

INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF SCOTTISH STUDIES

ISSN 1923-5755
E-ISSN 1923-5763

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To contact the Editor:

The Editor, *International Review of Scottish Studies*
Centre for Scottish Studies
Department of History
University of Guelph
MCKN 1008
50 Stone Road East
Guelph, Ontario, Canada
N1G 2W1

scottish@uoguelph.ca

Centre for Scottish Studies at the University of Guelph
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IRSS Volume 46: 2021

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STATE, COMMUNITY, AND THE SUPPRESSION OF BANDITRY IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY SCOTLAND

Allan Kennedy, University of Dundee

ABSTRACT

Eric Hobsbawm's influential thesis of 'social banditry' has provoked a great deal of research into the history of brigandage which had done much to enrich our knowledge of early modern society. This work has also helped inform our understanding of how state structures functioned, especially in the early modern period. This article seeks to contribute to that discussion by deploying Scottish evidence. It shows that the suppression of banditry in Scotland—mainly the Highlands—involved a range of tactics and approaches, all of them predicated on co-operation between central government, local elites, and local communities. The necessity of such coordination, the article contends, underlines the political realities of the Scottish state, which worked according to a 'magisterial' model that required politically powerful groups to work closely with ordinary communities if they were to achieve their goals.

Keywords: Scotland, Early Modern Scotland, banditry, bandits, highwaymen, Highlands, Scottish State, Scottish Government, state-formation, early modern crime, Hobsbawm

Introduction

In 1734, Charles Johnson (probably a pseudonym for Daniel Defoe) published an influential anthology of essays about the lives of some of the most notorious criminals in British history. Among the outlaws he described was a bandit from the Scottish Highlands named 'Gilderoy,' whom he claimed had prospered during the British Civil Wars of the 1640s and 1650s. Gilderoy's exploits—incorporating

robbery, rape, murder, and much else besides—were recounted in lurid detail, and the book presented him as an archetypal villain who had given free rein to his naturally evil character.¹ While Johnson's Gilderoy was a literary construct, and rooted in an artistic tradition stretching back at least 60 years, he was also, like the later and much more famous Scots outlaw-hero Robert 'Rob Roy' MacGregor, based on a real man.² The historical Gilderoy was in fact Patrick MacGregor, who had operated in the northeastern Highlands during the 1630s, before being executed at Edinburgh in 1636. And while the fictionalized Gilderoy was very much an exceptional figure (not least in his wickedness), the historical one was merely part of a wider tradition of banditry and other outrages by so-called 'broken men' in the Highlands that was a prominent feature of seventeenth-century Scotland.

The study of banditry as a historical phenomenon has been hugely influenced by the work of Eric Hobsbawm. His model of 'social banditry'—positing that there existed in pre-modern societies a type of brigand who functioned as a champion of the lower orders against repressive social elites—proved sufficiently provocative that countless subsequent historians, working on numerous jurisdictions around the globe, sought to test how far 'social banditry' as a model held up under empirical testing.³ Generally the Hobsbawmian framework has been found problematic or overly simplistic, but the resulting research has done much to enrich our understanding of how past societies functioned, how they conceptualized deviance, and how they accommodated the activities of marginal groups.⁴ At the

¹ Charles Johnson, *A General History of the Lives and Adventures of the Most Famous Highwaymen, Murderers, Street Robbers &c.* (London, 1734), 310–1.

² See "A Scotch Song, called Gilderoy" in Anonymous, *Westminster-drollery, or, A choice collection of the newest songs & poems both at court and theaters* (London, 1671), 112–14, which may have been based on a still older traditional song. The development of Rob Roy's legend began in his own lifetime with 'E. M.', *The Highland Rogue: Or, The Memorable Actions of the Celebrated Robert Mac-Gregor, Commonly called Roy-Roy* (London, 1723).

³ E. Hobsbawm, *Bandits* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1969).

⁴ A useful summary of the current 'state of play' as regards 'social banditry' can be found in S. Cronin, "Noble Robbers, Avengers and

same time, Hobsbawm forced historians to think about culture, and in particular to notice that the ‘social bandit’ figure he described is an almost universal feature of folklore around the globe. Exploring the emergence, nature, and significance of these tales, it has emerged, can offer stimulating insights into the way various societies have thought about justice, freedom, and intersectional relations.⁵ If Hobsbawm’s ‘social banditry’ is now broadly considered a limited model, the process of challenging his thesis has nonetheless demonstrated that banditry offers scholars a powerful window into the social and cultural dynamics of the past.

Historians have similarly grasped that an enhanced understanding of banditry can deepen our understanding of political developments. This is particularly true for the early modern period, since the maintenance of internal order was an integral component of state-forming projects across Europe at this time, and banditry, much like the related challenge of vagrancy, was a major threat to stability, both because it was disorderly and because it challenged the guiding assumptions of settled, hierarchical societies.⁶ Responses to it, therefore, can tell us much about how individual states conceived of themselves, how they functioned, and how they pursued their own expansion. Thus, the means chosen for stamping out ‘toryism’ in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Ireland, which focused on regular military patrols supplemented with secret negotiations to set some bandits against others, reflects both the militarism of the English regime in Ireland and the stark limitations of its civic reach.⁷ In Valencia, the favoured tactic was to induce bandit leaders into military service in exchange for a pardon, an approach that speaks to the financial weakness of Spanish regional government, as well as

Entrepreneurs: Eric Hobsbawm and Banditry in Iran, the Middle East and North Africa,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 52, no. 5 (2016): 845–70

⁵ G. Seal, “The Robin Hood Principle: Folklore, History and the Social Bandit,” *Journal of Folklore Research* 46, no.1 (2009): 67–89.

⁶ M. J. Braddick, *State Formation in Early Modern England, c. 1500–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 151.

⁷ S. J. Connolly, *Religion, Law and Power: The Making of Protestant Ireland, 1660–1760* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 203–10.

the legal constraints often placed upon its activities.⁸ From a slightly different perspective, the problem of banditry, much exaggerated in print, was used by various polities within the Holy Roman Empire to foster a sense of ‘national’ belonging and to enhance the legitimacy of the state, which presented itself as the best solution.⁹ The suppression of banditry, therefore, could both shed light on the project of state-formation, and actively further it. Conversely, the persistence of banditry could be one marker of a dysfunctional state, as, for example, in Catalonia, whose long-term problems with banditry can be attributed, at least in part, to lack of a firm government lead, coupled with the reluctance of certain sections within Catalan society to countenance the disappearance of bandits, who were often drafted in to help pursue factional feuds. Disagreement about how to deal with banditry, indeed, may have been a contributory factor to the complete breakdown of Catalan governance during the rising of 1640.¹⁰

The potential of Scottish evidence for offering useful perspectives on these issues remains under-explored. The relationship between banditry and elite feuds, particularly in the Borders, has received stimulating attention, but this form of brigandage was already in retreat by 1600, and had almost completely been eradicated prior to the accession of Charles I.¹¹ Banditry was more enduringly associated with the Highlands, and much has been done to trace the causes and nature of the phenomenon, with attention usually falling on the formative role of long-term social change, government

⁸ H. Kamen, *Spain in the Later Seventeenth Century* (London: Longman, 1980), 207–12.

⁹ U. Danke, “Bandits and the State: Robbers and the Authorities in the Holy Roman Empire in the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries,” in *The German Underworld: Deviants and Outcasts in German History*, ed. R. J. Evans (London: Routledge, 1988), 75–107.

¹⁰ E. Belenguer, “Bandits, Banditry and Royal Power in Catalonia between the 16th and 17th Centuries,” *Catalan Historical Review* 8 (2015): 45–57.

¹¹ J. Wormald, *Lords and Men in Scotland: Bonds of Manrent, 1442–1603* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1985); K. M. Brown, *Bloodfeud in Scotland 1573–1625: Violence, Justice and Politics in an Early Modern Society* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1986); A. Groundwater, *The Scottish Middle March, 1573–1625: Power, Kinship, Allegiance* (London: Boydell Press, 2010), chapter 5.

pressure, and civil disorder.¹² This article approaches the question from a rather different perspective, however, by applying the lens of state-formation. In general terms, the persistence of banditry in the seventeenth-century Highlands has been seen as characteristic of a weak Scottish state that was unable to exert meaningful control over its distant territories, or which did so ineptly and even counterproductively.¹³ Such a judgement, however, sits uncomfortably with the wider literature on Scottish state-formation. Scholars have widely characterized seventeenth-century governments as authoritarian, expansionist, and, in at least one account, ‘absolutist’ at the centre. At the same time, however, they have noted this emergent state’s thoroughgoing decentralization, in the sense that the practical exercise of day-to-day power belonged principally to local elites, be they landlords, urban office-holders, or, particularly, nobles, all of whom were therefore *de facto* agents of ‘the state.’¹⁴ Discussion of Highland banditry through the prism of

¹² A. I. Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce, and the House of Stuart* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1996), especially chapters 1 and 4; A. I. Macinnes, “Lochaber – The Last Bandit Country, c.1600–c.1750,” *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, xlv (2004–6): 1–21; A. Kennedy, *Governing Gaeldom: The Scottish Highlands and the Restoration State* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), chapter 2.

