

Scottish Merchants in Poland 1550–1750¹

Poland, for the purposes of this study is taken to be metropolitan Poland, that is the areas of the kingdom with Polish speaking people. In the west this area was bordered by the Mark of Brandenburg; in the south-west and south by Habsburg lands; in the south-east by the Ottoman Empire and in the east by Lithuania which did not become united to Poland until the Union Of Lublin in 1596. This study also generally excludes Danzig which, although under the Polish king, was a free city largely inhabited by Germanic peoples. Although this study is concerned with the period *circa* 1550–1750 it must not be presumed that there were no Scots in Poland before this. The Scots had had trading relations with Poland at least two centuries prior to this and it may reasonably be assumed, although there is no surviving documentary evidence to support this assumption, that once these relations were established Scots, in the form of factors and merchants, went to Poland to advance the trade.²

By the middle of the fifteenth century there are records of Scots living in Danzig and of some being granted trading privileges in the city and in the surrounding districts.³ Scots were also beginning to settle in Poland proper although the evidence is very scant and it is extremely difficult to establish location or numbers. It is in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that there is a great increase in Scots emigration to Poland, increases which T. Fischer described as making 'Poland the America of those days'.⁴ The emigrations were large by sixteenth and early seventeenth century standards and Fynes Moryson, writing in 1617, stated that the Scots 'flocke in great numbers into Poland'.⁵ All contemporary writers seem to be in agreement with Moryson, and Lithgow writing a few years later described Poland 'to be a Mother and Nurse, for the youth and younglings of Scotland, who are yearly sent

¹ An earlier version of this paper was presented to the Society in July 1994. I am grateful for the many thoughtful comments given to me by members. I am especially grateful for those given by Dr Elizabeth Bonner.

² A.I. Dunlop, *The Scot Abroad in the Fifteenth Century*, Historical Association Pamphlet 124 (London, 1942).

³ T.A Fischer, *The Scots in Eastern and Western Prussia* (hereafter *Scots in Prussia*) (Edinburgh, 1903), p. 10.

⁴ T.A. Fischer, *The Scots in Germany* (hereafter *Scots in Germany*) (Edinburgh, 1902), p. 31.

⁵ F. Moryson, *An Itinerary Containing his Ten Yeers Travell Through the Twelve Dominions of Germany, Bolmerland, Switzerland, Netherlands, Denmark, Poland, Italy, Turkey, France, England, Scotland and Ireland* (hereafter, *Itinerary*) Vol. III (London, 1617), p. 155.

hither in great numbers ... in clothing, feeding and enriching them with the fatnesse of her best things'.⁶

Lithgow then stated that there were thirty thousand Scottish families in Poland at the time of his travels. This figure is accepted by the Englishman Chamberlain who wrote, 'there are about thirty thousand Scots in Poland'.⁷ Other evidence of the vastness of the emigration came from the House of Commons, when during a debate in 1606 discussing full union with Scotland one speaker declared 'if we admit them our liberties we shall be overrun with them ... witness the multiplication of the Scots in Polonia'.⁸ Most of the Scots who went to Poland came from the East of Scotland from at least 140 localities and most of the ships left from Aberdeen although Dundee was also important and there was some migration from the Fife ports.⁹ The burgh records contain many references to the emigration at this time. The Edinburgh Records of May 1588 note that six Polish 'Cramers' (Scottish pedlars going to Poland) 'were leaving on the ship *Dysart* bound for Konigsburg'.¹⁰ In 1607 the Dunfermline Burgh Records make reference to a man 'now travelled be way of merchandise in the kingdome Of Poll.' Most emigrants sailed for either Danzig or Konigsburg and then made their way to their place of business in Poland. This could have been one of the larger cities or more probably, due to the peddling nature of their trade, to a smaller town or village. The presence of Scottish merchants has been found in 420 localities in present-day Poland.¹¹

Not all the Scots migrating to Poland were merchants or pedlars; some, like many of those to Scandinavia and Russia went as soldiers. An account of the mercenary's life in Poland is, however, almost impossible due partly to the mobility involved in his work and due also to the loss of most of the records concerned with him. For these reasons this study concerns itself almost exclusively with the merchants. Most of the Scots travelling to Poland wished to return to Scotland and certainly many must have done so for, despite the large numbers

⁶ W. Lithgow, *The Totall Discourse of the Rare Adventures and Painfull Perigrinations of Long Nineteene Years Travayles, from Scotland, to the Most Famous Kingdomes in Europe, Asia, and Africa* (hereafter, *Totall Discourse*) (Edinburgh, 1632), p. 432.

⁷ Fischer, *Scots in Germany*, p. 34.

⁸ *Journal of the House of Commons 1547-1628* (London, 1803), p. 332.

⁹ D. Bieganska, A note on the Scots in Poland 1550-1800 in T. C. Smout (ed) *Scotland and Europe* (Edinburgh, 1986), p. 157.

¹⁰ 'Extracts from the Burgh of Edinburgh', in W. Tomaszewski, *The University of Edinburgh and Poland: an Historical Review* (Edinburgh, 1968), p. 12.

¹¹ Bieganska, *Scots in Poland*, p. 157.

emigrating, the Scots left little mark on the town populations. Those who remained for life and who bought up their children in Poland managed to retain their Scottish identity only for a short time. By the middle of the seventeenth century the Scots were beginning to fuse with the native population. By 1700 Polish was more widespread than English amongst the merchants and by 1750 the Scots as an independent national grouping had disappeared with only their names surviving as evidence of the family of origin.

