

The Darién Scheme

Failure and its treatment in the press

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1 INTRODUCTION

In the years 1695 to 1700 a Scottish company's attempt to establish a colony in Darién resulted in utter failure. In the eyes of at least some Scots the repercussions from this led to an even greater failure, namely the loss of Scottish independence in entering the Union with England (1707). While an absolute causal connection between the two historical events cannot necessarily be made, perceptions of course have a reality of their own. What is certainly at issue in both cases is the relationship of the Scots and the English, the loss-gains balance for both sides, (ascribed) good *vs* bad will and degrees of (mis)trust. This chapter, while providing an outline of events in section 2, deals not so much with the political and economic matters of this affair as with the reactions to it in print. The Darién Scheme was amply discussed in writing, as for example the Spencer Collection (cf. Glasgow University Library) or a search in EEBO illustrate¹, both before, while and after the main events. Focusing mainly on the pamphlets published immediately at or after the time of failure, I will look at arguments regarding why the Scottish colonial enterprise ran into trouble and at how

1 | Glasgow library links: www.gla.ac.uk/services/library/collections/virtualdisplays/collectionhighlights/spencer/ and <http://eleanor.lib.gla.ac.uk/search~S6?/fsp+coll+spencer/fsp+coll+spencer/1%2C131%2C170%2CB/browse/indexsort=->. On both EEBO and ECCO a search such as Darién or Caledonia will find a considerable amount of useful material, e.g. Darien 36 and 31 records respectively, Caledonia 29 and 85 records (not all of them immediately relevant, of course).

these were rhetorically presented. For this a discourse analytical approach will be applied, to be introduced in section 3. Before the actual analysis in section 5, we will briefly look at the expectations connected with Darién (section 4), as the degree of failure can often only be measured by the original goals.

2 AN OUTLINE OF EVENTS²

The foundation of a colony in Darién, situated on the isthmus of Panama, was the brainchild of William Paterson, a well-known Scottish projector of the time and co-founder of the Bank of England (1694), his most successful and long-lasting project.³ Inspired by his ideas the Scottish parliament created the *Company of Scotland* in 1695, giving it an extensive trading monopoly as well as the right to take possession of uninhabited territories. From 1695 to 1697 preparations for the first expedition of the company with the (supposedly secret) destination Darién were underway, including raising money, acquisition of ships and provisions, recruiting colonists. The efforts to raise money for the company early on ran into problems: after a very promising start to collecting London subscriptions the protest of English traders caused a political intervention and the collapse of London financing. This was partly the effect of the Scottish parliament, while paying attention to all formalities, having neglected to really consult King William about the Company.⁴ The hostile English reaction also led to the blocking up of financing avenues in Germany and the Netherlands. Thus, the Company had to fall back wholly on the financial resources in Scotland, a country with few resources and, moreover, economic problems at the time. Nevertheless, 400,000 pounds were raised quickly at the beginning of 1696, with subscribers representing all classes and institutions of Scottish society. In July 1698, the first expedition finally started with five ships containing 1,200 Scottish colonists (including William Paterson and family) and arrived in Darién in November 1698, a destination none

2 | The following summary of events is based on Prebble (1968) and the documents collected in Pratt Insh (1924).

3 | Another of his successful projects was Walpole's sinking fund. Cf. the contribution by Brakensiek (this volume) for more information on Early Modern projectors.

4 | Davies (1999), 671.

of the colonizers had first-hand knowledge of. Nevertheless, their view was that this was territory not in possession of any European power and that Scottish possession could be negotiated with the native inhabitants. The colonists set about constructing a settlement ('New Edinburgh') and a Fort named St. Andrew, drawing up rules for the colony and electing a kind of government. The beginning was marked by a grand declaration:

And now by Virtue of the before-mentioned Powers to us given, We do here Settle, and in the Name of GOD Establish Our Selves, and in Honour, and for the Memory of that most Ancient and Renowned Name of our Mother Kingdom, We do, and will from hence-forward call this Country by the Name of *Caledonia*: and our selves, Successors, and Associates, by the name of *Caledonians*.⁵

But in the face of inadequate and depleting provisions, lost supply and relief ships, as well as diverse adversities such as diseases, incessant rains and storms, internal quarrels, and a Spanish attack, the colony dwindled to three quarters of its original strength in the first six months. Negotiations and wished-for alliances with the native population also led to no material results, as the Scots simply did not understand the tribal dynamics in Darién.⁶ In this situation (May 1699) the colonists learned of English proclamations to all governors of English colonies in America forbidding assistance to the Scottish colonists of Darién in any way, on the grounds that King William was not informed of the scheme and that it was against the peace with his allies (the Spanish). Therefore, and because of a rumour of another Spanish attack, the colonists decided to abandon the settlement in June 1699. Ignorant of that, two more relief ships with 300 settlers left Scotland in August 1699, one of which burned within sight of Darién, the other retreated to Jamaica. Also, a full second expedition with four ships and 1,300 colonists arrived in November 1699; they rebuilt the Fort St. Andrew and waited for the Spanish attack, which ended in Scottish defeat by April 1700. English help was explicitly denied in this situation. The Scots were allowed by the Spanish to sail off with their remaining people and possessions, which due to sorry states of their ships turned out not to be

5 | Quoted in Prebble (1968), 141. The choice of the name *Caledonia* is noteworthy for the associations this old Roman term for Scotland carries (antiquity, authority, importance).