¹³ See, for example, M. Fry, *Wild Scots: Four Hundred Years of Highland History* (London: John Murray, 2005), chapter 1; M. Lee, ‘Dearest Brother’: *Lauderdale, Tweeddale and Scottish Politics, 1660–1674* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2010), 178; M. Lynch, “James VI and the ‘Highland Problem’,” in *The Reign of James VI*, eds. J. Goodare and M. Lynch (East Linton, 2000), 208–27; P. Hopkins, *Glencoe and the End of the Highland War* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1990); Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart*, chapter 2; D. Stevenson, *Highland Warrior: Alasdair MacColla and the Civil Wars* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1980), chapter 11.

¹⁴ J. Goodare, *State and Society in Early Modern Scotland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); J. Goodare, *The Government of Scotland 1560–1625* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); C. Jackson, *Restoration Scotland, 1660–1690: Royalist Politics, Religion and Ideas* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003); Lee, ‘Dearest Brother’; A. I. Macinnes, “William of Orange – ‘Disaster for Scotland?’” in *Redefining William III: The Impact of the King-Stadholder in International Context*, eds. E. Mijers and D. Onnekink (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 201–23; L. A.

an absent or inept 'state' is therefore conceptually simplistic, and it is to this issue that the present article hopes to speak.

Focusing on three distinct levels—central government, the local elite, and the local community—this article aims to explore the various strategies deployed for suppressing the activity of Highland bandits during the seventeenth century, and to use these as a tool for uncovering the working political dynamics of the early modern state in Scotland. It demonstrates that tackling bandit activity was a shared effort requiring each level to work in tandem, and that the failure of any one element to co-operate with the others, or at least not stand in their way, inevitably resulted in banditry remaining unchecked. This suggests that historians are correct in their recent tendency to conceptualize 'the state' as a shared project between rulers and ruled, while also acting as a reminder that this symbiosis extended beyond the politically active classes to incorporate local communities as well.

I.

Scottish central government regarded banditry—understood here as the activity, typically robbery, 'sorning' (forcibly extracting free quarter and provisions), and occasionally kidnapping and murder, of the landless brigands generally referred to in contemporary sources as 'broken men'—as an affront to its own dignity and a threat to the health and security of the kingdom.¹⁵ This was made explicit by the Privy Council, reflecting in 1635 upon the activities of the Aberdeenshire gang surrounding Patrick 'Gilderoy' MacGregor:

M. Stewart, "The 'Rise' of the State?" in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Scottish History*, eds. T. M. Devine and J. Wormald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 220–35; L. A. M. Stewart, *Rethinking the Scottish Revolution: Covenanted Scotland, 1637–1651* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); K. M. Brown, *Noble Power in Scotland from the Reformation to the Revolution* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011).

¹⁵ For more discussion about the nature of Highland banditry in this period, see A. Kennedy, "Deviance, Marginality, and the Highland Bandit in Seventeenth-Century Scotland," *Social History*, forthcoming.

Having wearied with the peace and quietnes quhilk of lait yeeres under his Majesties blessed government wes established in the Hielands of this kingdome, and preferring the wicked and theevish trade of thair infamous predecessors to the obedience of the law and to all good order and honestie, they have brokin louse and associat unto themeselffes a lawlesse byke of infamous and theevish lymmars with whome they goe ravaging athort the countrie, and in all places where they may be maister they sorne upon his Majesteis good subjects, taking frome thame all and everie thing that comes narrest to thair hands, and where they find anie opposition or resistance they threaten his Majesties subjects with all kynde of extremitie and sometimes with death.¹⁶

This understanding of the threat posed by banditry—which remained broadly consistent across the seventeenth century, irrespective of changes in the aims and strategies of wider Highland policy¹⁷—allowed its suppression to be invoked as justification for expansion in the power or reach of central government, especially in the second half of the century.¹⁸ The Scottish Parliament, in granting William and Mary the right to establish a judicial commission for the

¹⁶ D. Masson and P. H. Brown, eds., *The Register of the Privy Council of Scotland [RPCS], 2nd Series*, 8 vols (Edinburgh: H.M. General Register House, 1899–1908), vi, 128.

¹⁷ On developments in seventeenth-century Highland policy, see Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart*; S. Theiss, “The Western Highlands and Islands and Central Government 1616–1645,” in *Scotland in the Age of Two Revolution*, eds. S. Adams and J. Goodare (Woodbridge: Ashgate, 2014), 41–58; A. Kennedy, “Civility, order and the highlands in Cromwellian Britain,” *Innes Review* 69, no. 1 (2018): 49–69; A. Kennedy, “Military Rule, Protectoral Government and the Scottish Highlands, c.1654–60,” *Scottish Archives* 23 (2017): 80–102; A. Kennedy, *Governing Gaeldom*; A. Kennedy, “Managing the Early Modern Periphery: Highland Policy and the Highland Judicial Commission, c.1692–c.1705,” *Scottish Historical Review* 96, no. 1 (2017): 32–60.

¹⁸ Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart*, 130–7.

Highlands in 1693, made this dynamic explicit when it noted that “depredations and robberies may be the more effectually punished and restrained by virtue of their majesties’ royall authority,” thereby positioning not only the organs of the government, but also the very idea of ‘public’ authority as the natural remedy to bandit-related disorder.¹⁹

The government might go about suppressing the threat of banditry, and exploiting the state-forming cover it provided, in a number of ways. The most straightforward was criminal prosecution. Where possible, bandits were captured and put to trial. This was the fate of some of the period’s most notorious brigands, including John Roy Macfarlane (1624), Gilderoy (1636), Lachlan Mackintosh (1666), Patrick Roy MacGregor (1667), Finlay MacGibbon (1669) and his brothers (1676), and Alasdair Mor MacDonald (1701–4).²⁰ The government preferred trials to take place in Edinburgh, so that, when in 1637 Sir Alexander Irvine, sheriff of Aberdeen captured an associate of Gilderoy’s named John Dow Braibner (known as ‘the light horseman’), the Privy Council swiftly ordered that he be transferred to Edinburgh for trial, rather than facing justice in Aberdeen.²¹ Partly this was a matter of jurisdiction, since the forms of robbery and murder associated with bandits were usually reserved to the central criminal courts, although in practice that did not stop other bandits, such as the Donald MacDonald executed by the sheriff of Moray in 1632, from being tried elsewhere.²² But the government’s emphasis on trial in Edinburgh was also linked to a

¹⁹ K. M. Brown et al., eds., *The Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707* (St Andrews, 2007–19), www.rps.ac.uk, 1693/4/124.

²⁰ R. Pitcairn, ed., *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland*, 3 vols (Edinburgh: William Tait, 1833), iii, 565–8; NRS, High Court Books of Adjournal, 1631–7, JC2/7, 333v–335r; NRS, High Court Books of Adjournal, 1661–6, JC2/10, 275v–278r; NRS, High Court Books of Adjournal, 1666–9, JC2/12, 87v–91r and at 358v–363v; NRS, JC2/12, 3576–v; NRS, High Court Books of Adjournal, 1673–8, JC2/14, 274v–281r; NRS, PC1/52, Acta, 1699–1703, 286–7, 307, 309–10, 323–6, 329, 332, 333–5, 384–5, 422–4, 445–6 and at 486–7.

²¹ *RPCS, 2nd Series*, vi, 379–80.

²² John Spalding, *The History of the Troubles and Memorable Transactions in Scotland from the Year 1624 to 1645*, 2 vols (Edinburgh: Bannatyne Clun, 1828), i, 25.

clear desire to exploit the capital's larger stage for exemplary purposes, as underlined by judges' propensity for imposing unusually theatrical punishments on bandits. Gilderoy, for instance, was sentenced to be hanged on an especially heightened gibbet, after which his head and right hand would be cut off and displayed "vpon the eister netherbow port of Edinburgh," while the bodies of the newly executed MacGibbon brothers were "hanged up in chaines" on the "Gallowlie" between Leith and Edinburgh.²³ Prosecution was also valued because it offered opportunities for information gathering, never more overtly than in the case of the Aberdeen- and Banffshire bandit Patrick Roy MacGregor. After being sentenced to death in March 1667, MacGregor's execution was repeatedly delayed until May 1668. This was done in order to subject MacGregor to extensive questioning—including under torture—as to the extent of his crimes, but also, and more importantly, to investigate widespread rumours that he had enjoyed covert backing from powerful individuals. MacGregor eventually confessed, identifying Charles Gordon, 1st earl of Aboyne, as his patron and occasional employer.²⁴

As an extension of their efforts at prosecution, governments occasionally established entirely new criminal jurisdictions aimed at bandits. Sometimes these were highly targeted, as in the case of the temporary justiciary court established at Elgin in December 1641 to try the suspected reseters (i.e. suppliers of shelter and sustenance) of the recently deceased northeast bandit, John Dow Geir.²⁵ In other cases the new jurisdictions created were more broadly focused. In 1620, for instance, George Gordon, 1st marquis of Huntly was granted a justiciary commission to try all criminals, including

²³ NRS, JC2/7, 335r; NRS, JC2/14, 281r; John Lauder, *Historical Notices of Scottish Affairs*, 2 vols (Edinburgh: Sc, 1848), ii, 136.