The reasons for the Scots migration to Poland in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries are many and to understand why the Scots migrated at all it is necessary to take a quiet look at Scottish society as it prevailed at this time. The second half of the sixteenth century was the time of the Reformation in Scotland. Although this was not an outstandingly bloody period in Scottish history there was still discontent amongst those who did not join the new church. The Americas were not yet open to colonisation and as Scotland had traditional trading and cultural links with Europe many Scots migrated there. Religion was, therefore, an important factor in this migration but too much should not be made of it for a large number of Scots going to Poland were Protestants and continued to practise their religion there.¹²

Scotland in the late sixteenth century practised primogeniture and thus younger sons, deprived of a living on the land, were forced into military service, trade or commerce. Many of these may have gone abroad. The Scots too had a love of adventure, a wander lust, and it is perhaps this that made them leave their native land. At this time there was also a surplus supply of labour in Scotland and the evidence suggests that the population was rising. L. von Weddel writing in the 1580's observed that the Scots 'have children without number' and though nothing approaching national statistics are available it has been calculated that between 1560 and the 1600's the population of Aberdeen, from where many of the Scots migrated, rose by about thirty percent.¹³ Coupled with the rising population was the sluggish nature of the Scottish economy at this time. Industry was only just beginning to develop and could not absorb the growing population. The surplus

¹² *Ibid*, p. 157.

¹³ S.G.E. Lythe, *The Economy of Scotland in its European Setting 1550-1625* (Edinburgh, 1960), p. 29.

supply of labour remained and it is small wonder that many saw migration as being a solution.¹⁴

While all the above are important the most probable explanation for the migration was the poverty and acute food shortages at home. Domestic harvest failures were common at this time recurring every few years. With the shortages went extreme poverty and it is this that Fynes Moryson saw as the main reason for Scots migration:

And in these kingdomes [Poland] they lived at this time in great multitude, rather for the poverty of their own kingdome than for any traffictee exercised there.¹⁵

Why then was Poland chosen? The reasons again are many and complex with no single one answering the question. One of the main reasons for Poland being chosen must have been the lack of other places to go. England until 1603 offered small scope to the Scottish merchant. Holland and France had their own merchant class. The former already had a large contingent of Scottish merchants and the latter was engaged in religious conflict and so the Scots had to look elsewhere. The Empire and Prussia were possible but the experience of Scots who had travelled there in earlier years showed that the Scots would not get a friendly reception from the jealous German merchants. The only other possible country in Northern Europe for migration was Poland and it held many attractions to the Scottish traveller.

The sheer size of the country was an obvious attraction. It was, at this time, the largest country in Europe and it had a low population density. There was room for the Scots and Lithgow must have voiced the opinion of many migrating Scots when he wrote, 'Poland is a large and mighty kingdome'.¹⁶ The religious toleration in Poland after the Confederation Of Warsaw in 1573 meant that Poland appealed to Protestants as well as Catholics.¹⁷ Other European countries, including France, were fighting or preparing to fight religious wars, and the peaceful nature of the Polish Reformation and Counter Reformation must have appealed to Scots of all denominations. The degree of toleration must not, however, be overemphasised for as the Catholic

¹⁴ E.G. Macdonald, 'A History of Commercial Relations between Scotland and Poland from 1500 to 1750', (Unpublished M. Libb thesis, Strathclyde University, 1970).

¹⁵ Moryson, *Itinerary*, Vol. III, p. 155.

¹⁶ Lithgow, *Total Discourse*, p. 432.

¹⁷ N. Davies, *Gods Playground: A History of Poland*, 2 Vols (Cambridge, 1982), Vol. I, p. 160.

Church became stronger the Scots and other Protestant traders were often put at trading disadvantages. The jealous merchants used religion to try and drive out the Scottish competition and in many cases, for example Poznan in 1630, religious tests were made before merchants were given the authority to trade.

The demand for foreign articles must have been another reason for the Scots choosing Poland. Fynes Moryson noted that while travelling in Poland 'Poland aboundeth ... with necessary commodities, and the people live content with their owne; yet they are not rich, because they want [lack] forraigne commodities farre bought and so deare'.¹⁸ The Scots could provide these goods through their contacts with the foreign communities in the towns and in the Baltic ports. The Scots also fulfilled a social need in Poland although many were despised for doing so. The Polish rural state was wholly military and there were only two classes of laymen: nobles and peasants.¹⁹ The bulk of the trading was done by Jews and foreigners, but merchants were not common and hence there was not much competition. There was room for a new class of merchant and while many commoners welcomed them 'the bulk of the nation looked on them as strangers and despised them as merchants'.²⁰ All forms of trade were despised by the Polish nobility but to the Scot trading was accepted as a way of life, and they helped to create a merchant class, so vital to a nation's economic development. The reasons why the Scots left home in the first place and why they decided to go to Poland were many. The Scots went in great numbers and after a few years many had given up the peripatetic nature of their trade to settle down in one of the larger towns, or to become a merchant of great importance following the Royal Court and equipping the army.

It seems reasonable to suppose that the vast majority of the Scots migrating to Poland were poor with little or no capital to begin trading. Many were youths of only sixteen or seventeen years of age. These Scots generally became pedlars moving around the country selling their goods in villages or small towns. There were also numbers of itinerant tradesmen such as weavers, cutlers and shoemakers. Due to their mobility and the resultant scantiness of documentary evidence a continuous historical sketch of their life in Poland is impossible. Most

¹⁸ Moryson, *Itinerary*, Vol. III, p. 155.

¹⁹ Davies, *History of Poland*, Vol. I, p. 202.

²⁰ B. Baskerville, 'Introduction to the Scottish Brotherhood in Lublin', A.F. Stuart (ed.), *Papers Relating to the Scots in Poland* (hereafter, 'Scottish Brotherhood'), Scottish History Society, Vol. LIX (Edinburgh, 1915), p. 109.

of the available evidence relates to the grievances against them but there is enough to give a brief account of their lives. The pedlars travelled through Poland on foot or on horse and carried with them a wide variety of goods. Most of his goods were made of cloth: woollen goods (called 'Scottish') and decorated linen kerchiefs. They also carried with them some metal wares, largely domestic utensils made from tin and iron. Fischer wrote that 'the Scottish Pedlar was well received by the country folk, who living many miles away from any town were glad to have the shop brought to their door'. This statement does show that the Scots served a useful function and it is possible that the old Prussian proverb, 'Warte bis der *Schotte* komt'²¹ (wait until the Scot comes) also had a Polish equivalent.