6 | Cf. Gallup-Diaz (2002), chap. 4 for a detailed account of the Darién situation.

an easy undertaking. Only one ship, the *Caledonia*, made it back to Scotland, and only one ship involved in the whole expedition was still afloat at the end of 1700 – the others had either sunk (3 ships), burnt (1), been otherwise ship-wrecked (1), been abandoned as not seaworthy (2), or lost to the Spaniards (2).⁷ Of the 3,000 would-be colonists the great majority had died one way or another, while some had ended as indentured labourers or as pirates. Most Scottish families in the lowlands had been directly affected by losing a family member in the undertaking. And many Scots were ruined following their investment in the Company's Darién scheme. The affair only reached its ultimate end seven years later, when in the context of the Union between England and Scotland the so-called *equivalent*⁸ was used to compensate losses incurred in the Darién disaster.

3 DATA AND ANALYSIS

The data to be investigated consists of pamphlets and other ephemeral texts published at the time of the Darién project, mostly in 1699 and 1700. The overall context of these texts is that of an “information revolution”,⁹ with the press playing a very important role in British society and politics at that time.¹⁰ The immediate context of the Darién texts was an ongoing public/press discourse on the (nature of) the British union.¹¹ In this situation, pamphlets and other fairly short publications, which could be produced quickly, were the major means of creating and influencing public opinion. Political discussion typically found its outlet in pamphlets, which were seen as appropriate in both length and text type to develop a line of

7 | The colonial failure is thus strikingly embodied by shipwreck, which provides a link to the German etymological conception of *Scheitern* as literally breaking into its wooden bits, as described in the contribution by Wesche (this volume), although the relevant English words have another history (cf. the introduction).

8 | Article XV of the Act of Union: “It is agreed that Scotland shall have an equivalent for what [her] subjects shall be charged towards payment of the debts of England [...] the sum of three hundred ninety-eight thousand and eighty-five pounds ten shillings.”

9 | Smith (1994), 1.

10 | Alston (1981), 333 and Sommerville (1996), 163.

11 | Bowie (2007), 67.

argument and to interact with opposing views.¹² Pamphlets thus were often very specialised in content, focused on current affairs, directed at very specific other texts and their authors as well as written with fairly specific audiences in mind.

The Darién pamphlets are of exactly this type. Most of them are (very) long argumentative, even polemical pamphlets, but some of them are also rhymed pieces like praise poems or ballads (the texts used here are listed in the appendix). The authors fall into two camps: the pro-Scottish group defending the undertaking and finding face-saving justifications for its failure (or still trying to avert failure) *vs.* the anti-Scottish faction attacking and blaming the Scots for their incompetence. Anti-Scottish in this particular case equals (pro-)English, as the constitutional set-up (one monarch, but two states on the British island) and geopolitical situation led to conflicting English and Scottish interests. Thus, for both sides in this ‘pamphlet war’ it is to a certain extent a question of an *us vs. them* situation,¹³ visible also in some of the author pseudonyms chosen (*Philo-Caledon*, *Phil.Scots vs. Philo-Britan*). A (critical) discourse-analytic approach to these texts is thus suitable, which, according to van Dijk, “aims to show how the cognitive, social, historical, cultural, or political contexts of language use and communication impinge on the contents, meanings, structures or strategies of text”.¹⁴ In this approach, texts are seen to both embody and construct (or construe) beliefs and ideologies¹⁵ – here the Scottish world-view, as this will be the focus in this paper. The particular perspective shaping the text is visible through the choices made by the author (which need not and will not all be conscious ones), such as:

- which (type of) arguments are chosen, i.e. what is presented as ‘fact’, as an appropriate representation of reality;

12 | Sommerville (1996), 122 and Ahrens (1991), 21.

13 | Cf. Bös (this volume) for another instantiation of this common antagonistic set-up.

14 | Van Dijk (1991), 45. For another example of historical discourse analysis, also involving Scottish and English relations, cf. Prentice/Hardie (2009).

15 | “Discourses are semiotic ways of construing aspects of the world (physical, social or mental) which can generally be identified with different positions or perspectives of different groups of social actors.” Cf. Fairclough (2009), 232.

- which lexico-semantic selections are found that imply or enforce certain conclusions (modern examples are *freedom fighters vs. terrorists*, metaphors like *axis of evil* with its moral/religious implications).

Here, it will be especially of interest how such choices construe the English and the Scottish and their respective actions. Given the nature of the textual basis (namely pdfs) the analysis will mostly be of a qualitative and exemplary kind. As has been found, however, it is often not simply individual uses that have an impact, but larger patterns of (co)occurrences and frequencies in texts (versus those in other texts), cf. corpus-assisted discourse studies.¹⁶ As one of the Darién texts also exists in a digitised and searchable format (in the *Lampeter Corpus*), this approach will also be made use of to a certain extent.

3.1 Previous research

The writings on Darién have not received much attention from the linguistic side. Two papers by Marina Dossena¹⁷ treat specific linguistic features contributing to the argumentation in various pamphlets in some detail, thereby also showing the interpersonal and involved features of these texts. These features are modal verbs of necessity/obligation and of certainty/doubt, the use of Latin, the quotation of proverbs, biblical metaphors, the switch to colloquial language and in general verbal aggression. She shows how insults are directed both at individuals (e.g. Harris, one of the pamphlet authors and a participant in the Darién expedition: a *Monster*) and groups (e.g. Highlanders as the only ones to eat food not even fit for dogs), with the authors frequently slipping into colloquial or dialectal language at such points (e.g. Paterson described as tasting *the Creature*, a Scotticism for whiskey).¹⁸ Biblical (or generally religious) allusions, references and imagery are used to lend greater strength and authority to arguments. Thus, the situation in the New World is couched in religious

16 | Cf. Partington (2008).