²⁴ P. H. Brown et al, eds., *The Register of the Privy Council of Scotland [RPCS], 3rd Series*, 16 vols (Edinburgh: H.M. General Register House, 1908–70), ii, 125–26, 164–65, 261, 266, 272, 278, 433, 438 and at 444; National Library of Scotland [NLS], Yester Papers: Miscellaneous, MS.7033, ff.128r–129r.

²⁵ *RPCS, 2nd Series*, vii, 488–94.

bandits, within Badenoch, Strathdon, and the surrounding regions.²⁶ The Covenanters went further in 1641 by appointing separate judicial panels in ten Highland or Highland-fringe sheriffdoms, each composed of five to ten local luminaries and overseen by the Justice General, Sir Thomas Hope, and charged with “trying and punisheing of all theeves, sorners, robbers and thair ressetters.”²⁷ A rather different approach was tried by the Restoration regime, which between 1667 and 1678 appointed a series of lieutenants—successively John Murray, 2nd earl of Atholl, Sir James Campbell of Lawers, Major George Grant, and Angus MacDonald, Lord Macdonnell—who were instructed to arrest and prosecute any robbers they could catch.²⁸ But probably the most significant manifestation of jurisdictional proliferation was the Highland Commission. In existence between 1682 and 1688, and again from 1694 to c.1705, the Commission split the Highlands into a number of sub-regions, within each of which a panel of named commissioners was charged with suppressing the depredations of ‘broken men.’ While both iterations of the Highland Commission interpreted their briefs broadly, engaging in a range of administrative and arbitration activities, their core focus remained catching, trying, and punishing robbers.²⁹ Dominating Highland policy for the final twenty years of the century, the Highland Commissions thus stood as the clearest exemplars of the Scottish state’s readiness to create new jurisdictions to help it affect the prosecution of bandits.

Alongside prosecution, governments could use policy initiatives to tackle the problem of banditry. Occasionally this was done directly, as for instance in November 1635, when an act of the Privy

²⁶ J. H. Burton and D. Masson, eds., *The Register of the Privy Council of Scotland [RPCS], 1st Series*, 14 vols (Edinburgh: H.M. General Register House, 1877–1898), xii, 239–40.

²⁷ *RPCS, 2nd Series*, vii, 164–170.

²⁸ *RPCS, 3rd Series*, ii, 324–9; iii, 87–90; iv, 135–7; v, 92–3, 243–6 and at 496–7; vi, 1–2.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, vi, 393–8; W. J. Hardy et al, eds., *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of William and Mary*, 11 vols (London: H.M. Stationary Office, 1895–1937), xi, 337–44. The Highland Commissions are discussed at length in Kennedy, *Governing Gaeldom*, 237–49, and Kennedy, “Managing the Early Modern Periphery.”

Council specifically outlawed the provision of any assistance to Gilderoy and his gang.³⁰ Usually, however, policy solutions were more generalized. One of the provisions of the Statutes of Iona (1609), for instance, was for the restriction of chiefs' traditionally lavish hospitality, an effort to sever the presumed (though in reality tendentious) link between 'broken men' and their supporters within clan hierarchies.³¹ Bandits themselves were more explicitly targeted in 1670, when the Privy Council forbade Highlanders from maintaining armed retinues, and again when the Highland Commissions banned Highlanders from travelling more than seven miles from their homes while armed. The Commission also tried to use policy to undercut bandits' stock-in-trade of cattle-lifting by outlawing the sale of cattle by Highlanders unless they could produce a testimonial from their landlords. Efforts to shut down illicit droving routes, especially across waterways, were also made in the 1680s and again in the 1690s.³² The extent to which any of these policies took effect on the ground is open to question, but their mere introduction is testament to the state's willingness to marshal its legislative powers in an attempt to suppress Highland banditry.

When legalistic means were deemed insufficient, the state's military capacity could be brought to bear against bandits. Sometimes this was done in a direct, targeted way, an approach unsurprisingly characteristic of the Cromwellian regime, which, for example, dispatched the small garrison housed at Braemar to capture the suspected bandit John Baxter in 1659.³³ This kind of militaristic

³⁰ *RPCS, 2nd Series*, vi, 128.

³¹ *RPCS, 1st Series*, ix, 26–30; x, 777–8. For discussion of the Statutes and their meaning, see A. Cathcart, "The Statutes of Iona: The Archipelagic Context," *Journal of British Studies* 49, no. 1 (2010): 4–27; J. Goodare, "The Statutes of Iona in Context," *Scottish Historical Review* 77 (1998): 31–57; M. MacGregor, "The Statutes of Iona: Text and Context," *Innes Review* 57, no. 2 (2006): 111–181; Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart*, 65–71.

³² *RPCS, 3rd Series*, iii, 222; vii, 507–15; NRS, PC1/49, 251–9; NRS, Register of the Commissioners for Pacifying the Highlands, 1694, SC54/17/1/5, 10.

³³ Worcester College Library, Oxford, Clarke Manuscripts, volume XLIX, Abstracts of warrants, orders and passes, September 1658–October 1665, f.68r.

solution was not, however, the sole preserve of the Commonwealth; a detachment of the Covenanting army at Aberdeen was, for instance, sent in 1640 to pursue John Dow Geir, while the capture of the MacGibbon brothers in the 1670s was accomplished by “a partie of his Majesties forces” deployed specifically for that purpose.³⁴ From 1660 onwards, however, the military responses devised against Highland bandits grew increasingly generalized. Between 1667 and 1678, the lieutenancies awarded to Atholl and his successors were accompanied by permission to raise ‘Independent Companies,’ probably around 100-strong, to assist with the campaign against ‘broken men.’ These were replaced between 1678 and 1681 with ‘Highland Companies,’ two 150-strong secondments from the regular army charged with hunting robbers, before being revived in 1701, once again charged with suppressing “the depredations and robberies so frequently committed in the highlands.”³⁵ Equally characteristic of the post-1660 period was a growing attraction to the idea of settling permanent garrisons to tackle banditry.³⁶ The Restoration regime returned repeatedly, albeit unsuccessfully, to the idea of establishing a garrison at Inverlochy to help overawe brigands, an aim eventually realized in 1690 when William II established Fort William with a complement of 300 men.³⁷ By 1699, the utility of garrisons as an anti-bandit measure was so widely assumed that George Mackenzie, viscount of Tarbat was suggesting that a chain of small garrisons should be established between Invermoriston and Loch Hourne to hem in “the Highland robbers” of Lochaber.³⁸ Although never adopted, Tarbat’s proposal reflected the fact that using the state’s military might against banditry, in both

³⁴ Spalding, *History of the Troubles*, i, 222–3; NRS, JC2/14, 276r.

³⁵ *RPS*, A1700/10/51.

³⁶ Garrisoning had precedents under both the Covenanters and, especially, the Commonwealth, but it was only after 1660 that garrisons came to be explicitly linked with suppressing ‘broken men’ in particular.

³⁷ Kennedy, *Governing Gaeldom*, 131–41; Kennedy, “Managing the Early Modern Periphery,” 46–8; Macinnes, “William of Orange,” 208–12; Hopkins, *Glencoe*, 238.

³⁸ W. Fraser, ed., *The Earls of Cromartie: Their Kindred, Country and Correspondence*, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1879), i, 136–8.

targeted and general ways, had by the end of the century become a mainstream concept.

Through judicial and military means, therefore, the organs of Scottish central government regularly threw themselves into uprooting banditry in and around the Highlands. In this, Scotland resembled other early modern states, the usual aim of whose governments was the complete eradication of the problem as a means of demonstrating the power of the state.³⁹ But in some international cases, states' response to banditry was not straightforward suppression, but attempted co-option—that is, finding a means of using bandits, and particularly their expertise in irregular warfare, to the state's advantage.⁴⁰ Scottish governments proved very adept at exploiting the private levies of Highland elites in this way, perhaps most notably in response to the Earl of Argyll's rebellion against James VII in 1685, when a series of requests sent to major clan chiefs resulted, on paper at least, in a huge levy of around 8,000 irregular troops.⁴¹ Perhaps because it already had access to such a rich pool of irregulars, there is no indication that the co-option, rather than suppression, of Highland bandits was ever seriously considered by the Scottish state. There were, admittedly, rumours that some brigands had been pressed into the 'Independent Companies' during the 1660s, 1670s, and, particularly, after 1701, and it was also suggested that the forces raised in the northeast to fight for Charles I in the Bishops' Wars (1639–40) included members of two local bandit gangs, led by John Dow Geir and James Grant respectively.⁴² In general, however, governments seem to have focused their efforts on uprooting bandit activity, and the ambivalent response

³⁹ Danke, "Bandits and the State," 100–4.