Not all the pedlars spent all the year moving round the country selling their goods to country peasants and in villages. Others preferred a more settled way of life setting up small booths in towns (*Institutae Scotomem*) and by following the major fairs from town to town. These pedlars were probably more prosperous than the 'country' pedlars but most of them were still very poor. Their lot did not seem to improve over time. By 1651, almost thirty years having passed since the major migrations ended, the exiled Charles II of Britain appealed for financial help from Britons abroad to help him live in the style to which he was accustomed and to help him win back his throne. The Polish Diet agreed to impose a ten percent levy on all Britons but the Polish king, John Casimir, Jan Kazimierz, (1648-1668) intervened saying the pedlars were too poor and that it would be very disreputable to send such a trifling sum as a contribution.²²

The lives of the pedlars must have been difficult and full of dangers. They had to face a very long and cold winter. Spring brought little improvement for melting snow flooded the already poor roads. Their livelihood, and indeed their lives, were also threatened by a high rate of highway robbery and violence and a danger from wild animals such as bears, wolves and wild boars. Even in the towns the pedlars were not safe for often an over zealous bailiff could confiscate their goods for the most trivial of offences. Although these were all important the main danger threatening the livelihood of the pedlars was the hostility of other merchants and the Polish nobles which led to unfavourable laws being passed. It was the German traders who hated the Scots most. The Germans controlled much of the trade, especially in Western Poland, and they complained the Scots were selling inferior

²¹ Fischer, *East and West Prussia*, p. 18.

²² *Ibid*, p. 77.

goods, and bartering instead of using cash. Many other groups hated the Scottish pedlars and in some towns the merchants complained that the Scots were posing as cripples and blind men to raise capital to begin their peddling.²³ It is most probable that the Scots did not pay too much attention to local laws and trading customs and thus naturally incensed a large part of the community. Even the king, Sigismund III, was incensed by their lack of regard for any law and he declared

that among others there is here a large number of the Scottish nation, most of whom we are informed live licentiously, recognising neither judges nor jurisdiction nor any laws nor any superior, whence it comes that impunity being so complete, that they not only offend seriously against the laws of the Realm, but also cause great loss to our customs and revenue.²⁴

The Polish government hoped to stamp out the pedlars and 'was always ready to invent new obstacles and burdens in the free exercise of their trade'.²⁵ The first major obstacle put in their path was the decree of 1564 which taxed them on the same level as Jews and Gypsies who were, in all legal matters, second class subjects.²⁶

The *Royale Universale* passed against the Scots in 1566 was, on paper at least, a far more serious blow. This made it illegal for the Scots to roam the country when carrying out their business. They were restricted to very small areas and if the Scots had obeyed it their trade would have fallen. It appeared that many Scots ignored the law for in 1569 King Sigismund Augustus (1548-1572) introduced the 'Scot Tax'.²⁷ This imposed a tax of two florins per annum on a pedlar on horseback and one florin for a pedlar on foot. The restrictions did not stop the Scots from trading but they must have been a great inconvenience especially when the Scots were also facing restrictive laws passed for individual towns.

Nearly every town with a contingent of Scots in it petitioned the king for laws to be passed against them. The burghers were concerned that the great influx of Scottish traders would bring down prices and

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

²⁴ 'Engrossment of Privileges of the Well-born Abraham Yung, Captain of the Scots', Steuart, *Scots in Poland*, p. 5.

²⁵ Fischer, *Scots in Germany*, p. 34.

²⁶ Steuart, *Scots in Poland*, p. xii.

²⁷ Fischer, *Scots in Prussia*, p. 32.

ruin their trade. The major complaint in the big cities was that the Scots sold their goods before the fair and that as a result the established merchants could sell little at the proper time. The first town known to have petitioned the Court successfully was Poznan in 1567.²⁸ Poznan, famous for its spring fairs, obtained a decree that banished all unpropertied Scots from the town. This meant that only merchants with shops were left in the town at the time of the fair and that goods would only be sold at fixed prices. Other towns followed the example of Poznan. Bromberg, to name but one, was granted an edict checking the influx of Scots into the city. This meant there was no danger of price cutting. The decree only applied to pedlars as an exemption had been made for four Scots who were members of the guild.²⁹ Future kings reaffirmed the decrees of Sigismund Augustus. In 1594, for example, King Sigismund III (1587- 1632) decreed further restrictions on 'Jews, Scots and other vagabonds' including one at the request of the town of Keyna forbidding these groups to make large purchases of grain. The reasons for this are not altogether clear but it is possible that the Scots were buying and selling the grain at below the accepted price.

In 1629 it looked as if at last the Scots were gaining acceptance, Sigismund expunged the law of 1564 and then put the Scots on the level with other foreign merchants.³⁰ The result was less taxation and less restriction on travel. The Scots were much freer to carry on their trade where and when they wanted. This happy state of affairs did not last long for in 1635 Ladislas IV (1632-1648) passed a law which was much more severe than anything which had gone before.³¹ The Scots had to report to the authorities when they arrived in a town. They could only have one shop. River traffic was decreed to be a monopoly of the townsmen and they were forbidden to become burgesses. The last two were very serious indeed due to the dreadful state, and often the absence, of roads and the economic necessity of using the inland waterways, and the fact that the Scottish merchants were denied the right of ever achieving equality in their trade. Some towns, notably Kracow and Lublin, ignored those sections of the edict forbidding the Scots to become burgesses but most of the other parts were applied as rigorously as it is possible for a country in almost a permanent state of war. No king until Stanislaus Augustus (1697-1735) saw the need to pass or even reaffirm the old restrictions and this can be taken to mean that they were successfully applied. In 1699, however, Stanislaus

²⁸ Stuart, *Scots in Poland*, p. xiii.

²⁹ Fischer, *Scots in Germany*, p. 35.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

³¹ Fischer, *Scots in Prussia*, p. 43.