17 | Dossena (2003) and Dossena (2006).

18 | It needs to be said that such impoliteness is not specific to these pamphlets. Interactions in early modern England, roughly before the middle of the 18th century, are marked by greater directness, higher emotive involvement (in writing), and impolite, even rude behaviour, cf. for example Claridge (2000) and Bös (2007).

metaphors in the following passage, inviting the English to join the Scots in challenging the Spanish “antichrist”.

for we have as good reason to look upon the Spanish Mines in the West-Indies to be Antichrist’s Pouch, by which he maintains his War against the Church, as the old Taborites had to call the Silver Mines in Bohemia by that Name. It is certainly the surest Method of destroying Antichrist, to seize his Purse; for if he once be depriv’d of Judas’s Bag, he will quickly drop St. Peter’s Keys. It’s by the Charms of her Gold that the Babylonish Whore hath made the whole World to wonder after her, and the Kings of the Earth to be drunk with the Cup of her Fornication. (Defence, 1)¹⁹

Similarly to religious content, also the use of Latin lends credibility and authority to the points made by an author. Respected ancient and modern authors, such as Cicero, Seneca, and Puffendorf, are quoted and then translated for the benefit of a wider audience. Some foreign material is proverbial (e.g. *sed quos deus or Jupiter perdere vult eos dementat*), and like the native proverbs (e.g. *save a rogue from the gallows he shall be the first that will cut your throat*) also employed, activates common and readily accepted knowledge in the minds of readers, therefore involving them more deeply in the argumentation. Other means of involving and convincing the reader are the use of questions, the use of reader-inclusive *we* and direct reader address (*you*). The greater frequency of possibility and prediction modals highlight the type of argumentation used, namely discussing likely or unlikely outcomes if certain routes are (not) taken.

Further strategies employed in these pamphlets will be illustrated below (section 5).

19 | Original texts are quoted by a short-title reference, indicated in the listing of texts in the References section.

4 GREAT EXPECTATIONS

The time and expense of navigation to China, Japan, the Spice Islands, and the far greatest part of the East Indies will be lessened more than half, and the consumption of European commodities and manufactories will soon be more than doubled. Trade will increase trade, and money will beget money, and the trading world shall need no more to want work for their hands, but will rather want hands for their work. Thus, this door of the seas, and the key of the universe, with anything of a sort of reasonable management, will of course enable its proprietors to give laws to both oceans, and to become arbitrators of the commercial world, without being liable to the fatigues, expenses, and dangers, or contracting the guilt and blood, of Alexander and Cesar. (Paterson, Proposal, 1701)

These are some of the words with which William Paterson pursued his Darién scheme even after the failure. It can be assumed that he used similar rhetoric when he originally convinced the Scottish Company to set its aims on Darién as opposed to other places. Paterson's line of reasoning is that the narrow isthmus provided by the location will enable easy travel from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. This is taken up in other writings, e.g. one of the pamphlets, which states that the situation is "very commodious for a speedy and short Communication of Trade betwixt the North and South Seas" (Defence, 61). Starting with optimistic, but still reasonable points Paterson takes off on hyperbolic flights in the second half of the above quote. Even the reasonable aspects, although they may be vindicated by the later Panama Canal, present, however, a very high aim for a nation like Scotland with not one single successful colonial enterprise on its record. The promise is that one place alone, serving as a trade emporium, will cause the nation to be in possession of a more powerful economic power than all the others. Of course, this is sales talk, but it caught on, even with hindsight Lord Belhaven talks about the "great hopes and expectations we had" (Speech, 7) without calling them misguided. And it is visible not only in the Scottish willingness to finance the undertaking, but also in (more or less) poetical outpourings.

In various occasional poems we find Scottish hopes expressed. Both *A Congratulatory Poem* and *An Ode made on the welcome news* envisage Scotland as overcoming poverty. The *Congratulatory Poem* still couches this in modalised and wishful terms (cf. underlining), but the aim is clear: trade profits and also treasure from the colony are to ensure long-lasting wealth.

I wish that Heavens may still favour this Trade,
 Under the *Indian* Pole, and Treasure hade
 Worthy the pains and Travel you are at,
 T'enrich this Land was long Depauparat,
 That Scotland may yet Flourish and and in Peace,
 Preserved be from all seek to deface,
 Its fame, so that its Honest industrie,
May Persever to all Posterie,
 (*A Congratulatory Poem*)²⁰

An *Ode* sounds more self-assured, using *will* and *shall* instead of the more uncertain *may*, as the following two stanzas show. It too expects direct profits from the colony, in the form of 'Indian Gold', a usual European expectation in the case of Middle and South American locations.²¹ This will heal Scotland's "grand disease", namely its poverty, and, more precisely, will give all its citizens work to support themselves (no sons without a future, no beggars and vagabonds).

The <i>Countray</i> now will be at ease, the tender <i>Mothers</i> will no more their Sons <i>Uncertain Fate</i> deplore; And <i>Indian Gold</i> shall soon release The Nation from its <i>Tempral Grand</i> <i>Disease</i>	No swarms of <i>Beggars</i> shall annoy, no <i>Vagabounds</i> corrupt our <i>Wealth</i> ; but every Man that enjoys Health, His frugal <i>Countray</i> shall <i>employ</i> T'increase our <i>Store</i> , & crown our <i>las-</i> <i>ting Joy</i> .
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(*An Ode made on the welcome news* [...], Edinburgh 1699)

Together with the promising consequences for Scotland, the situation in Darién is also painted in rosy colours, as the following extracts from *Caledonia Triumphans* illustrate:

Fourth of November, that auspicious *Day*,
 Your valiant *SCOTS* their Colours did display,
 Into the *Western World*, where they did meet,
Thousands of Welcomes prostrat at their Feet.