⁴⁰ K. Hignett, "Co-option or Criminalisation? The State, Border Communities and Crime in Early Modern Europe," *Global Crime* 9, nos.1–2 (2008): 35–51.

⁴¹ A. Kennedy, "Rebellion, Government and the Scottish Response to Argyll's Rising of 1685," *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies* 36, no. 1 (2016): 51–8.

⁴² O. Airy, ed., *The Lauderdale Papers* (Oxford: Camden Society, 1884–5), ii, 136–7; Fraser, *Earls of Cromartie*, i, 184–6; James Gordon, *History of Scots Affairs from MDCXXXVII to MDCXLI*, 3 vols (Aberdeen: Spalding Club, 1841), ii, 267–8

demonstrated, for example, by Habsburg authorities towards the criminally-inclined Uskok community of Dalmatia seems to have had no observable analogue in Scotland's case.

II.

Scotland, in common with most European states in this period, lacked the infrastructure to support sustained or concerted actions in the locality on the part of central authorities.⁴³ Instead, governance relied on the active cooperation of the locality itself, and this was certainly true when it came to suppressing banditry. Like central government, localities had good reason for wanting to do so: banditry was, after all, inherently disruptive and damaging, and it also tended to attract the wrong kind of attention from central government.⁴⁴ Moreover, localities were often proactive in drawing the attentions of central government to discrete bandit challenges. In 1661, for instance, the shires of Stirling, Clackmannan, Peth, Forfar, Kincardine, Aberdeen, Banff, Nairn, Inverness, Ross, Sutherland, Caithness, and Moray banded together to submit a general petition to the Scottish Parliament for assistance against brigands:

Forasmuch as sewerall depredationes slaughters and wther enormous practices have bein laitlie committed and mor at this day than in former tymes by sundire laules broken persones liveing in and resorteing to the saids shyres against many of their peaceable neighbouris liveing in the low lands as can be made to appear in sewerall particullars And that is feared that the same will rather probleble increase then deminish wnles remeid be provydit.⁴⁵

The petitioners made a specific request for the establishment of armed watches in Highland areas, while also asking more generally

⁴³ J. Black, *Kings, Nobles and Commoners. States and Societies in Early Modern Europe: A Revisionist History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), chapter 2.

⁴⁴ Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce, and the House of Stuart*, 125.

⁴⁵ NRS, Supplementary Parliamentary Papers, 1661, PA7/9/1/76.

that “some solid and effectuall course” be developed “for preventing and redressing such abuses and prejudices in tyme comeing.” Such local demand for state action against bandits underlines the extent to which state-formation was not just a project sponsored by the centre, but rather a shared endeavour between rulers and ruled. More immediately, however, it also indicates that the locality always had a vital part to play in the struggle against ‘broken men.’

The most important local actors in the suppression of banditry were regional elites, who regularly received orders from central government to apprehend brigands. Thus, a group of northeastern luminaries, led by George Gordon, earl of Enzie, was commissioned in 1612 to capture a gang of broken men who had recently committed a series of “reiffis, privie, stouthis, slauchteris, mutilatiounis, soirningis, and utheris insolencyis.”⁴⁶ Similarly, James Grant of Freuchie was in August 1660 specifically requested by the Committee of Estates, the interim government of the newly restored Charles II, to apprehend Donald MacDonald *alias* Gavine Cuin (also known as ‘Halkit Stirk,’ meaning streaked or spotted bullock), and present him for trial, a request that Freuchie had fulfilled by the following October, when the Committee promised “to protect and maintaine yow and your followers for doeing so good a work for his Majestie and the peace of the Kingdome.”⁴⁷ In other cases, the lead given by central government was not quite so specific. Thus, when Archibald Campbell, Lord Lorne, apprehended Gilderoy in mid-1636, he did so without having received explicit instructions, but with the knowledge that the government, which had recently put a £1,000 bounty on Gilderoy’s head, badly, and vocally, wanted him caught.⁴⁸

A related way of co-opting the power of regional elites was to compel them to capture any of their own tenants or clansmen suspected of being bandits. This had been enshrined as a cornerstone

⁴⁶ *RPCS, 1st Series*, ix, 421

⁴⁷ W. Fraser, *The Chiefs of Grant*, 3 vols (Edinburgh, 1883), ii, 19–20; NRS, PA11/12, Register and Minute Book of the Committee of Estates, 1660, f.50r.

⁴⁸ *RPCS, 2nd Series*, vi, 219–20 and at 353–4; Robert Gordon, *A Genealogical History of the Earldom of Sutherland* (Edinburgh, 1813), 418–2.

of law and order policy in the Highlands since the introduction of the General Band by James VI in 1587, but its efficacy as a tool against banditry was unclear, since bandits tended to be ‘broken men’ who did not readily acknowledge any lord—a problem recognized by the Privy Council’s specialist Highland Committee when it suggested in 1699 that Highland chiefs, instead of being held liable only for their proven dependants, should also be liable for the actions of anybody who had received provision on their lands for a period of more than 48 hours.⁴⁹ Nonetheless, some efforts were made to hold chiefs liable for bandit activity, especially later in the century. Archibald Campbell, 9th earl of Argyll, was fined £7,000 Scots in 1667 for a series of robberies committed against Magdalene Scrymgeour, Lady Drum, on the twin grounds that some of the bandits responsible were his tenants, and the goods they stole had been concealed on his lands.⁵⁰ Under pressure like this, there was a strong incentive for Highland elites to make sure that none of their dependents engaged in banditry or corresponded with bandits, and some clearly reacted accordingly. Both Angus MacDonald, Lord Macdonnell, and Alexander MacDonald of Keppoch were noted during the Restoration for their efforts to shake off their clans’ reputations for condoning banditry, although in Keppoch’s case only at the cost of being murdered by disaffected elements of his own clan in 1663.⁵¹ John Campbell, 1st earl of Breadalbane, clearly had a comparable aim when, in 1687, he received a bond of manrent wherein the giver, Duncan Macnab, undertook not to reset or correspond with any broken men, thieves, sorners, or vagabonds.⁵²

⁴⁹ J. Allardyce, ed., *Historical Papers relating to the Jacobite Period 1699–1750*, 2 vols (Aberdeen: New Spalding Clun, 1895–1896), i, 1–3.

⁵⁰ *RPCS, 3rd Series*, ii, 329–32; Edinburgh University Library, La.III.354, Lauderdale Correspondence, 1657–98, f.145, Sir Peter Wedderburne to the Earl of Lauderdale, 27 July 1667.

⁵¹ NRS, GD112/39/106/7; NRAS832, Papers of the Maitland Family, Earls of Lauderdale, bundle 63/55, “Information Concerning the Highlands,” 1677. Keppoch’s case is a neat example of the importance, explored later, of securing the acceptance of local communities in the suppression of banditry—for whatever reason, Keppoch failed to secure this, and thus the project failed. Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce, and the House of Stuart*, 50.

⁵² NRS, Breadalbane Muniments, GD112/24/1/46.

But elite efforts to suppress banditry were not always precipitated by direct pressure from central government. The capture of bandits, in particular, was often accomplished by members of the elite working on their own initiative, in line with their generalized responsibility for keeping the peace within their spheres of influence. This was the capacity in which Alexander Culquhoun of Luss seems to have been working in 1610 when he effected the capture of three bandits—Gillespie McMulvoir McLauren, Donald McIlvy, and Johnne McIlcallum VcAndro McFarlane—whom he subsequently had incarcerated in Dumbarton Castle while the Privy Council was informed.⁵³ It was, similarly, as sheriff and premier peer of Moray, rather than as an agent of Edinburgh, that Alexander Stewart, 4th earl of Moray, captured the Speyside bandit Lachlan Mackintosh in 1665.⁵⁴ Slightly different, but equally suggestive of elites' capacity for responding independently to the challenge of banditry, were the actions of William Forbes of Leslie in 1643. After his servant James Andersone was captured by the gang of John Dow Geir younger (son of the identically named bandit mentioned above) and carried as a prisoner to "town of Langlandis" Leslie unilaterally mounted a rescue operation that succeeded in liberating Andersone from his captors.⁵⁵

While elites' contribution to the suppression of banditry most commonly took the form of effecting capture or giving chase, their social prestige was such that they might also be involved in other ways. They could, for example, take a leading role in organizing defensive measures, so that, for instance, Breadalbane spent several years "apoynting his own Tennents" to mount an armed watch on his Perthshire estates against the depredations of broken men, before being invited in 1687 to accept a voluntary contribution of £3 per markland from his senior tenants to help organize a more professional guard.⁵⁶ Elites might also be involved in a broadly investigative capacity. In 1657, James Ogilvie, 1st earl of Airlie, having suffered a spate of robberies from his estates in Forfarshire,

⁵³ *RPCS, 1st Series*, ix, 89.

⁵⁴ NRS, JC2/10, 277v–278r.

⁵⁵ S. A. Gillon and J. I. Smith et al, eds., *Selected Justiciary Cases, 1624–1650* (Edinburgh: Stair Society, 1953–74), iii, 574–6.