Augustus saw fit to introduce new restrictions. In these he refers to the old laws against the Scots and he further forbade that they acquire any landed or town property. This decree, although passed largely at the instigation of the town of Kozten, was probably influenced by the Jesuits, a powerful force in Poland at this time, for the decree went on to point out that the Scots were a '*religione romana_Catholica dissidentas*'.³² This decree is the last one against the Scottish pedlars for during the eighteenth century as Poland's economy and political autonomy declined³³ many Scots seem to have left trade completely. Some, especially those of the second, third and later generations, remained and fused with the local population while others returned home.

Not all the Scots merchants were treated as badly as the pedlars. Some became powerful in a local area by being on friendly terms with the nobles and other prominent officials. These merchants were generally wealthy and as well as selling goods to the nobles they lent them money and served in the capacity of a banker.³⁴ The most powerful and privileged of all the merchants were the Royal Merchants, so named because they had been given the privilege of serving and following the Court. The first Scottish merchant to be accorded this title was John Gipson who, in 1576, was granted a faculty to follow the Polish Court 'whithersoever we may proceed; and in all places whithersoever we may reside; ... without let or hindrance from anyone'.³⁵

In 1583 King Stephen Bathory (1576-1586) increased the number from one to eight, granting them liberty and immunity in recognition for their services in following the Royal Court in campaigns against Muscovy. Officials were directed 'to preserve and be careful to preserve the same Scots in possession of the foresaid licences and privileges'.³⁶ These appointments were of great importance and for life. On the death of a Royal Merchant another Scot was appointed to take his place. The merchants could open booths and shops in any town where the Diet was sitting; they could follow the Court on military campaigns and could act as purveyors to the Court in both peace and war. King Stephen Bathory thought so highly of the eight Scots that he

³² *Ibid*, p. 33.

³³ N. Davies, *History of Poland*, Vol. II, pp. 492-507.

³⁴ Steuart, *Scots in Poland*, p. xii.

³⁵ Faculty granted to John Gipson, a Scots merchant, to retail goods to the Court of his Royal Majesty', Steuart, *Scots in Poland* p. 1.

³⁶ 'Engrossment of Privileges of the Well-born Abraham Young, etc', Steuart, *Scots in Poland*, p. 5.

wrote, 'Our Court cannot be without them'.³⁷ Sigismund III reaffirmed these privileges when he moved his capital from Cracow to Warsaw in the 1620's the Scots moved with him. One of these merchants, Chalmers, became very powerful later in the sixteenth century as the king's secretary and was elected Mayor of Warsaw three times.³⁸ Sigismund thought very highly of the Scots and after his Muscovy campaign ended in 1613 he granted the Royal Merchants a further privilege by allowing them to open booths wherever they pleased.³⁹

Ladislas IV continued the tradition of privilege to the 'eight Scots merchants whose industry and diligence in supplying the Royal Court with necessities were well known ... as were also their remarkable loyalty and services'.⁴⁰ He reaffirmed all their privileges and rights and the Scots followed him in campaigns against Russia, Turkey and Sweden. The Scots must have performed their services well, for the next king, John Casimir, not only reaffirmed but actually granted further privileges to this small elitist group. He allowed them to sell foreign as well as Polish goods and more importantly exempted their money and goods from the claims of the Exchequer at their death. This was very important as often the Exchequer claimed the whole of an estate, however small, on the death of a foreigner. The eight Scots were not, as might have been expected, Catholics. They became one of the few non-Catholic groups to hold any position of privilege in Poland. Most of the senior members of the Court had been educated in Jesuit schools and universities and so held anti-Protestant views. It is surely reflection of the excellence of their service that their privileges were not taken away. King Michael Wisniowiecki (1669-1673) probably came under Jesuit pressure to end the privilege for in a decree of 1669 he said the privileges would stay despite the fact that the Scots were dissidents.⁴¹

Jan Sobieski (1674-1696) is the last known king to grant privileges to the merchants. After his death there is virtually no evidence pertaining to the merchants. The only remaining evidence is an inventory of goods made at the death of one of them in 1702. It is possible that these eight, like so many others, came to regard

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. xiii.

³⁸ Baskerville, 'Scottish Brotherhood', p. 118.

³⁹ 'Faculty to Trade granted to certain Scots within the Realm', Steuart, *Scots in Poland*, p. 8.

⁴⁰ 'Approbation by King John the Third at Cracow on 20th February 1676 of the confirmation of the privileges and rights belonging to the Eight Scots Merchants attached to the Court', Steuart, *Scots in Poland*, p. 14.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

themselves as Polish and not Scots. It is possible that with the rapid decline of Poland that set in with the death of Sobieski it was no longer profitable for them to follow the court or no longer profitable for the Court to be served by a privileged group. The new king, Stanislas Augustus, may have brought merchants from his native Saxony to serve him or he may have opened up Court trade to all established merchants. We do not know. The merchants had, in sharp contrast to the Scottish pedlars, enjoyed positions of power and privilege. They were very proud of their position and looked down on the pedlars, doing nothing to prevent the decrees being passed against them by the same kings who were granting Royal Merchants new privileges.

Although the Royal Merchants were the most privileged of the Scottish merchants not all those outside this select group suffered the restrictions imposed on the pedlars. The remaining merchants were largely town merchants and throughout the period they struggled for equality with the locals and tried to become burghers in their place of residence. Kracow was one such town where these merchants lived and here the records of people being granted citizenship⁴² have been preserved. The records show that between 1576 and 1650 over eighty Scottish merchants were granted citizenship.⁴³ There were probably more Scots in Kracow than were granted citizenship for Lithgow writes 'being arrived in Crock or Cracovia, the capital City of Poland ... I met with diverse Scottish merchants'.⁴⁴

Other evidence to support the idea of a greater number than were granted citizenship comes from Sir John Skene's *De Verberum Significatione*, published in 1569 which stated he had seen a great many Scots in Cracow.⁴⁵ In 1576, possibly because of their numbers, or possibly because of native hostility, the Scots had a district in Cracow set aside for them. The allocation of a separate district for foreign

⁴² The terms citizen and citizenship are used a number of times in this paper. I am using it in its widest meaning of the term and in no way implying that the concept of 'citizenship' as used in the Polish towns of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is the same as it is in the Western World of the twentieth century. Other terms such as freedom of the city and membership of the guild have been suggested, but these do not seem to indicate the sense of acceptance that the term 'granting of citizenship' implies. *Both editors reserve the right to disagree with this concept and agree with the usual view among Early Modern European Historians that the term 'citizen' cannot be applied before the French Revolution (1789). Before that time the peoples of Europe were considered as 'subjects' of their king, prince or emperor.*

⁴³ Records of those Scots granted Citizenship in Cracow', Steuart, *Scots in Poland*, pp. 39-58.

