Dataset of household goods and furnishings of urban dwellers derived from inventories drawn up at death of subjects.

Abstract:

This project developed new perspectives on what was a crucial phase in modern Scottish urbanization, the second half of the eighteenth and opening decades of the nineteenth centuries. The main focus of investigation was on the country’s medium-sized and smaller towns, defined as those with populations of between ca. 1,000 and 10,000. Recent influential accounts of urbanization in this period have tended to concentrate almost exclusively on the largest cities, especially Glasgow, and to be wri...
Calculated from data in I. D. Whyte, ‘Scottish and Irish urbanization in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: a comparative perspective’ in S., J. Connolly, R. A. Houston and R. J. Morris (eds), Conflict, Identity and Economic Development: Ireland and Scotland, 1600-1939 (Preston: Carnegie Publishing, 1995), p.24. In other words Scottish urban history lagged a long way behind our understanding of the nature, causes and consequences of change in Scotland’s countryside in what is sometimes termed the long eighteenth century. In this project – entitled Scotland’s Smaller Towns in the Era of the Enlightenment, 1745-1820’, we looked at around thirty of Scotland’s smaller towns - a cross section, by size, location, type and function. The key term for this change was improvement, a pervasive ideology among urban householders, in the interests of economy, cleanliness, and refinement. At times it seemed to erase major aspects of Scotland’s urban heritage—the abandonment of the market cross is an example—in favor of a more general British cityscape. The authors reject that notion, insisting instead that continuity and stability were underlying themes. The authors’ combined focus on town-scape and culture underlay their argument that the burgh Enlightenment was built upon Scottish foundations. Ned Landsman. SUNY, Stony Brook. “As a qualitative study of the physical space, architecture and planning of the Scottish town, this book is a major landmark not just in terms of research, but as a treasure-trove for the general reader seeking a clearer understanding of how Scottish society The result is an important and substantial contribution to Scottish, and to British, urban history and historical geography and one that “Deeply researched, cogently written, and lavishly illustrated, The Scottish Town in the Age of the Enlightenment, 1740-1820 sets a new standard for the study of provincial urbanization in the eighteenth century.” The late Charles McKean was Professor of Scottish Architectural History at the University of Dundee and considered the pre-eminent historian of Scottish buildings and towns.