⁵⁶ NRS, GD112/43/15/19.

sought to invite Angus MacDonald of Glencoe to “wndertak for Taskell to try the busines,” and two years later, while the same case was being investigated by the Cromwellian authorities at Inverlochy, two Highland chiefs, Ewan Cameron of Lochiel and John Maclean of Ardgour, were on hand to offer intelligence and act as translators.⁵⁷ Local elites might, finally, attempt to act as points of mediation between bandits and the communities they targeted. Perhaps the clearest evidence of this relates to the kidnap in 1666 of John Lyon of Muiresk by Patrick Roy MacGregor and his gang. John Gordon of Baldornie, having heard about the abduction, rode to meet MacGregor and negotiate Muiresk’s release. The two men met on the banks of the River Avon, but Baldornie could not persuade MacGregor to clemency, and the next day he received word that the bodies of Muiresk and his son, Alexander, were to be found dumped on the Braes of Abernethy.⁵⁸

Local elites, then, were heavily implicated in the suppression of bandits, but it is worth noting that this was in tension with the simultaneous propensity of some regional grandees to support them. This is discussed in more depth elsewhere, but one example will serve to illustrate the difficulty.⁵⁹ James Grant, sometimes styled ‘of Charron,’ was initially part of the Grant clan elite, but was driven to banditry early in the 1630s as a consequence of an ancient feud with the Grants of Ballindalloch. His activities, committed alongside a gang perhaps up to 50-strong and usually targeted at the Ballindalloch sept and its dependents, incorporated multiple robberies, kidnappings, and murders throughout the eastern Highlands, but Grant evaded capture because he enjoyed the protection of the Gordon family, to whom he was related through his mother. Gordon patronage was confirmed in 1639 when the earl of Aboyne awarded Grant a commission in the forces he was raising to fight for Charles I in the Bishops’ Wars, and this was enough to precipitate an unsuccessful attempt to have George Gordon, 2nd marquis of Huntly, censured in Parliament for his family’s protection

⁵⁷ NRS, Airlie Papers, GD16/41/379, Airlie to Alexander Murray, n.d. ‘Taskall’, or tascal, refers to a payment or reward demanded for the recovery of stolen goods.

⁵⁸ NRS, JC2/12, 87v–91r.

⁵⁹ Kennedy, “Deviance, Marginality, and the Highland Bandit.”

of Grant.⁶⁰ While elite support for bandits, and in some cases covert employment of them, was therefore not unknown, it does seem to have been unusual. Much more typically, as we have seen, the disruptive, damaging impact of banditry ensured that elite focus was on its suppression.

III.

While governmental and elite responses to banditry are the best known, ‘broken men’ were also frequently brought down by more informal community action. Much of this was purely reactive, representing an instinctive defence mechanism on the part of the local communities to particular bandit attacks. Around 1602, for instance, a very large cattle raid on the lands of Glen Isla provoked a spontaneous convocation of the surrounding countrymen, who attempted unsuccessfully to reclaim their livestock, allegedly with the loss of fifteen or sixteen lives.⁶¹ On a smaller scale, Lachlan Mackintosh was obliged to fight off several of the servants of John Lyon of Muiresk who chased after him and his associates following their theft of some 60 oxen from Muiresk’s lands of Balchirie, wounding at least one, John Downe.⁶² The settlement of Cromlix in Perthshire did not escape so lightly following a raid by the MacGibbon brothers in 1676, at least according to one eye-witness:

He sawe them take up and cary away with them tuo
webs of linning cloath And depons that having followed
efter to recover the cloath the pennells and ther
companie shott fyve severall shott with the second
wherof they killed the deceast William Buy and did
wound John Buy his son with another shott.⁶³

⁶⁰ Gordon, *Genealogical History*, 459–60; Gordon, *History of Scots Affairs*, ii, 267–8; John Spalding, *Memorialls of the Trubles in Scotland and in England. AD 1624–AD 1645*, 2 vols (Aberdeen: Spalding Club, 1850–1), i, 52–4.

⁶¹ *RPCS, 1st Series*, vi, 500–1.

⁶² NRS, JC2/10, 277r.

⁶³ NRS, JC2/14, 279v–279r.

It was not always the case, however, that bandits would successfully beat back community resistance. John Dow Geir elder discovered this to his cost when he attempted to extort blackmail money from the Speyside settlement of Garmouth in 1639. After “the countrie was advertised, and shortly conveyed,” Geir found himself forced to retreat by ferry to the “Stanners,” probably referring to Stony Island in the upper River Spey. Unable to reach the bandits, the “countrie people [...] begin to persew them with shotts,” one of which, fired by one Alexander Andersone, hit and killed Geir himself.⁶⁴ Even more spectacular was the resistance mounted by the townsfolk of Keith in Banffshire when Patrick Roy MacGregor attempted with his 30 to 40-strong gang to extort protection money in early 1667. While he awaited their response, allegedly holed up in an alehouse, two local lairds, Alexander Gordon of Glengarrock and John Ogilvie of Milton, surreptitiously mustered “divers of his majesties frie Leidges Inhabitants within the Toune and countrie men who wer their for the tyme” and led them in a counter-attack that not only expelled MacGregor’s gang from the town, but captured the man himself, paving the way for his eventual execution in 1668.⁶⁵ Given their familiarity with violence and tendency to be heavily armed, it is no surprise that bandits could often repel *ad hoc* resistance, but the fates of both John Dow Geir and Patrick Roy MacGregor demonstrate nonetheless that an inflamed community could prove very dangerous to them.

In some cases, community efforts to suppress banditry evolved beyond reacting on a case-by-case basis into something more organized and premeditated. On an individual scale, Alasdair Grassich, apparently an ordinary man from the northeast, was in 1638 commended by the Privy Council for killing Johne Ferreis McGregor, an associate of Gilderoy, and rewarded with a payment of 100 merks. Grassich, however, explicitly claimed this money by virtue of a bounty the Council had put on the heads of all Gilderoy’s

⁶⁴ Spalding, *History of the Troubles*, i, 174–5; Gordon, *Genealogical History*, 496.

⁶⁵ JC2/12, 88v; James Fraser, *Chronicles of the Frasers: The Wardlaw Manuscript entitled Polichronicon Seu Policratia Temporum, or, The True Genealogy of the Frasers, 916–1674* ed. W Mackay (Edinburgh: Scottish History Society, 1905), 136.

followers two years previously, suggesting his was a calculated, financially motivated manhunt.⁶⁶ Another northeastern bandit, James Grant, had likely escaped a similar fate two years previously, when he narrowly evaded a surprise attack launched on his hideout in Strathbogie by some of the Marquis of Huntly's tenants, and yet a third brigand, Lachlan Mackintosh, mentor of Patrick Roy MacGregor, was "apprehendit as a comone and notorious theiff and robber be the Countrie people of Strraspey" at some point in the early 1660s, albeit he managed to escape from his resulting incarceration at Ballindalloch.⁶⁷ A slightly different approach was adopted against John Dow Geir younger. He was coaxed into a drinking session with a Mr William Forbes in 1643, and once their respective companions had fallen asleep, Forbes suddenly produced a pistol and attempted to murder Geir. This would-be assassination failed, however, and Geir escaped with just a wounded shoulder.⁶⁸

For more vulnerable communities in particular, reactive suppression of banditry proved insufficient, leading them to experiment instead with preventative measures. One approach was demonstrated by the heritors of Kincardine and Alford in 1700. Sick of being terrorized by a range of bandits, especially the trio of Alasdair Mor, Angus MacDonald ('Halkit Steir'), and John MacDonald ('The Laird of Glendey'), 45 of them signed a bond wherein they undertook to pay a voluntary stent of 1 merk per £100 of valued rent. The pot of money thereby generated would then be offered as bounties of up to 500 merks for any enterprising individuals who might capture the bandits.⁶⁹ A more usual defensive tactic, however, was to organize private armed watches, over and above any government-led initiatives.⁷⁰ This was most easily done in towns, given their small size and comparatively well-defined boundaries. Inverness, which constantly fretted about being "in the mouth of the hylands," made repeated efforts to establish a nightly,

⁶⁶ *RPCS, 1st Series*, vi, 219–20; vii, 56–7.

⁶⁷ Gordon, *Genealogical History*, 481–2; NRS, JC2/10, 88v.

⁶⁸ Spalding, *History of the Troubles*, ii, 123–4.

⁶⁹ J. Allardyce, ed., *Historical Papers relating to the Jacobite Period, 1699–1750*, 2 vols (Aberdeen: New Spalding Club, 1895), i, 20–3.