20 | Italics in the texts quoted are original. Highlighting by me is done by way of underlining.

21 | Cf. Pointner (this volume).

[...]

At Landing, Fertile Fields and Golden Mountains,
Saluted them, with clear and christal Fountains;
Roots, Flowers and Fruits, for Physick, and to eat,
And neither pinching Colds, nor scorching Heat.
Rivers, safe Bayes, variety of Plants,
And useful Trees which our old *Britain* wants.
(*Caledonia Triumphans*, Edinburgh 1699)

Both the climate, the geographical features and the fauna of Darién are described as providing ideal living conditions as well as diverse potential benefits. The positive reaction of the native population to the Scottish arrival is overstated with European colonial arrogance. As outlined above, the actual situation was less beneficial and more complicated. The Scots also had delusions about important things closer to home, thus the same poem confidently states “What humane Counter-plot can marr the thing,/ That is protected by *Great-Britains* King”, and *The Golden Island* adds “King WILLIAM did encourage us/against the *English* will” – although no explicit royal approval had been sought or provided.

As the last quote shows, the competition with England, Scotland’s more powerful neighbour, is an important issue. In the words of *The Golden Island*, the Darién project, which it calls a “noble interprize”, is also a matter of “the *Thrissel* in the *Lyons* hand ‘gainst *Leopards* and *Rose*”, using the national heraldic symbols metonymically for the two nations.²² Another passage of the same poem talks more explicitly of enemies and also of victory by Scotland:

The *Thistle* and the *Reed Lyon*,
will Crush our Enemies.
We’re Antipods to England now,
win by a pleasant Toil.
(*The Golden Island or the Darian Song*, Edinburgh 1699)

22 | The Scottish national flower is the *thistle* (spelled variously in the poem). The English *leopards* are also called lions sometimes; in contrast to the Scottish (red) lion *rampant*, they are *passant gardant* in heraldic terms.

The term *antipodes* seems to be used metaphorically here, as ‘opposites’ in the sense of ‘opponents’, more specifically probably ‘opponents of equal standing’ (geographically, and given the overall colonial situation, the English, and the Scots in Darién were not antipodal to each other). Thus, Scotland is not only seeking material gains through its colonial undertaking but also national reputation and political clout. Among the aims one thus finds also “That all the Neighbouring Nations yet may own, / SCOTLAND deserves still Honour and Renown” (*A Congratulatory Poem*). The neighbouring nation of most interest was clearly England.

As this short overview shows, Scottish expectations were indeed great, with respect to the nature of Darién, material gain to the mother country, and a boost to the national psyche. Expectations of such grandeur are easy to disappoint and if spectacularly disappointed, as in the present case, the contrast between wish and reality makes things even harder. A narrative exculpating Scotland (at least to some extent) had to be found, which will be the topic of the following section.

5 MAKING SENSE OF FAILURE

In 1699 it was gradually becoming known in Scotland that the Darién undertaking was not going according to plan, and by 1700 it was clear that Scotland’s colonial hopes had not only failed, but done so spectacularly. Pro-Scottish pamphlets appearing in these two years, plus some from 1701 and 1705, will be examined as to their content arguments, their representation of the English and the Scottish respectively and their adversative grammatical structures.

5.1 Constructing the Scottish view-point

An early apologetic pamphlet in this matter, Philo-Caledon’s²³ *A Defence of the Scots Settlement at Darién* from 1699, still hoped for a positive outcome and thus in a sense is argumentatively still fighting an impending failure. The pamphlet treated the matter under the following four headings: (i) “The Legality of the Scots Establishment”, (ii) “The Advantage or

23 | Philo-Caledon has been variously identified as Archibald Foyer, Andrew Fletcher and Lord Belhaven.

Disadvantage that may redound from it to England,” (iii) “Whether the Scots without the Assistance of the English may be able to maintain their footing in America”, (iv) “and what may probably be the Consequences if the Scots should be oppos’d therein by the English, and miscarry in the Undertaking” (p. 1, numbering added). As to (i), the pamphlet points out that the Scots “were authorized by an Act of Parliament, and the King’s Letters Patent, to plant Colonies in Asia, Africa, or America, upon Places not inhabited, or any other Place, by consent of the Natives, not possess by any European Prince or State” (p. 14) and that Darién was not in fact under Spanish jurisdiction, thus free for the taking by the Scots.²⁴ The quotation below concerns a Spanish document sent in protest to the British Monarch, belittling it by the choice of characterising nouns and by not even finding it deserving of refutation.

It were easy to make proper Remarks upon the Weakness, Insolence and Ingratitude of this [the Spanish, CC] Memorial, but it is not worth while; (Defence, 3)

By charging Spanish *insolence* and *ingratitude* against King William, the author positions himself on the King’s side – in line with his aim of having him (and the English) on the Scottish side. After extensive discussion the pamphleteer comes to the conclusion that the Spaniards have no right to Darién:

It is evident that the Spaniards cannot pretend a Title to that Country by Inheritance, Marriage, or the Donation of Prince and People; and as to Conquest it would be ridiculous to alledg it, (Defence, 4)

Of especial importance for the author is also the fact that there is evidence that even the English considered Darién not subject to Spain in the past – implying that they should also do so now. As to the second point above, the (dis)advantage to England the author points out that the Scottish Darién scheme, if successful, would profit both English (overseas) trade and the English economy as such, give England a strong political ally (with Scotland as a naval power) and be good for the Protestant interest in general.

