

Music and dances in Edinburgh polite society in the light of the journals and letters of Jenny Harden Agnes Witts and Lord Cockburn, 1793-1804.

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Jenny Allan Harden, Agnes Witts and Lord Cockburn left the testimonies of their lives in the polite society of Edinburgh in their journals and letters. They described and commented on their domestic and social lives and experiences, leaving us hints of what life was like in these well-off circles of the Scottish capital. Their writings are witnesses of the evolution of that part of Edinburgh society, which based its life and manners on social meetings with the people of their circles. Their tea parties, evenings at their private residences or at the theatres or the concert halls, and even some meetings in certain clubs and societies, were cadenced with music and dances. People would practice them, attend them and discuss them. This paper proposes a study of the place of music and dances in the lives of Jenny Harden (*Journals and Letters*, NLS MSS.8832-8873) and Agnes Witts (*An Edinburgh Diary 1793-1798*, edited by Alan Sutton, 2016), and of the opinion and descriptions of their uses by Lord Cockburn (*Memorials of his Times*, London, 1856) at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. These will be compared to practices in England and France, for instance, in order to assess their potential specificity in the practices and manners of the Scottish and more generally European polite societies.

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