⁴⁴ Lithgow, *Total Discourse*, p. 420.

⁴⁵ Fischer, *Scots in Germany*, p. 33.

merchants was not unique to Cracow as it was common practice in most medieval towns throughout Europe.

The granting of citizenship was often a lengthy process as the candidate had to prove the legitimacy of his birth. This usually necessitated the obtaining of a birthbrieve from the Scot's native town. For example, and this is but one of many, when David Ledel applied for citizenship in 1592 he was given six months to obtain his birthbrieve from Brechin.⁴⁶ There are many instances of requests for birthbrieves in the Scottish burgh records of this time. When citizenship was finally granted a payment of money with a gun and gunpowder was generally paid to the city by the new citizen. The payments varied and if the applicant was the son of a burgher, as was Peter Burnett who applied in 1620, there was no charge. It is not unexpected that a son of a burgher be admitted free and indeed this was the case in most European towns at this time, including Scotland and England. Other candidates had to submit to quite strenuous conditions. In 1625 when two merchants, James Carmichael and Peter Wood became burghers 'they each had to pay the Treasury twenty Hungarian gold pieces and undertook that one or other should pay a lone gun (or musket) and marry within a year or acquire a holding'.⁴⁷

Most of the Scots applying for citizenships were merchants but in 1671 there was one notable exception. He was John Scot, a surgeon. He appears to have been welcomed by the authorities and was given citizenship quickly and without charge 'being excused in return for care and labour on behalf of the plague stricken'.⁴⁸ Among those families being granted citizenship were the Dixons whom Lithgow described as being 'men of singular note for honesty and wealth'.⁴⁹ The first Dixon to take the oath of citizenship was Thomas Dixon in 1598 and it appears that the family remained in Cracow until at least 1650. As well as having to apply formally for citizenship it appears to have been necessary formally to relinquish it. In 1622 the records state that John Munkhouse 'of his own free will resigned the citizenship conferred upon him ... having no wish to avail himself of it further'.⁵⁰ In fact he had left Cracow to carry on his trade in Danzig. The Scots in Cracow, like the Scots elsewhere in Poland began to regard themselves as Poles of Scottish ancestry rather than Scots. In 1651 when the king was

⁴⁶ 'Records of those Scots granted Citizenship in Cracow', Steuart, *Scots in Poland*, p. 50.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

⁴⁹ Lithgow, *Totall Discourse*, p. 421.

⁵⁰ 'Records of those Scots granted Citizenship in Cracow', Steuart, *Scots in Poland*, p. 53.

collecting money from the exiled Scots for the upkeep of Charles II there were objections from the Scottish merchants. One, Alexander Dixon declared, 'I was born here; I have lived in Cracow for 57 years and continue to live here ... and ought not to pay this tithe'.⁵¹ But he was forced to pay as were all the Scots and heirs of Scots. The payment put many of the Scots into financial difficulties. James Carmichael, whom we have seen being granted citizenship in 1625 was forced by Cracow to liquidate part of his estate in order to pay it. A total of £10,000 was collected for Charles in Poland, but of this only £800 reached him, the rest being embezzled by the agents who were sent to Poland to collect it.⁵² The Scottish merchants in Cracow were by no means unique. In all the towns in Poland the Scots faced similar, if not identical problems; problems which forced many of them to join together in a brotherhood which acted almost as a government and a lawmaker for them.

In the late sixteenth century there was a growing hostility towards the Scots in Poland. They were accused of leading immoral lives and of paying no attention to the laws of the land. Even James VI chided the Scots, writing, 'the princes in whose jurisdiction you live being informed by their natural subjects of maine disorders amongst you by dissolute living of an great number, who neither will dutie serve nor be subjected aime discipline'.⁵³ Complaints against them were numerous and in 1603 Sigismund III decided to subject them to a Conservator, Director and Informer ... that he may restrain them by virtue of his office ... that under the same Conservator, Director and Informer they may live honestly and piously'.⁵⁴

The man appointed to this task was Abraham Young of the 'Scotch' Regiment of the Polish army. The appointment of a Conservator to supervise merchants in a foreign land was not unique to Poland. In Holland, for example, a conservator was in charge of the Scottish Staple at Veere. This was, however, a Scottish appointment to help improve Scottish trade with Holland. In Poland it was an appointment made by the Polish crown to supervise Scottish merchants concerned with internal trade. Young found that the hostility of other merchant groups had forced the Scottish merchants into trading unions, Scottish Brotherhoods, in twelve cities of the kingdom, including Cracow, Poznan and Lublin. To investigate these further Young

⁵¹ 'Cracow Court Records', *Ibid*, p. 82.

⁵² Tomaszewski, *University of Edinburgh and Poland*, p. 5.

⁵³ 'Undated letter of King James VI', Steuart, *Scots in Poland*, p. 106.