⁷⁰ Kennedy, *Governing Gaeldom*, 135–6; Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart*, 34.

twelve-man watch after 1660 with the explicit intention of securing the burgh against robbers and brigands, albeit getting the watch on a stable footing proved consistently challenging.⁷¹

But even in rural areas, armed watches proved the favoured tactic of local communities wishing to mount a corporate defence against bandits. The heritors of Lennox, for example, did this in the spring of 1680 after a gang of 20–30 robbers began targeting their lands, lifting 30 cows and horses in a single week.⁷² Further east, the inhabitants of Glen Isla, it was reported in 1633, had for several years been maintaining a twelve-man watch, active between July and September, to tackle the “Highland theeves and lymmars” accustomed to descend on Angus from the Cairngorms.⁷³ This approach was not unproblematic, however, not least because of reliance on voluntary funding from local people, which was liable to be withdrawn—and this was, indeed, the fate of the Glen Isla watch. There were also doubts as to the efficacy of armed watches, as noted by one analysis prepared for the Earl of Tweeddale in 1669:

The Charge that the Countrey is at in maintaineing of watches, betuixt dumbartane and Abirdeine amounts to more then the pey of fyve companyes and that notwithstanding of So great expence their rebundes litle or noe benefite, for besyd frequent oppressiones, ther is daylie reife and steilling to that hight that in some places of the Countrie the people hath beine forced to compound with the theives to restoir the goodes when they wer taken away from them.⁷⁴

⁷¹ W. Mackay and G. S. Laing, eds., *Records of Inverness*, 2 vols (Aberdeen: New Spalding Club, 1911–24), ii, 211; A. Kennedy, “The Urban Community in Restoration Scotland: Government, Economy and Society in Inverness, 1660–c.1688,” *Northern Scotland* 5 (2014): 36–7.

⁷² NRAS1209, Papers of the Campbell Family, Dukes of Argyll, bundle 111, item 48.

⁷³ *RPCS*, 2nd series, v, 151–2.

⁷⁴ NLS, MS7033, f.144, “Proposalles for taking order with Broken men and Suppressing thift in the highlands.”

Watches were also notorious for their tendency to evolve into extortion rackets, so much so that, for example, all the extant watches in Argyll were summarily disbanded in the autumn of 1694 so as to thwart “givers and receivers of black-maill.”⁷⁵ Finally, a watch could prove counterproductive by becoming a target for the very bandits it was aiming to repel; the MacGibbon brothers in August 1676 attacked and scattered a guard at Killin, established specifically against them by the Earl of Perth’s tenants.⁷⁶ These challenges notwithstanding, armed watches were the standard means by which discrete localities chose to organize themselves for defence against the depredations of Highland bandits, and as such they reflect the vital role played by community action, both spontaneous and planned, in suppressing banditry.

The existence of community actions like armed watches might be taken as evidence that central government was incapable of responding meaningfully to banditry, forcing localities to take matters into their own hands. But, as already suggested, this is a simplistic perspective, and it overlooks the fact, apparent from the foregoing discussion, that neither the state, local elites, nor local communities could hope to suppress banditry on their own.⁷⁷ The community required the leadership and support of regional elites, who in turn needed to retain the confidence of their dependents and the backing of central government. The government, meanwhile, could usually do little more than provide a moral lead and an overarching framework; the donkey-work of catching bandits, dispersing their networks, and breaking up the infrastructure supporting them had to be performed by those already on the ground. The consequences of any of these relationships breaking down can be gleaned from the experiences of John Murray of Aberscorse in connection with a Sutherland bandit gang, the Nielsons, as he recounted them in 1667:

Yitt the doeris thairoff, notwithstanding of being longe
agoe declaired fugitives and rebellis, and ane

⁷⁵ NRS, SC54/17/1/5, 5.

⁷⁶ NRS, JC2/14, 275v.

⁷⁷ For discussion of the same dynamic in a very different context, see Belenger, “Bandits, Banditry and Royal Power,” 52–3.

commissioun and letters of intercomuning having beine published against thame, yitt that they should be harbored and quartered quhair ever they pleis in everie corner in the cuntrey, not regarding the danger of the intercomuning no moir then if they war the kings frie liegis.⁷⁸

Aberscorse went on to explain that a judicial commission awarded to Kenneth Mackenzie, 3rd earl of Seaforth, against the Neilsons had so far been ineffectual because the local gentry preferred to await instructions from John Gordon, Lord Strathnaver, instead. Here, the lack of a firm lead from the regional elite had manifestly paralyzed the wider community in the face of Neilson depredations, while that same community's refusal to follow anybody but an absent Strathnaver hamstrung the rest of the local nobility, simultaneously undermining the state's effort to provide leadership through its commission. All this took place within a broad environment of weak government oversight, since contemporaneous developments in Highland policy prioritized the central and southern Highlands over the northern, Aberscorse's letter coming in the same year as Atholl's lieutenancy, discussed above, which covered no territory further north than Nairnshire. The depredations of the Neilson gang—which continued into the 1670s at least—are therefore a succinct demonstration of the mutual interdependence of government, social elite, and local community when it came to suppressing Highland banditry.

IV.

Highland banditry was one of the characteristic law-and-order problems of seventeenth-century Scotland. While there are some indications that elements within Scottish society, especially among the regional elite, had an ambivalent relationship with brigands, the most usual response to banditry was attempted suppression, rooted in the assumption that, as a disorderly and destabilizing phenomenon, it had no legitimate role to play in a civilized realm. The response could incorporate a number of approaches, reactive and

⁷⁸ W. Fraser, ed., *The Sutherland Book*, 3 vols (Edinburgh, 1892), 186–8.

proactive, deploying judicial, political, or military means, but most usually involved either catching particular bandits, or taking steps, very often with a martial quality, to make banditry in general more difficult. In this, Scotland broadly accorded with other societies facing comparable problems throughout contemporary Europe. The precise tactics deployed were of course highly variable—there is, for example, no evidence that the Spanish propensity for pardon-and-impressment had a direct Scottish analogue—but on a fundamental level the Scottish response to banditry was forged using a familiar conceptual toolkit.

But what is important about Scottish efforts to suppress brigandage is not so much the precise tactics used, but the interaction between those tactics and the broader socio-political context. All attempts to uproot banditry depended on at least some degree of co-operation between central government, local elites, and local communities, and without this collaboration, success was unlikely. That reflects the realities of the Scottish state, which was characterized by: a bureaucratically under-developed central administration that nonetheless claimed unfettered jurisdiction; powerful regional elites whose attention was perpetually divided between their own localities and the centres of government in Edinburgh or Whitehall; and local communities accustomed to both significant practical autonomy (more so, perhaps, than conventional assumptions about localities' dependence on powerful regional potentates tend to allow) and habitual deference to more august actors higher up the political food-chain. This was a system that guaranteed mutual interdependence, and understanding the campaign to suppress Highland banditry provides a revealing insight into the simultaneously highly diffuse and thoroughly integrated nature of political agency in the early modern Scottish state.

This analysis also has broader implications. While historians of state-formation still find significant value in explanatory models emphasizing the growth of central bureaucracies, coupled with political cultures that privileged the sovereignty of monarchs, there is also broad recognition that even the most overweening governments of the early modern period were dependent upon the

participation of local elites and institutions.⁷⁹ In revealing the workings of the Scottish state, the campaign against Highland banditry helps confirm that historians are correct to emphasize this essentially ‘magisterial’ nature of early modern polities. Perhaps more importantly, it also serves as a reminder that the project of state-formation was not simply a dialogue between central authorities and the locally powerful, but also depended upon the acquiescence, and in some cases the active collusion, of ordinary local communities. In exploring in detail the campaign against Highland bandits in seventeenth-century Scotland, then, we are reminded that we need to consider the role not just of the politically active classes, but of the entire national community, if we are properly to understand the formation and workings of the early modern state.

⁷⁹ T. Ertman, *Birth of Leviathan: Building States and Regimes in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), *passim*, but especially 6–34; Black, *Kings, Nobles and Commoners*, 21–7; Braddick, *State Formation*. In a Scottish context, these cross-cutting developments are most explicitly juggled in Goodare, *State and Society*.

**“OSTENTATIOUS BY NATURE”:
FLEMISH MATERIAL CULTURE
AT THE MARRIAGE OF JAMES IV AND
MARGARET TUDOR**

Morvern French, Historic Environment Scotland

ABSTRACT

This article considers James IV’s use of Flemish and other southern Low Countries material culture at his marriage to Margaret Tudor of England in 1503. Adding to the considerable body of scholarship on the events, which were described in detail by eyewitness John Young, Somerset Herald, it will also draw on the *Treasurer’s Accounts* and a surviving book of hours to argue that its origins—and those of the luxurious chairs, tapestries, and metalwork—were just as important as the political and diplomatic messages conveyed in their imagery and expense. Flemish goods were regarded as the pinnacle of northern European luxury and were sought after by, among others, James’s new father-in-law, Henry VII. At this critical juncture in Anglo-Scottish relations, therefore, James’s display of such objects capitalized on a common understanding of their cultural power and put him in direct competition with Henry.