24 | The Spanish (and English) colonial context is treated equally, but much more detailed and with discussion both of historical facts and legal literature by Ferguson (Vindication).

Here, as elsewhere in the text, the author has repeatedly recourse to historical argumentation:

It will effectually unite the Scots to England by an inseparable Tie, if the English join us in this Undertaking: Their Ancestors would have gladly purchased this Union at a much dearer rate, but were always outbid by France: and the want of that Union made the English not only an easy Prey to their successive Conquerors, but lost them all the large Provinces that they enjoy'd beyond Sea, which were their natural Barriers, gave them a free Access to the Continent, and made the English Name so glorious in the days of their Ancestors. (Defence, 21-22)

The point here is that England is and has been weakened by the lack of strong ties, even a union, with Scotland. While the historical truth of this is extremely doubtful and Scottish importance overstated, the aim is clearly to sell cooperation on Darién to the English because of larger gains arising from it. With regard to the following point, continued Scottish presence in America, the author is exuding optimism; with hindsight one might say he was hoping for a self-fulfilling prophesy. With regard to the last point he resorts heavily to historical argumentation again, where a very bitter note creeps into the text. Present English ingratitude is juxtaposed to everything the Scots did for England in the past, such as Scotland “being so instrumental to rescue them [the English] from Anarchy and Confusion, by the Restoration of K. Charles II. and above all, our generous and frank Concurrence with them in the late happy Revolution, and Advancement of K. William III.” (p. 30). The author also stresses that history shows the English that “we always broke their Yoke at long-run, if at any time we were brought under it by Force or Fraud. The best way to assure themselves of us is to treat us in a friendly manner:” (p. 41). In this part, the author also goes to some trouble to divide the English into good and bad, so to speak, by blaming a certain “faction” for opposition to the Scottish plans – while sensible Englishmen should certainly react differently:

however we be despis'd and undervalued now by a certain Party in England. (Defence, 35)

the Malice of a Faction in our neighbouring Nation fix'd a scandalous Reproach upon us (Defence, 44)

our wise and politick Neighbours will at last see it their Interest to protect and encourage us in this matter (Defence, 50)

This already points in the direction in which the argumentation of the next paper to be treated goes.

In 1700 the failure of the Darién undertaking was beyond doubt. In this context, finding reasons for the failure also implied identifying culprits. While for the anti-Scottish writers these are clearly the Scots themselves, i.e. the Company and the colonists, the matter is more complex for pro-Scottish writers. A consideration of *An Enquiry into the Causes of the Miscarriage of the Scots Colony at Darien* (1700), attributed to Ridpath,²⁵ can illustrate this. Naturally, Ridpath wants to keep the Scots free of blame, but he also wants to avoid making King William seem responsible and he does not want to accuse the whole English nation as such. The strategic aim behind this must be that the Scots may very well need the good will of either or both of them in the future. The author of a rival pamphlet, *H---s*, thus serves as Ridpath's overt main target, whom he styles as the front-man of an anti-Scottish clique. *H—s* himself, either Harris or Hodges,²⁶ is described by various epithets and attributes, for example “this unnatural Renegado” (62 and passim), “this malicious Scribler” (70), “Libertine” (97), and as having an “Irreligious and Atheistical temper” (82), which are meant to damage him on national (traitorous), moral and religious grounds. If that author is indeed Walter Harris, the character demolition is necessary from a Scottish viewpoint in order to discredit somebody who, after all, was an eyewitness to Darién events. Repeatedly, the pamphlet speaks of “H—s and his Suborners” (e.g. p. 66), i.e. people who incited *H---s* to his crime of ‘smearing’ the Scots (and allegedly also paid him for it). The Suborners are apparently to be found “at the West End of the Town [=Westminster/London, CC]” (p. 73), that is a group in or close to the English government. Ridpath thus identifies this “Faction in England” (76) as the enemies of Scotland's colonial aspirations. The attack on Scotland in opposing pamphlets is claimed to be an evasive action, with the aim of “clear[ing] some Gentleman that perhaps may be found within the Verge

25 | George Ridpath was not only a pamphleteer, but also ran the newspaper *The Flying Post* (mentioned in Bös, this volume).

26 | EEBO states about this pamphlet that it was “variously attributed to James Hodges, Walter Harris, and Archibald Foyer.” Regarding Walter Harris, Gallup-Diaz makes the point that he was a client of the English Secretary of State, James Vernon (chap. 4, fn 99). Thus, in spite of the fact that he had taken part in the Darién enterprise as a surgeon he was writing from an English perspective.

of White-Hall, from having any hand in it [the failure of Darién, CC]" and to hide the fact that "the Crime is very black" (1). In identifying this faction, Ridpath avoids being "so unjust as to charge it upon the Nation" (76), also called "the good People of England" (58) and "our good Neighbours", who are "much surpriz'd and displeas'd with our Treatment" (63). While clearing the English people is fairly easy, clearing the King without damaging him in some other way or other is more complicated. Ridpath attempts a rhetorically clever operation by inverting the King's own statement (the part underlined):

Then let the World judg, whether the King of *England* had not less reason to say that he was ill serv'd in *Scotland*, than the King of *Scots* had to say that he was ill serv'd in *England* (Enquiry, 34)

In doing so, he highlights a basic problem in the set-up of the Union of the Crowns without a corresponding Union of Parliaments: with two 'independent' states having separate interests and policies, the joint monarch is put into a kind of schizophrenic position. In the business of Darién the King of Scots, the second persona of William, apparently had lost out – and the culprit is this alleged faction in England, as the following quotes imply.