⁵⁴ 'Engrossment of Privileges of the Well-born Abraham Young, Captain of the Scots', Steuart, *Scots in Poland*, p. 78.

established a Court of investigation in Cracow. Among the witnesses called was one, Thomas Dunkeson, who stated,

having lived here in Poland for many years, we do know that the Scots have their laws and statutes, according to which they elect four persons every year, who try them, publish decrees and punish the guilty by fines or imprisonment, lending this money to other Scots and taking usury for it.⁵⁵

Further details were given by witness, Richard Tamson from Poznan. He said that the elders held tribunals during fairs and that all appeals had to go to the Scottish diet at Torun which met at Epiphany.⁵⁶ It appears from evidence that every Scot had to join the Brotherhood on his arrival in the country but it is doubtful if the pedlars were included. The Brotherhoods also had spiritual elders and members were taxed for the building of new churches. Tamson also stated that many of the books and statutes were against the Catholic faith. Much of the punishment given by the elders was of a psychological nature with nobody being allowed to speak, eat or drink with the guilty party. The Scots hated Young's meddling in their affairs and made life very difficult for him. But he had the backing of the Polish authorities and in March 1604 Sigismund III made him chief of all Scots merchants in Poland. The merchants were forced to obey him and register their names in his book 'in order that they might be found easier, if required for the defence of the country'.⁵⁷ The Scots were now under some central control and despite various attempts to gain some independence 'the Scottish autonomy never recovered'.⁵⁸

Despite the supervision most, if not all, of the merchant brotherhoods survived for a long time after 1603. The Scottish Brotherhood at Lublin survived until 1730 and there is no reason to doubt that other brotherhoods had a similar story. Complete records of the Scottish Brotherhood at Lublin survive from 1680 until *circa* 1730 and they give an interesting insight into the organisation and working of the Merchant Brotherhoods. The Brotherhood was definitely in existence before 1680 but the earlier records have been lost. Most of the evidence concerning the Scots comes from the records of the Protestant Congregation in Lublin of which the Scots were members. The Scots

⁵⁵ 'Cracow Court Records', *Ibid*, p. 78.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p. 78.

⁵⁷ Fischer, *Scots in Germany*, p. 90.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, p. 90.

had been in Lublin in considerable numbers at least since the 1600's and Lithgow described the town as a place where he 'found abundance of gallant rich merchants, my countrymen'.⁵⁹ Further evidence to support to this is that between 1624 and 1627 there were fifteen children with Scottish names baptised in Lublin.⁶⁰ The Protestant Congregation at Lublin came into existence about 1620 and included not only Scots but English, Germans and Poles. The rules and difficulties experienced by the Protestant Congregation deserve a brief examination because it was but one of many in Poland and they played an important part in the lives of most of the Scottish town merchants in Poland.

The Congregation had many rules pertaining to Church services and the duties of the pastor and elders. The minister was bound by the rules to preach a sermon of an hour in length each Sunday and he was forbidden by the rules to make jokes during it. The strictness of the Congregation is seen in the laws relating to the elders whose duties included taking care of the hospital run by the Congregation. One rule stated that the elders had to be careful whom they admitted to the hospital 'so that the poor may be pious and the unruly be punished'.⁶¹ Before 1637 the hospital was open to all whom the elders deemed fit but in this year a new rule came into being to the effect that 'nobody who does not belong to the Augsburg Confession is to be admitted'. As well as the hospital the Scots and other members of the Congregation were entitled to other services. There was a poor fund but members receiving aid were forbidden to enter any sort of trade, 'rather may they pray zealously to God'.⁶² The Congregation also had a school although mention of this is made only once, in a letter dated 1651, and it is not known how long it survived.

The Scots were a fairly large group in the Congregation with over thirty families in January 1652. The German and Polish group combined do not seem to be much larger than this for when, in 1652, the Congregation ordered a new bell the Poles and Germans contributed 216 florins while the Scots, who were listed separately as they were still regarded as foreigners, contributed 198 florins.⁶³ Despite the hostility of the townspeople, and especially the Jesuit students, the Congregation survived until after 1730. To examine the lives of the Scottish merchants in the town during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth

⁵⁹ Lithgow, *Total Discourse*, p. 420.

⁶⁰ 'Records of the Protestant Congregation in Lublin', Steuart, *Scots in Poland*, p. 216.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, p. 246.

⁶² *Ibid*, p. 215.

⁶³ *Ibid*, p. 273.

centuries it is necessary to examine the records of the Scottish Brotherhoods of Lublin.

When the surviving records of the Brotherhood begin in 1680 they show that the funds were almost exhausted owing to unauthorised withdrawals. The members agreed to build up the funds and to limit payments for two years. To increase their funds the Brotherhood imposed a series of levies on members and those from other areas passing through Lublin.⁶⁴ If a member travelled abroad and returned home safely he was 'intreated to give liberallie to the common poore box for the assistance of the needie and poor'. On marriage the members also had to make a contribution to the poor fund so 'that God of his Infinite goodness may further prosper him in his accomplished matrimonie'.⁶⁵ Charges were imposed on Scots from other areas who were trading in Lublin and on those who were passing through. Even those Scots leaving Lublin for a 'more convenient residence' would 'be liouble to dealle bountifullie towards the poor and distressed remaining'.⁶⁶ The last of the rules states that anyone who did not obey them was to be excluded from the Brotherhood. Although the Brotherhood was Scottish it is interesting to note that among the signatures there are those of two Germans. The Scots appeared, even by 1680, to be losing some of their national identity and before long their records ceased to be written in English; it being replaced by Polish and a little German.

Despite the levies the main source of revenue for the funds were the Sunday collections. Between October 1680 and December 1681 the poor fund received almost 350 florins from the collections. Over the same period 130 florins were collected from strangers and others passing through, 15 florins from 'way-comers and sellers' and 13 florins from weddings. The fund also made 40 florins in interest for it appears that money was lent to members. The total income for the period ending December 1681 was 828 florins, being made up from the above plus legacies and the balance in hand at the beginning of the period. Expenditure over the same period was 555 florins. Much of the money spent was in the form of loans. A loan of 150 florins was made to John Chalmers, a member, at four per cent, while another loan was made to a townsman, a non-member, at fifty per cent. Other expenditure took the form of 'friendly society benefits'. The benefits, the main purpose of

⁶⁴ 'Scottish Brotherhood', Steuart, *Scots in Poland*, pp. 120-24.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

the fund, were often quite considerable. In 1680 the Brotherhood agreed to give Thomas Argyll, 'by reason of his inability'⁶⁷ the sum of 100 florins *per annum* to be paid in quarterly instalments for as long as he lived. The Brotherhood also paid for the funerals of its members and in December 1680 a payment of 46 florins was made to this end.⁶⁸

The Brotherhood in the 1680's was by all appearances a very busy organisation. Income and expenditure rose, income reaching 1650 florins in 1684. The records, unfortunately, do not show where all the money went although it is probable that it followed the same pattern as that of 1681. One item of expenditure listed must have been the cause of much annoyance amongst the Scots. A sum of 39 florins was given to the Jesuit vaults.⁶⁹ This may have been a voluntary donation to placate the Jesuits, or, much more likely, a payment made to satisfy a decree demanding a donation from each organisation in Lublin.