Keywords: Scotland, Flanders, Low Countries, Early Modern Scotland, James IV, Margaret Tudor, material culture, royal marriage, kingship, queenship, Flemish culture, trade, art, tapestry, Anglo-Scottish, Henry VII

Introduction

The marriage of James IV of Scotland and Margaret Tudor, celebrated at Holyrood on 8 August 1503, was intended to put an end

to a lengthy period of Anglo-Scottish diplomatic instability.¹ In the 1490s James had lent his support to the Yorkist pretender Perkin Warbeck in an attempt to destabilize the kingship of Margaret's father, Henry VII of England.² Although this campaign was ultimately unsuccessful it put considerable strain on Henry's reign, leading to a popular revolt against the taxation levied to cover his costs.³ By the late 1490s the diplomatic situation was transformed, with negotiations to hammer out the details of an Anglo-Scottish marriage alliance held from 1498.

This fragile peace between the "auld enemies" was recorded by Don Pedro de Ayala, ambassador for Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon, tasked with securing peace between Scotland and England so that the latter would be an effective Spanish ally. In 1498 he wrote to his monarchs that a marriage between James and Margaret, the latter only eight years old at the time, was a means of achieving further stability.⁴ The Treaty of Perpetual Peace was

¹ I am grateful to the editor and to the anonymous peer reviewers for their helpful comments on a previous draft of this article. Any remaining errors are my own.

² Norman Macdougall, *James IV* (East Linton: Tuckwell, 1997), 130–2; David Dunlop, "The 'Masked Comedian': Perkin Warbeck's Adventures in Scotland and England from 1495 to 1497," *Scottish Historical Review* 70 (1991): 103, 121–3; Ian Arthurson, "The King's Voyage into Scotland: The War that Never Was," in *England in the Fifteenth Century: Proceedings of the 1986 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. Daniel Williams (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1987), 3–4; Norman Macdougall, "The Political Context of the Perpetual Peace (1502)," *The Forth Naturalist and Historian* 25 (2002): 72–3; Katie Stevenson, "Chivalry, British Sovereignty and Dynastic Politics: Undercurrents of Antagonism in Tudor-Stewart Relations, c. 1490–c. 1513," *Historical Research* 86 (2013): 603–4.

³ S. B. Chrimes, *Henry VII* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), 199–200.

⁴ "The Protonotary Don Pedro de Ayala, to Ferdinand and Isabella," in *Calendar of Letters, Despatches, and State Papers, relating to the Negotiations between England and Spain, preserved in the Archives at Simancas and Elsewhere*, 19 vols, eds. G. A. Bergenroth et al. (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1862–1954), vol. 1, 176, no. 210.

agreed early in 1502.⁵ However, Henry's eldest son Arthur, married to Catherine of Aragon, soon died and Margaret moved a step closer to the English throne, making Scottish domination of the British Isles an all-too-real possibility for Henry. Furthermore, the Stewart royal house possessed lineage and status unmatched by the usurping Tudors, complicating Anglo-Scottish relations while significantly enhancing the dynastic significance of the match.⁶

The stage was set for a highly competitive marriage display in which Henry spent lavishly to outfit his daughter and her household with appropriate garments, fabrics, furniture, and other items for her new role as queen.⁷ In return, James demonstrated his proximity to the English throne and his chivalric prowess, as argued by Katie Stevenson. For example, at a mass he wore a "Saunt George of Gold, apou the Dragon a Ruby," symbolic of English chivalry and British supremacy respectively.⁸ Yet he also demonstrated his ownership of the finest and most highly regarded material goods: chairs of state, tapestries, metalwork, and a book of hours, all sourced from the Low Countries. Expenditure on these luxuries placed him in direct

⁵ The National Archives, London, E 39/92/12; National Records of Scotland, Edinburgh [NRS], SP6/31.

⁶ Stevenson, "Chivalry, British Sovereignty and Dynastic Politics," 601–2, 605; Jenny Wormald, "Thorns in the Flesh: English Kings and Uncooperative Scottish Rulers, 1460–1549," in *Authority and Consent in Tudor England: Essays presented to C. S. L. Davies*, eds. G. W. Bernard and S. J. Gunn (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 68, 70.

⁷ *Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland*, 4 vols, ed. Joseph Bain (Edinburgh: General Register House, 1881–8) [CDS], vol. 4, nos 1689, 1698–1700, 1704–5, 1715–17, 1720–9; app. 1, 421–41; Michelle L. Beer, "'Translating' a Queen: Material Culture and the Creation of Margaret Tudor as Queen of Scots," in *Medieval Clothing and Textiles*, vol. 10, eds. Robin Netherton, Gale R. Owen-Crocker, and Monica L. Wright (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2014), 155–60.

⁸ John Young, "The Fyancells of Margaret, eldeft Daughter of King Henry VIIth to James King of Scotland: Together with her Departure from England, Journey into Scotland, her Reception and Marriage there, and the great Feafts held on that Account," in *De Rebus Britannicis Collectanea*, 6 vols, eds. John Leland and Thomas Hearne (London: Benjamin White, 1774), vol. 4, 297; Stevenson, "Chivalry, British Sovereignty and Dynastic Politics," 615–16.

competition with his new father-in-law and asserted his cultural power. Material splendour was inextricably connected to the personal exercise of kingship, as revealed by De Ayala. Of Henry, he wrote that,

he likes to be much spoken of, and to be highly appreciated by the whole world. He fails in this, because he is not a great man. Although he professes many virtues, his love of money is too great.⁹

Henry was known as a miser obsessed with increasing his income by collecting customs revenues and heavily taxing his subjects. His reluctance to distribute lands and titles led to the impression that he was “a ruler bent on amassing wealth for its own sake.”¹⁰ In contrast, De Ayala described James as “neither prodigal nor avaricious, but liberal when occasion requires.”¹¹ He considered the Scottish people to be “vain and ostentatious by nature. They spend all they have to keep up appearances.”¹² Material culture was, therefore, another way in which James could distinguish himself from Henry, in addition to his dynastic security.

Much of the scholarship concerning the ceremonies of 1503 focuses on the use of enacted ritual and gesture, the manipulation and decoration of space, and the deployment of material culture to express the harmonious coming together of two previously antagonistic nations in dynastic unity and peace. For example, it has been noted that Margaret entered Edinburgh accompanied by James, contrasting with the later entries of Mary of Guise and Anna of Denmark, who entered alone.¹³ Douglas Gray characterizes the

⁹ “The Protonotary Don Pedro de Ayala,” 178.

¹⁰ S. J. Gunn, “Henry VII (1457–1509),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/12954>, accessed 23 March 2021. See also S. J. Gunn, *Early Tudor Government, 1485–1558* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995), 123–7, 133, 136–7; Chrimes, *Henry VII*, 194–218.

¹¹ “The Protonotary Don Pedro de Ayala,” 169.

¹² *Ibid.*, 172.

¹³ Sarah Carpenter, “‘Gely with tharmys of Scotland England’: Word, Image and Performance at the Marriage of James IV and Margaret

tableaux vivants presented during Margaret's entry as "deliberately avoiding nationalism and any memory of the bloody past, but stressing peace and concord between the kingdoms."¹⁴ Sarah Carpenter notes how a duet sung between a Scotsman and an Englishman, prompted by James, constituted "enacted national harmony," and that the union was visually expressed in the intertwined thistles and roses illuminating the treaty documentation.¹⁵ A royal marriage was, in theory, an ideal time at which to project images of peace and unity, both within and beyond Scotland. As argued by Louise Fradenburg, the incoming queen was

Tudor," in *Fresche Fontanis: Studies in the Culture of Medieval and Early Modern Scotland*, eds. Janet Hadley Williams and J. Derrick McClure (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), 170; Lucinda H. S. Dean, "Enter the Alien: Foreign Consorts and their Royal Entries into Scottish Cities, c. 1449–1590," in *Ceremonial Entries in Early Modern Europe: The Iconography of Power*, eds. J. R. Mulryne, Maria Ines Aliverti, and Anna Maria Testaverde (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), 279.

¹⁴ Douglas Gray, "The Royal Entry in Sixteenth-Century Scotland," in *The Rose and the Thistle: Essays on the Culture of Late Medieval and Renaissance Scotland*, eds. Sally Mapstone and Juliette Wood (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1998), 22.

¹⁵ Carpenter, "'Gely with tharmys'," 168, 176. See also *ibid.*, 170–2; Sarah Carpenter, "'To thexaltacyon of noblesse': A Herald's Account of the Marriage of Margaret Tudor to James IV," *Medieval English Theatre* 29 (2007): 109–10; Louise Olga Fradenburg, *City, Marriage, Tournament: Arts of Rule in Late Medieval Scotland* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 97. For courtly love performed around the time of the wedding, see Lorna G. Barrow, "'The Kyng sent to the Qwene, by a Gentyman, a grett tame Hart': Marriage, Gift Exchange, and Politics: Margaret Tudor and James IV, 1502–13," *Parergon* 21 (2004): 73–9; Carpenter, "'To thexaltacyon of noblesse'," 114–6; Fradenburg, *City, Marriage, Tournament*, 103–5; Gray, "The Royal Entry," 16–17; Beer, "'Translating' a Queen," 162; Giovanna Guidicini, *Triumphal Entries and Festivals in Early Modern Scotland: Performing Spaces* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2020), 65.

outside and above the interests of her new realm and so could act as an agent of the new alliance.¹⁶

The principal primary source for the wedding is that of John Young, Somerset Herald. He recorded Margaret's journey to Scotland, her entry into Edinburgh, "a varey fayr Torney," magnificent pageants representing the Judgement of Paris, the Annunciation, and the marriage of Mary and Joseph, as well as the marriage itself and the lavish celebrations following.¹⁷ However, Young's account does not go into great detail on the objects under discussion here, and other English accounts are much less forthcoming. The Great Chronicle of London only records that Margaret "was Joyously and honourably afftyr theyr [the Scots'] manir Ressayvid" and that the attendees "were ffestid and 3ountr" with named dishes.¹⁸ An English account of 1550 records how James "efpoufed thefaied faire princes, and feafted the xx Englyfh lords, and fhewed to them Juftes and other paftymes, very honourably, after the faffion of his rude 3ountry."¹⁹ Without digging deeper into the material culture—both extant and non-extant—we do not get a full picture of James's display nor of the complexity of contemporary Anglo-Scottish relations.