From all which it is plain, that as it is the best Apology that can be made for the King of *Scots* when he acts thus, contrary to the Honour and Interest of himself and his Country, to say, he is a Prisoner in *England*; (Enquiry, 36)
our King is in the hands of our Enemies, since we are thus condemn'd without a hearing (Enquiry, 39-40)

Thus, it is not King William himself, who is intending to harm the Scots but people who are exerting a bad influence on him. However, this is a tricky argument. The king after all is supposed to be in full charge and knowledge of the state of affairs, he is not supposed to be swayed by factional interest. The attempted clearing of the king thus backfires somewhat by leaving a blemish on his character and his qualities of leadership; the same applies to a similar attempt by Ferguson (Vindication, p. 45).

Another text from 1699, *A Short and Impartial View of the Manner and Occasion of the Scots Colony's coming away from Darien*, attributed to Andrew Fletcher, goes about the matter again in a different way. Three

aspects were singled out for discussion, namely the responsibility of the directors of the Company, the potential faults of the colonists, and the effect of “His Majesty’s Proclamations”. While the author admits some shortcomings and problems regarding the first two aspects, he on the whole absolves both parties from blame. The directors are said to have behaved admirably given the circumstances, but were slandered:

intolerable Liberty *Malice*, *Envy* and *Ignorance* have, as it were, combined together to derogat from the just Merit of those Noble and Worthy Persons, who are concerned in the Management of the Company, by endeavouring to asperse their Conduct (View, 21-2)

A similar exoneration of Scottish actors is found in a eulogistic passage in Belhaven’s speech (p.8). This shows the self-serving bias treated in more detail in Bös (this volume), namely the dissociation from one’s own faults and blaming others instead. The author then berates the slanderers, with all the authority he can muster, quoting not only the Bible but also respected classical authors such as Horace and Juvenal. The greatest blame thus is put on the English proclamations forbidding support of the Scots (cf. section 2 above), because without these the colonists could have overcome their difficulties. The damaging psychological effect of the proclamations is pointed out, interestingly phrased at crucial points in question form so that the reader becomes directly involved in the thought process:

Must they not think, that since the said Proclamation was published in his Majesty’s Name, that undoubtedly it must needs have been legally founded upon some positive Law, tho’ they knew nothing of it? And must not the Consideration of all these together have distracted and confounded the Thoughts, Resolutions, and Measures of any Sett of Men that could have been in the Colony? [...] And in that same case, they must have resolved to have been dis-owned by *Scotland*, as well as by *England*: And if so, pray from whom then must they have expected Protection? (View, 29)

But instead of stopping with the psychological and material effects of the proclamations, the author thinks one step further. After mentioning that the King might perhaps not have had knowledge of the proclamations at the time, he proceeds to the following statements:

I remember the judicious *Montaigne*, in this political Essays, observes it, as a Misfortune commonly incident to a Nation that is under the Government of a Prince living in another Country, That any Nation so stated, is seldom or never Govern'd according to the real Inclination of the Prince, or the true interest of the People; so much as according to the Humors, Affections, and Designs of his Ministers: For that he seeing only with their Eyes, and hearing but with their Ears, cannot possibly know the true State, Condition and Interest of a Distant Nation, nor the Humors and Inclinations of its Inhabitants, any thing near so well as if he lived amongst them. (View, 35)

He essentially points out here that the British set-up of the Union of the Crowns cannot work, or at least not to the equal satisfaction of all parties involved. Thus, he lays his finger on a larger political, namely constitutional failure, but without spelling it out fully. The Scottish king being made to act against Scottish interests through the influence of his English ministers is also part of the larger union debate going on at the time.²⁷

5.2 Taking sides: lexico-semantic choices

With the help of the one digital text it is possible to perform a keyword analysis, i.e. a procedure that statistically calculates which words are statistically significantly more frequent in this text than in a larger group of comparable texts – as well as those that are noticeably less frequent.²⁸ Needless to say, words that are extremely topic-specific will appear here (e.g. *Darién* itself, *Spaniards*, *Indians*, *America*, *Panama*, *colony*, *proclamation*, *Ambrosio* = the name of one of the native chiefs), but also words that are less self-evident and more telling for an interpretation. Disregarding the very obvious words, the following are some of the meaningful keywords:

Scots, *English*, *England* – *us*, *we*, *our* – *they*, *their*
union, *alliance* – *crowns*, *K.* (= King)
join, *joining*
interest
ancestors
treated

27 | Bowie (2007), 68.

28 | This was carried out with the help of WordSmith Tools 5.0. The Darién pamphlet was compared to the 19 other political pamphlets in the *Lampeter Corpus*.