The late 1680's appear to have been a prosperous time for the Brotherhood. Total annual income and expenditure was usually between 1000 florins and 1500 florins with a balance of about 150 left at the end of each year. In the 1690's income and expenditure began to fall. For the three years 1697-1699 the combined total income was 2446 florins and the combined total expenditure for the three years was 2250 florins.⁷⁰ The balance of 196 florins was, however, higher than the average balance of the 1680's. The reasons for decline in both income and expenditure can only be guessed but the most probable explanations are that there was a decline in numbers or that the 1690's were not as prosperous for trade as the previous decade.

Squabbles amongst members of the Brotherhood were common although this was strictly forbidden by the rules of the Brotherhood. Fines, to be put in the poor box for 'helpe of distressed brethern',⁷¹ were the punishment. How much was collected by these fines is not known, but it is known that the elders took a serious view of quarrelling. In 1698 one of the Brotherhood, Peter Gern, quarrelled with the elders over the repair and renting of a house. To make sure the fines they imposed upon him were paid, the elders took some of his silver as security.⁷² The emphasis on friendly relations between members was

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, p. 125.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, p. 130.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, p. 143.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p. 164.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, p. 120.

⁷² *Ibid*, p. 163.

common to most Scottish groups living abroad. The Staple at Verre had similar laws perhaps, like the Brotherhood at Lublin, to maintain a united front against the hostilities of other groups.

The members of the Brotherhood suffered a great deal of religious persecution in Lublin in the late seventeenth century mainly at the hands of the Jesuits who were doing everything possible to crush Protestantism in Poland in 1687, upon pressure from the Jesuits, one Scot was sent to the tower in Cracow for 'Calvinistic doctrine damned by laws divine and human'.⁷³ The council also ordered his books to be burnt in the market place by the public hangman. It was not only the Scots who were persecuted: the Calvinist nobles and influential Polish families also suffered at this time. The Scots were also at a religious disadvantage in burials. A person could be buried according to his own rites but by decree of 1633 the Scots shared the same burial regulations as Jews.⁷⁴ When a member of the Brotherhood died the Burgomaster had to be told immediately so that he could appoint the time of the funeral. (The Scots had no say in the matter.) There could be no music or armed men in the funeral procession and two members of the Lublin council had to be in attendance to make sure the peace was kept. The Jesuit and Catholic students must have tried to disrupt the funerals in the past for they were kept under strict surveillance during the funeral to stop them causing trouble. The Brotherhood had its own burial ground near Lublin. This, and the buildings around it, seemed to have been developed by Peter Germ at a cost of nearly two thousand florins.⁷⁵ That the cemetery was also used by the Polish Protestant families of the district was a sign of the great affinity and friendship amongst all the Protestant groups living in and around Lublin.

Despite the persecution of all the Protestant groups they were allowed by Polish law to practice their religion and most had ministers.⁷⁶ The Brotherhood was no exception. The minister was either a Scot or of Scottish descent and was paid by a collection from the congregation. In 1701 the Brotherhood agreed that the minister should have an annual salary of 500 florins, of which 413 were collected from the congregation.⁷⁷ The sum of 500 florins was a considerable sum for the Brotherhood to pay especially in the early 1700's when it was going through difficult times. The income, the sign of either the prosperity or

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

⁷⁶ 'Scottish Brotherhood', Steuart, *Scots in Poland*, p. 167.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

numbers of the Brotherhood, fell to 713 florins in 1702. At a meeting of the Brotherhood in 1701 only twenty were present, although as there were probably absentees the number of Scots was probably greater than this. There is, however, a suggestion that numbers were falling. Expenditure as well as income fell, from 740 florins per annum 1697-1699, to 543 florins in 1702. The most convincing evidence of falling numbers is seen in 1702 when the minister's salary was cut from 500 florins to 400 florins.⁷⁸ This could possibly be attributed to a fall in the prosperity of the community but if this were so then the expenditure from the poor box would surely have risen.

Numbers may have been falling but the Brotherhood was as active as ever. In 1711 it was decided to build a house at Zimgrod, a village belonging to the Protestant family Stadniekis. The total expenditure of the house was 2542 florins and it put the Brotherhood in great financial difficulties. It had to borrow 800 florins from each of two members, Daniel Gregory and George Ross. Most of the income and expenditure after this date was concerned with the house although expenditure in the form of poor relief rose in 1713 and 1714 probably due to the devastation caused by the Great Northern War. In the second decade of the eighteenth century the Brotherhood underwent a great decline. At a meeting of the Brethren in 1713 to collect money for the minister's salary, only twelve families contributed. This would suggest that the Brotherhood now contained only twelve families as every family would surely contribute to the minister's salary which had shrunk to 300 florins.⁷⁹

Great changes were now taking place in the membership of the Brotherhood. Their records were now written almost entirely in Polish and by 1719 a Polish pastor was chosen to take over the church. It is probable that before this date the services were in Polish, but now it appears certain. In 1717 a man of German origin was elected to look after the poor fund and men with Polish names, Persteineusz for example, were becoming members of the Brotherhood although it is possible that these men were descended from Scottish merchants.⁸⁰

The members appeared to be very worried by the falling numbers and it is perhaps symptomatic of the worry that a meeting of the Brethren on January 31st 1724 should close with the prayer, 'May God

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 169-71.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 176-86.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 192-98.

of His holy grace bless this small Assembly and multiply it'. By 1727 the Scottish contingent of the Brotherhood had fallen to six families with even some of their names being altered. Young was changed to Jounga and Lindsay to Lendze. Foreigners now outnumbered the Scots in the Brotherhood by seven families to six. It looked as if the organisation was changing from a brotherhood of all Scots to a brotherhood of Protestants. In 1728 a meeting of the Brotherhood began with the words, 'We of the Reformed Faith,' showing that emphasis was now on faith and not on Scottish descent. In 1730 the balance of the Brotherhood was down to 20 florins and in 1731 expenditure was 20 florins more than income.⁸¹ The poor box was empty and at this point the records of the Brotherhood close. It is probable, and the trends after 1700 suggest this, that, as in the rest of Poland, the Scots became integrated with the native Protestant population; their religions more important than their ancestry.

