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This is not the ideal book on Scot: far from it. But it fulfils the need for an up-to-date full-scale biographical treatment of one of the most important figures in the cultural, academic and political life of Scotland in the seventeenth century. It is also well-printed and attractively illustrated, although the extraordinary decision to divide the notes between (if I understand correctly the principle of the separation) short references in footnotes and longer annotations at the end of the book is not helpful to the reader.

In many (dare one say most?) scholarly works it is possible to find mistakes and misapprehensions if one looks hard enough for them, and in this respect Mr. Snoddy’s book is no exception. There is a bibliographical lapse on page 43, where the National Library of Scotland’s copy of Scot’s cousin and namesake’s *Hodoeporicon*, printed at Edinburgh by Andro Hart in 1619 together with Scot’s own *Schediasmata miscellanea*, is described as “a singular example of the printer’s and bookbinder’s art in that day in Scotland,” despite the fact that the binder’s endpapers bear the watermark date “1823.” (This appears to be the work that Mr. Snoddy alludes to, although his description is not very clear; a copy of it is the book located in the National Library at the pressmark I. C. 593(1), which is the reference that he gives.) On page 148 he accepts the unlikely view that Drummond of Hawthornden’s *Poems*, published in 1616 (although in private circulation in print since 1614 or 1615), were inspired by a love affair with a daughter of Cunningham of Barns. The latter is an example of an error that could have been avoided by consulting the results of more up-to-date research than Mr. Snoddy seems generally to have used (R. H. MacDonald, “Drummond of Hawthornden, Miss Euphemia Kyningham, and the ‘Poems’” [The Modern Language Review, lx (1965), 494-9]).

Nonetheless, and despite such lapses as those mentioned above, Mr. Snoddy has presented his facts in a painstaking and thorough way. There is a chapter on Scot’s early life, education and family, followed by two on his official career and two on his cultural, academic and ecclesiastical activities. Next come three chapters nearly associated with
the appropriate sections of Scot’s own narrative, “The true relation of
the principall affairs concerning the state, ascribed by Sir John Scot of
Scotstarvit in the reign of King Charles ye first, vindicating him from
ye aspersions laid upon him by Mr Sandersone in the history of the
life of the said King Charles, 1658. Written at Edinburgh ye 9 August,
1660” (and largely concerning the claim of William Graham, Earl of
Menteith, to the Earldom of Strathearn and its implications in relation
to the royal line of succession). Chapters 9 to 12 deal with Scot as
Privy Councillor, the coronation of Charles I in Scotland and the nego-
tiations with the king on Anglo-Scottish fishing rights. The final chap-
ter reviews Scot’s treatise, “The staggering state of Scots statesmen,”
in which Scot assesses the activities of a selection of Scottish potentates
during the period between the Reformation and the Restoration.

The most generally disappointing feature of Mr. Snoddy’s book is
implicit in its title, which tells us that the book is about Scot’s “Life
and Times.” It might well have concentrated more on the life and less
on the times. We are presented with so much background material
about the history of the period that the central figure is occasionally
completely crowded out. This is particularly true of chapters 9 and 12,
“The Privy Council” and “The common fishing” respectively, both of
which are concerned much more with general Scottish history than with
Scot of Scotstarvit; but it is to some degree a feature of the whole
book, or at least those substantial parts of it that deal with Scot’s official
career.

Scot’s most valuable contribution to his own and later generations
was surely his promotion and patronage of academic, literary and pub-
lishing activities, and it is arguable that more emphasis should have
been placed upon this topic. Mr. Snoddy does not, it is true, neglect
Scot’s patronage of St. Andrews University, his relationship with poets
such as Drummond of Hawthornden and Arthur Johnston, his virtual
editorship of the Delitiae poetarum Scotorum and his good offices in
having Timothy Pont’s maps published in Blaeu’s Atlas; but one might
have wished for a more detailed treatment of these aspects of his
work—analyses, for example, of the manuscript collection, “Letters from
learned men to Scotstarvat,” in the National Library of Scotland, and
of the nature of the books that he presented to the Library of St. Leo-
nards College, St. Andrews.

But perhaps it is unfair to criticize the author for writing the book
that he wrote and not the one that the reviewer wishes that he had
written. Mr. Snoddy’s book as it is deserves a welcome, although this
welcome is coupled with the hope that its existence will not inhibit any future study of the same subject from a somewhat different viewpoint.

One final query—addressed to the writer of the advertisement of the author's other books on the dust jacket: surely the works, *Round about Greenock, Afoot in Fife* and *Tween Forth and Tay*, are about "Topography and History", not "Typography and History"?

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*National Library of Scotland*