While *Scots* and *English* might seem too obvious, they are not: both groups are prominent players in British politics in the 17th and 18th centuries, thus occur regularly in political writing, but their frequency here, together with the prominent first and third person plural pronouns, point to an importance even greater than usual and to a strong *us* vs. *them* depiction. In this context, it is also interesting that *I* stands out as infrequent (a negative keyword), which means that the persona of the pamphleteer, otherwise often very prominent, is here downgraded in favour of stressing the national *we*-perspective. The listing above reflects (descending) key-ness order as closely as possible, which means that the form *us* is more typical than *we*, putting the Scots in the non-agentive, passive or receiving position. In contrast, *they* is the subject, i.e. agent, pronoun. This subject-object distribution can be seen nicely in the examples below, as well as the use of *treated* in a passive construction with the same effect and the overuse of *our* (which is not grammatically necessary in all cases, e.g. *in Distress*). Partly, this emphasises Scotland's status as the 'wronged' party, but it also shifts the perspective to England – whom, after all, this pamphleteer still wants to convince of a different kind of reaction, namely of supporting the Scots, cf. the keywords *interest* and *join* as used in the third example.

to this they have added an opposition to our receiving foreign Subscriptions at Hamburg and elsewhere, refus'd us a Supply of Corn for our Mony, to relieve us in our Distress; and discourag'd our Settlement at Darien, by forbidding their Subjects to trade with us there. (Defence, 34)

by the Discouragements from England before-mentioned, which exposes our Ships to be taken and treated as Pirates by any Nation that pleases, (Defence, 43) that it is England's Interest to join with and protect us (Defence, 85)²⁹

Crown, *union* and *K(ing)* repeatedly refers to the common bond between England and Scotland by sharing a monarch and common *interests*. These words are often found in passages referring to history, which is made even more explicit by the mention of both English and Scottish ancestors, reminding the readers that there once was a better mutual relationship, e.g. "they may be pleas'd to consider the honorable Privileges granted us by

29 | The underlined words in these examples are all statistical keywords.

their Ancestors". In contrast to *union*, *alliance* is used referring to a wider political range, and it is even partly used in threats, cf.:

we shall only desire them to consider how fatal it may be to them, if by any Emergency we should be forc'd to break off the Union of the Crowns, and enter again into a French Alliance. (Defence, 56-57)

The keywords thus highlight how this text uses the joint and sometimes grievous history of England and Scotland, as well as threats of other political orientations, to convince the English that it is in their interest to support the Scottish colonial undertaking.

Apart from keywords, there are also other lexical choices and patterns of interest. The English-Scottish political relationship, for example, is repeatedly phrased in kinship terms. The English are called *Brethren* (the word form with religious colouring, vs. more neutral *brothers*) and Scotland is described as the *Sister-Nation* of England (Defence, 43). The Darién colony is called *infant*, in relationship terms thus a child of Scotland and (mentally extending the metaphor) nephew/niece of England. The King unsurprisingly is called *Father* of the country, having *paternal* affections (Defence, A4, 86). This is both friendly and, to a certain extent, inspired by wishful thinking. The same metaphorical field can also be turned to negative use, however, when sentiment becomes more inflamed. In Belhaven's speech (1701) the Scottish infant (here the Parliament Act preceding the colony) is attacked by the English Brethren, the term in this case used sarcastically.

So our Act must be attacked in it's Swadling Cloaths, and persecuted in its Infancy, and that our dear Brethren of *England* might have the Honour to give us the deadly Blow at one Stroke, [...] they endeavoured to perswade our most Excellent and Gracious King that he was ill served in *Scotland*. (Belhaven, 8)

Images of fratricide and infanticide are captured up in this passage with all their associations.³⁰

30 | "Those who endeavour to destroy the *Embryo*, are chargeable with a design of preventing the Birth" (Enquiry, 3) uses the same metaphor, but here the infant is the Company and the birth refers to that of the colony.

Although there is no overt reference to the Bible, this is nevertheless reminiscent of Herod's murder of the babes of Bethlehem. Belhaven's speech dwells on such metaphorical violence somewhat longer, but shifts to a different domain, that of physical violence (perhaps execution) and warfare, thus playing on the conceptual metaphor POLITICS IS WAR:³¹

[they] struck at the Independency of the Nation, through the Bowels of the Company, they rested not satisfied with all these Injuries, but pursued us to Foreign Countries, and most insolently and impudently, without Warrant from his Majesty, their Residents did not only attack the Company, but, by Consequence, the whole Trade of the Nation, and its Sovereignty, by their Infamous Memorial at *Hamburgh*. When, notwithstanding of all their Malice, by the Firmness and Resolution of the Company, Equipments were forwarded, and under Sail for America, yet their wicked Designs over-run us, even to the New World [...] the Barbarity and Inhumanity of these Proclamations, and the more unnatural prosecutions of them [...] are such unpardonable Injuries and Affronts to the Law of Nature, the law of Nations. (Belhaven, 8-9)

Mixed with the imagery we find extremely explicit evaluation of the English in this passage: *insolently*, *impudently*, *infamous*, *malice*, *wicked*, *barbarity*, *inhumanity*, *unnatural*, *unpardonable* – words indicating behaviour that violates social and moral norms, even places the targets outside of humankind. While other writers are also critical of the English, such explicit and blatant formulations are not found in the other pro-Scottish pamphlets, which may be partly due to the later time of this piece.³² Note, however, how even in the middle of this vitriolic attack, Belhaven takes care to exonerate the King, in line with the strategies of the pamphlets looked at above. That Belhaven is not alone with such assessments of – and lexical choices for – the English is illustrated by *Pill for Pork-Eaters* (1705), which is an extended harsh and bitter attack on the English and their dealings with the Scots. Epithets used in it for the English are “rogues”, “insolent”, or “proud like hell”. Two brief quotes can illustrate the sentiment in this piece as well as the fact that Darién was not forgotten quickly:

31 | Cf. Bös (this volume) for a detailed treatment of conceptual metaphors.

32 | It may also be a question of personal style: Belhaven was a sophisticated rhetorician, who seemed to give pathos more weight than logos in his practice.