Although most of the estates left by the Scots were very small there was usually a charitable bequest contained in them. Most of these bequests were very small and merely involved a contribution to the poor box of the nearest brotherhood of Scottish merchants. Other merchants, with larger capital, left quite considerable sums in the form of bequests. Most of these bequests took the form of educational grants. In 1688 a Scot, Daniel Davisson left a bequest for the purpose of giving young people a university education.⁸² His main idea was to obtain good theologians for the Polish Reformed Church. The students had to be from either Poland or Lithuania but he stipulated that 'those descended from Scots are to have special preference'. The bequest allowed them to go to any foreign university where Protestant theology was taught but the most popular were Edinburgh and Leyden. The fund, although set up in 1688, was not used until 1735 by which time the money had built up to a considerable sum by voluntary subscriptions from other Scottish merchants.⁸³

The fund was not, however, run in an efficient and orderly manner, and when the British Consul, Alexander Gibson, was appointed provisor in 1782 he wrote 'On my receipt of the safe, I found the same in great disorder. I tried to set the whole affair in order but in vain'.⁸⁴ Gibson found that although the bequest was made to the Synod

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 206-17.

⁸² 'Papers from the Lesno Archives', Steuart, *Scots in Poland*, p. 295.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 296.

⁸⁴ 'Letter from Alexander Gibson to the Reformed Church of Little Poland dated 1782', *Ibid.*, p. 320.

of the Reformed Church of Little Poland it was in fact being administered by the Scots in the name of Scots. The last record of the fund is in 1793 when Gibson, eleven years after his appointment, was still trying to put the funds in order, and put it on a legal footing. The most famous of the funds was that set up by Robert Brown, a merchant of Zamosc, in 1713. He left £500 sterling 'whereby the revenues thereof yearly may maintain and educate two students of Protestant religion at the College of Edinburgh'. Due largely to the bursary a number of students arrived in Edinburgh from Poland and gave their nationality at matriculation as *Polonus*. Many of them, for example James Inglis (1723), Christopher Karkettle (1723), Samuel Cran (1731), and Robert St. Clair (1744), had Scottish names. Other students arriving in Edinburgh, Wladislas Bochiwez (1726), Gabriel Binaszewski (1726), Nicodemus Bienaszewski (1739), Vencheslas Radasz (1729), Andrew Kurnatowski (1735), had Polish names. The bursary attracted other Poles to Edinburgh who arrived in hope of getting a scholarship on the spot. One such case was that of Christopher Alexander Wysonkinski who arrived in Edinburgh only to be told that the bursary had been filled. He did, however, attend the university assisted financially by the the Presbytery of Edinburgh. The fund continues to this day, but as there are no Protestant students from Poland coming to Edinburgh to study divinity, the bursary is given to a Scottish student.⁸⁵

The existence of these funds is interesting in two ways. Firstly it shows that the Scots in Poland, like the Scots at home were laying great emphasis on education. This was part of the heritage they took to Poland and it appears that even after many years in Poland they were still very proud of it. Secondly, and more importantly, the fund shows that even after 1700 when the Scots were becoming integrated with the Polish community they were still trying to maintain some ties with Scotland.

This has been a study of a small and relatively specialised alien community in a land of different language, culture and religion. Poland must have appeared a very strange place to these immigrants. They were not, as were the Scotsmen at Veere, protected by Scottish law. The merchants had to live in a variety of governmental systems which were neither sympathetic to their position as traders nor with their religion. Despite the hostility shown to most of them they did make some valuable contribution to the history of their new country.

⁸⁵ 'Letter to the City Treasurer of Edinburgh from the Elders of the Reformed Faith at Zamosc', Tomaszewski, *University of Edinburgh and Poland*, p. 27-28.

The eight Royal merchants served the king in military campaigns in Russia and in Polish Ukraine. They served the court wherever it was held and when the king moved court from Cracow to Warsaw the merchants followed, opening up shops and booths and contributing in a small way to the commercial expansion of the new capital city.

The town merchants occupy an important place in the economic history of Poland in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. This period, before the economic and political decline of the country, was one of prosperity for Poland. Larger villages were granted town charters and towns already in existence were beginning to expand. Poland had no indigenous trading class yet trade was crucial to the economic expansion of the towns, and indeed the whole country. It was by filling this gap that the Scots contributed most. Without them, and other foreign merchants, economic life in towns would have been static and town growth would have been much slower.

It is much more difficult to judge the contribution the pedlars made to Polish history. To the governing bodies they must have seemed little different from any other class of alien vagrant, at the best a nuisance, at the worst a menace to the safety of society, yet at the same time were always welcomed by the country people they served. Their main contribution to Polish economic development was that by their trading techniques they stimulated sales of goods in areas remote from the main centres of demand.

The presence of Protestant Scottish merchants was undoubtedly important in the religious history of Poland. Although the Scots were persecuted this rarely took the form of violence and they were allowed to worship in their own way. Their contribution to the Reformed Church of Poland was great and they did much to bolster its meagre numbers. Indeed it could be argued that without the Scots and the Germans the Protestant Church in Poland would have virtually disappeared. Even with their support the Reformed Church did not develop beyond being a very small body.

The Scots as a national trading group remained in Poland for about 200 years. Their lives in Poland were for the most part hard. Even the town merchants were never wholly accepted by the local people and as the majority were Protestant obstacles were continually being put across their path. Despite these difficulties the Scots did

remain; remained to play a small, but important role, in the economic development of their adopted country.

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