or no practical effect on the maps which were ultimately published. Only a few of the written descriptions accompanying the maps resulted from the General Assembly's efforts to get all ministers to provide parish descriptions. Yet, disappointing as this seems, it can at least be said that the Kirk's efforts had some visible effect on the *Atlas*, which is more than can be said for the efforts of the King and the Covenanting State. Moreover though *Fifae Vicecomitatus* is only one map, it is the most accurate in the Scottish section of the *Atlas*. James Gordon was a better cartographer than his father, and it is unfortunate that his responsibilities as a parish minister prevented him from making a greater contribution to the *Atlas* than he did. But the Kirk can hardly be blamed for this, and indeed without its sanction

(and presumably the co-operation of his colleagues in the Presbytery of Strathbogie who conducted services during his absence) he would not have had a chance to demonstrate his cartographic skills at all.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am most grateful to Dr Jeffrey C. Stone for his criticism of an earlier draft of this article: I owe several of the references below to him.

NOTES

- 1 Two items not previously noted relating to State support for Gordon are: (i) An order of 18 May 1649 by Colonel Robert Montgomery, ordering his officers and men to respect Parliament's order of 9 February exempting Gordon from taxes *etc.* (N.L.S. MS. 109: folio 2). (ii). A letter of 22 July 1651 from Gordon to the Marquis of Argyll thanking him for past favours—'many and great kyndnesses'—and asking him 'to favour a business I have to petition the estates for'. Gordon refers to himself as Argyll's 'humble and bownd servitor' (*op. cit.* folio 4). It is not certain that the favours referred to relate to Gordon's mapping activities, but this seems likely, raising the possibility that the great Argyll lay behind the Covenanting State's support for Gordon's work.
- 2 See also captions on three of the manuscript maps, Cash 1907:586 no. 25; 590, no. 52; 591, no. 62.
- 3 The text printed in *Fife Synod*: 131 is wrongly dated 5 April.
- 4 The text printed in *Fife Synod*: 133 is wrongly dated 4 October.
- 5 Blacu in 'Lectori salutem' says only four ministers did their duty by providing descriptions—M'Clellan, Bonar, William Spang, and 'Lauder'. Lauder has not been identified, and his and Spang's contributions to the Atlas are unknown. Blacu has overlooked Forbes' contribution, and ignores the fact that some ministers in Kirkcaldy Presbytery had 'done their duty' by providing parish descriptions, being evidently under the impression that ministers had been ordered to provide shire or provincial accounts.
- 6 Dr Stone informs me that this manuscript map of Kinross was not used in preparing the printed *Fifae Vicecomitatus*. James Gordon visited Sir John Scot at Pitteadie in Fife in October 1642, (Gordon 1841:1. preface pp. 32 and n. 34n).
- 7 Stone (1970:17) correctly lists *Fifae Occidentalis* and *Fifae Orientalis* as being among the five regional maps not attributed in the *Atlas* either to Pont or the Gordons; but on p. 20 the two maps are erroneously attributed to the Gordons, and Stone (1981:18) suggests that the two maps include place-names added by Robert Gordon to Pont's work. However, new work by Dr Stone proves that both maps were engraved from Pont's work without the intervention of the Gordons.
- 8 Robert Gordon has marked his own attempt to draft a map of Fife based on Pont 'Fyffe imperfect' (Cash 1907:590 no. 54A).
- 9 Analysis of distortion in the forty-six regional maps of Scotland in the *Atlas* reveals that *Fifae Vicecomitatus* is the most accurate of them all; *Fifae Orientalis* ranks twenty-second, *Fifae Occidentalis* thirty-third. The maps are all wrongly attributed to Robert Gordon, instead of James Gordon for the first, Pont for the other two (Stone & Gemmell 1977:7-11).
- 10 The grammar of Scot's letter is ambiguous (as pointed out in Cash 1901:410): it is not entirely clear whether Southesk or James Gordon lost the map. But from the context, and the fact that Gordon was the more likely to have had custody of Pont's map, it seems highly probable that he was the culprit.