Then England for its Treachery shou'd mourn,
 Be forced to fawn, and truckle in its turn:
 Scots Pedlars you no longer durst upbraid,
 And *DARIEN* shou'd with Int'rest be repaid. (Pill, 4)
 [...]
UNGEN'ROUS *England!* at this savage rate,
 Still to abuse a Free and Neighbouring State! (Pill, 6)

A somewhat curious lexical choice is found in *View*, a text that singled out the English proclamations as the biggest culprit. Nevertheless, the text contains various formulations which actually seem to deny any responsibility:

all the Mis-Fortunes that have happened to the Company and Colony (*View*, 28) whatever may be the Occasion of it, away, you see, they are come, as ill Luck would have it: Quae volunt Fata, non tollunt Vota. (*View*, 33)
tragical and unexpected emergency (*View*, 33)
 the Disasters and Misfortunes, that have attended the Undertakings of this Company, and really, since the Affections, as well as the Interests of many People seem to be wrapt up in its Fate (*View*, 38)

Fate and fortune are not something man can influence, instead they imply agentless and unpreventable courses of events. This is apparently not the interpretation the author intends, at least no across the board: English actions are still to blame, but Scottish reactions to them may well be determined by a degree of fate. A further aim may lie in the connotations the words carry: even without negative words and prefixes (*ill*, *mis*-), *fate* would have negative implications. Using these words emphasizes the bad nature of events and of Scotland's present state.

Interesting lexical choices are not only found when making statements about the world, but also in the context of argumentation. In *Defence* one finds explicit evaluations of the arguments used as in the following examples:

It is evident that the Spaniards cannot pretend a Title to that Country by Inheritance, Marriage, or the Donation of Prince and People; and as to Conquest it would be ridiculous to alledg it, (*Defense*, 4)

which is a plain Demonstration that the Government of England did then look upon Darién to be no way subject to Spain, (Defence, 4-5)

when it is so well known to the World that the Crown of Spain has no manner of Title to that Province. (Defence, 6)

The author's own points here are *evident* and *plain* whereas the opposing points of view can only be *alleged*, i.e. have no factual basis. This is common stylistic practice throughout this pamphlet: The words *evident*, *plain*, *no doubt*, and *obvious* are frequent, occurring about once every 1,000 words; similarly "we could multiply Instances to prove this" stresses the well-foundedness of the argument. Opposing arguments are described, though not quite as frequently, by *allege/allegations*, being *ridiculous*, merely *pretended*, *precarious*, and *perfectly overturned*. Hyperbole is used in the last statement above as a strong truth marker: what is so generally known actually needs no arguing. This (colloquial) expression of *the world* knowing is used four times in the text. Similar strong effects are reached by the heavy and marked negation patterns: instead of simply *no(t)* we find *no way* and *no manner of*.³³ By using such markers as all the above the writer tries to steer the reception process of the readers, drawing them to his side. This author is not alone in trying to explicitly stress his own conclusions as correct and denigrate those of others, cf. formulations like "it is then *Apodictically* evident" or others' "allegation [...] offer[ing] violence to common sense" used by Ferguson (Vindication, p. 83, 98); indeed they are common throughout. While this is not uncommon for (polemical) pamphlet literature as such, it of course also highlights very nicely here the two sides involved, the pro- vs. the anti-Scottish.

6 CONCLUSION

As the discussion above has shown, Scottish fault-finding was decidedly one-sided: it was the English or a certain English faction which was to blame for the Darién failure. While there is some truth in this, it is cer-

33 | Similar strategies are also found in other pro-Scottish Darién papers, e.g. "the Directors of our Indian and African Company at home, are no manner of way Chargeable with any Omission" (View, 4). It is noteworthy that thus an already marked strategy like negation is made even more marked.

tainly not the whole story. There were also aspects the Scots could have handled better, such as early negotiations with the king (in the context of the Act) or acquiring better information about Darién's situation, inhabitants and colonial context. They may have also not been completely honest about the purpose of their colony; for a peaceful philanthropic undertaking there were a surprising number of military men in the expeditions.³⁴ Nevertheless, in the overall context of European colonialisation the Darién circumstances do not exhibit incompetence to a noteworthy high degree. And it was certainly not the first colonial effort to fail – it was just that fairly impoverished Scotland, which was broke after Darién, could not digest this failure easily. Thus, the need for a scape-goat. The preoccupation with the English goes deeper than the Darién events, however. As various documents (e.g. *Vindication*, *Defence*, *Pill*) amply show it is the whole of Scottish-English historical relations that rankle with the Scots. Darién was only one straw in the line of many, from the Scottish perspective, and it may have been the one that broke the camel's back (if there is indeed a causal line leading from Darién to the Union).

Apart from the more multi-faceted state of affairs, the one-sidedness of the publications is not surprising. On a general level, this is the nature of most pamphleteering of the time: it is usually partisan, single-minded, polemical and often downright rude to opponents. In these circumstances, black-and-white textual pictures are much more common than those containing nuanced shades of grey. Thus, English pamphlets on Darién, for example, simply blamed the Scots.³⁵ In our specific case, the pamphleteering happened in the context of a court-country factional division in the Scottish parliament, with the country party actively using the press to induce political action, such as producing the 'right' mood for the signing of national petitions.³⁶ The same way modern newspapers have a clear political alignment, e.g. *The Guardian* vs. *The Daily Telegraph*, pamphlet(eer)s were also aligned along political lines. The pamphlets treated in chapter 5 represent the views of the country party, which, among others, deplored English influence on the monarch and the relative loss of importance of the Scottish parliament. Both of these were of course prominent aspects in the Darién case.

34 | Gallup-Diaz (2002), chap.5, p. 13 (the chapters are paginated individually).

35 | Bowie (2007), 88.

36 | Bowie (2007), 32.

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