



George Gordon: An Annotated Catalogue of His Scientific Correspondence

Susan Bennett, Michael Collie

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The Rev. Dr George Gordon (1801-1893) was one of Scotland's leading natural historians. His enormous surviving correspondence with other 19th-century scientists (which is housed in the Elgin Museum in Moray) consists of thirteen hundred autograph manuscripts. This book catalogues these letters in date order; each entry is supplemented by a brief synopsis of the letter's content and the catalogue is preceded by a substantial introduction. Gordon corresponded with eminent researchers such as T H Huxley, Charles Darwin, Roderick Impey Murchison and William Hooker, and the letters shed light on the ways in which science was conducted both in Scotland and elsewhere during the 19th century. With a working life that spanned over 55 years, Gordon was unique in being able to witness scientific advancement from random discovery to systematic professional research. Towards the end, much of Gordon's correspondence was from scientists 20 or 30 years younger than himself, seeking his knowledge of the history of scientific exploration: a history that had not been available to Gordon himself when he had started his own explorations in the 1830s.

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