REFERENCES

Manuscripts

- S.R.O.
CH. 1/1/9 Scottish Record Office. Acts and Proceedings of the General Assemblies, 1642-6.
- S.R.O.
CH. 2/154/2 Scottish Record Office. Minutes of the Synod of Fife, 1639-57.
- N.L.S.
MS. 109 National Library of Scotland. Carmichael and Gordon Papers.

Printed Works

- ABDN. LETTS.
1952 *Aberdeen Council Letters* III, ed. L. B. Taylor. London.
- APS
1870 *The Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland*, edd T. Thomson and C. Innes. Vol. VI. i (1643-7). Edinburgh.
- BAILLIE. R.
1841-2 *Letters and Journals*. 3 vols. Bannatyne Club, Edinburgh.
- BLAEU. J.
1645 *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, sive Atlas Novus*. Pars Quinta. Amsterdam.
- CASH. C. G.
1901 'The First Topographical Survey of Scotland'. *Scottish Geographical Magazine* XVII: 339-414.
1907 'Manuscript Maps by Pont, the Gordons, and Adair, in the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh'. *Scottish Geographical Magazine* XXIII: 574-92.
- COMS. OF G. A.
1892 *The Records of the Commissions of the General Assemblies . . . 1646 and 1647*. ed. A. F. Mitchell and J. Christie. Scottish History Society, Edinburgh.
- EDIN. RECS.
1938 *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh, 1642-55*, ed. M. Wood. Edinburgh.
- FASTI
1915-50 *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, ed. H. Scott. 8 vols. Edinburgh.
- FIFE SYNOD
1837 *Selections from the Minutes of the Synod of Fife*. Abbotsford Club, Edinburgh.
- GORDON. J.
1841 *History of Scots Affairs*. 3 vols. Spalding Club, Aberdeen.
1842 *Aberdoniae Utriusque Descriptio. A Description of Both Towns of Aberdeen*. Spalding Club, Aberdeen.
- KIRKCALDIE PRES.
1900 *The Presbytrie Booke of Kirkcaldie*, ed. W. Stevenson. Kirkcaldy.
- MACFARLANE. W.
1906-8 *Geographical Collections relating to Scotland*. 3 vols. Scottish History Society, Edinburgh.
- MOIR. D. G.
1973 'A History of Scottish Maps', in *The Early Maps of Scotland* 3rd. edn. Royal Scottish Geographical Society, pp. 1-156.
- MOIR. D. G., & SKELTON. R. A.
1968 'New Light on the First Atlas of Scotland'. *Scottish Geographical Magazine* LXXXIV: 148-59.

OED

Oxford English Dictionary. Oxford.

RECORDS OF G. A.

1838

Records of the Kirk of Scotland, containing the Acts and Proceedings of the General Assemblies. Edinburgh.

ST. A. & CUPAR PRES.

1837

Selections from the Minutes of the Presbyteries of St Andrews and Cupar. Abbotsford Club, Edinburgh.

SNODDY, T. G.

1968

Sir John Scot, Lord Scotstarvit. His Life and Times. Edinburgh.

STONE, J. C.

1968

'An Evaluation of the "Nidisdaile" Map by Timothy Pont'. *Scottish Geographical Magazine* LXXXIV: 160-71.

1970

'The Preparation of the Blaeu Maps of Scotland: a further Assessment'. *Scottish Geographical Magazine* LXXXVI: 16-24.

1971

A Locational Guide to the Pont, Gordon and Blaeu Maps of Scotland. O'Dell Memorial Monographs, no. 3. Aberdeen.

1981

'Robert Gordon of Straloch: Cartographer or Chorographer?' *Northern Scotland* IV: 7-22.

STONE, J. C. & GEMMELL, A. M. D

1977

'An Experiment in the Comparative Analysis of Distortion on Historical Maps'. *Cartographic Journal* (June): 7-11.

SPALD. MISC

1841

'The Straloch Papers'. *Miscellany of the Spalding Club* 1: 1-58.