Artefacts are not merely illustrative but reflect the beliefs, attitudes, and social relations of those who purchased and used them. Considering them in parallel with the available documents, as sources in their own right, can therefore add greatly to our understanding of historical and social contexts. However, most late medieval objects have not survived. Among those items associated with James and Margaret's marriage, the chairs of state likely suffered wear and tear and the metalwork was perhaps melted down and reused. The tapestries may have been subject to both processes as they often contained valuable gold and silver thread. It appears

¹⁶ Louise O. Fradenburg, "Troubled Times: Margaret Tudor and the Historians," in Mapstone and Wood, *The Rose and the Thistle*, 41; Fradenburg, *City, Marriage, Tournament*, 76.

¹⁷ Young, "The Fyancells of Margaret," 258–300.

¹⁸ *The Great Chronicle of London*, eds. A. H. Thomas and I. D. Thornley (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1983), 324–5.

¹⁹ Edward Halle, *The Union of the Two Noble Families of Lancaster and York, 1550* (Menston: Scolar Press, 1970), fol. 56v, reign of Henry VII.

that the History of Troy tapestries in the royal collection, which were displayed in the queen's great chamber, had been reduced from at least nine in 1539 to five by 1561.²⁰ Despite such loss, the material reality of such objects, as evidenced in their related written record, has much to tell us about the thought processes of James IV and his contemporaries. Through an examination of the prestige associated with the source of these objects—Flanders and the wider southern Low Countries—it is clear that they were intended to exercise great cultural power over the English spectators, who had not so long before been enemies of the king of Scots.

Status Symbols from the Southern Low Countries

In late medieval northern Europe, efforts “to keep up appearances,” in the words of De Ayala, required Flemish and other southern Low Countries goods. These were perceived as status symbols and were routinely deployed in rituals of power and diplomacy. Documentary and artefactual evidence indicates that Scottish elites were fully immersed in these highly fashionable material trends and that Flemish luxury goods were used in Scotland, as elsewhere, to delineate significant power relationships and to impress. The marriage of James and Margaret is an important example of the significance of Flemish material culture to the performance of royal ritual, and an important addition to the messages of both unity and antagonism highlighted in existing scholarship.

Flanders and its surrounding regions, for which the county functioned as a *pars pro toto*, were ruled by the Valois and then the Habsburg dukes of Burgundy. It was the premier northern European centre for the production and distribution of luxury goods including paintings, tapestries, manuscripts, woodwork, metalwork, and

²⁰ *A Collection of Inventories and Other Records of the Royal Wardrobe and Jewelhouse; and of the Artillery and Munitioun in some of the Royal Castles. M.CCCC.LXXXVIII. – M.DC.VI.*, ed. Thomas Thomson (Edinburgh, 1815), 50; *Inventaires de la Royne Descosse Douairiere de France: Catalogues of the Jewels, Dresses, Furniture, Books, and Paintings of Mary Queen of Scots, 1556–1569*, ed. Joseph Robertson (Edinburgh: 1863), 39, no. 81.

sumptuous textiles.²¹ As Scotland's principal trading partner for much of the late medieval period, Flanders was a key source of the luxury goods acquired by its elite, both secular and religious.²² In 1407 the office of conservator was established to protect Scottish trading rights in the Low Countries, with the officeholder organizing purchases, sales, and movements of capital for their clients.²³ In James IV's reign the Scottish conservator in the Low Countries, Andrew Halyburton, though based in Veere in Zeeland, maintained commercial ties with Bruges. His surviving ledger provides a wealth of information on trade in Flanders and the wider Low Countries area

²¹ Peter Stabel et al., "Production, Markets and Socio-economic Structures II: c.1320–c.1500," in *Medieval Bruges, c. 850–1550*, eds. Andrew Brown and Jan Dumolyn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 264–7; Maximiliaan P. J. Martens et al., "Texts, Images and Sounds in the Urban Environment, c.1100–c.1500," in Brown and Dumolyn, *Medieval Bruges*, 420–9; Lorne Campbell, "The Art Market in the Southern Netherlands in the Fifteenth Century," *The Burlington Magazine* 118, no. 877 (1976): 188–98.

²² David McRoberts, "Notes on Scoto-Flemish Artistic Contacts," *Innes Review* 10 (1959): 91–6; David McRoberts, "Dean Brown's Book of Hours," *Innes Review* 19, no. 2 (1968): 144–67; Lorne Campbell, "Scottish Patrons and Netherlandish Painters in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries," in *Scotland and the Low Countries, 1124–1994*, ed. Grant G. Simpson (East Linton: Tuckwell, 1996), 89–103; Lorne Campbell and John Dick, "The Portrait of Bishop Elphinstone," in *King's College Chapel, Aberdeen, 1500–2000*, ed. Jane Geddes (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), 132–42; Thomas Coomans, "From Flanders to Scotland: The Choir Stalls of Melrose Abbey in the Fifteenth Century," in *Perspectives for an Architecture of Solitude: Essays on Cistercians, Art and Architecture in Honour of Peter Fergusson*, ed. Terry N. Kinder (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 235–52; Morvern French, "Magnificence and Materiality: The Commerce and Culture of Flemish Luxuries in Late Medieval Scotland" (PhD thesis, University of St Andrews, 2016).

²³ Stadscartularium 4, Oude Wittenboek, 1089–1546, Stadsarchief, Bruges, fols 183v–184r; *Cartulaire de l'Ancienne Estaple de Bruges: Recueil de documents concernant le commerce intérieur et maritime, les relations internationales et l'histoire économique de cette ville*, 4 vols, ed. L. Gilliodts-van Severen (Bruges: Louis de Plancke, 1904–6), vol. 1, 448–51, no. 540.

from 1492 to 1503, detailing objects including manuscripts, printed books, fabric, jewelry, and silverware.²⁴

Anglo-Flemish trade, in contrast, had gone through a tense time in the years before 1503. In 1493 Henry suspended direct trade to the Low Countries in response to Margaret of York, dowager duchess of Burgundy's support for Warbeck. This added to pre-existing disputes between English merchants and the continental authorities, ostensibly resolved by the Anglo-Burgundian commercial treaty, *Intercursus Magnus*, in 1496.²⁵ However, Burgundy imposed a new import duty on English cloth and attempted to confine English merchants to Antwerp and Bergen op Zoom, and only in 1499 was *Intercursus Magnus* confirmed.²⁶ This pattern of dispute and renegotiation continued for the remainder of Henry's reign (d. 1509).²⁷ International trade was thus a potential source of insecurity for the English king, which James could exploit by ostentatiously displaying his own material sophistication via the medium of objects from the southern Low Countries.

As the *Treasurer's Accounts* reveal, Flemish objects played prominent roles at the most important ceremonial points of the marriage. The projection of power at such heavily symbolic events required a range of material trappings, and rulers were expected to project their status physically through their possessions and surroundings. In the mid-fifteenth century Gilbert Hay advised that,

it effeiris till magestee ryale to be ever stately cled and
honourably in preciouise vestementis and in faire maner
grathit. And that suld be abone all otheris of his
subjectis bathe in richesse in fassone and in fairenesse,
and suld ever have maist notable and fairest and rychest
and strangeast and best fassound anournementis, sa that

²⁴ NRS, RH9/1/1; *Ledger of Andrew Halyburton, Conservator of the Privileges of the Scotch Nation in the Netherlands, 1492–1503*, ed. Cosmo Innes (Edinburgh: General Register House, 1867).

²⁵ *Fædera, Conventiones, Litteræ et Cujuscunque Generis Acta Publica*, 20 vols, ed. Thomas Rymer (London: A. & J. Churchill, 1704–35), vol. 12, 578–89.

²⁶ *Fædera*, vol. 12, 713–20.

²⁷ Gunn, "Henry VII,"; Chrimes, *Henry VII*, 231–5.

he suld appere abone and before all otheris in knaulage
of dignitee.²⁸

That the king should have the richest and most exotic (“strangeast”) ornaments indicates the powerful connection between foreign trade, material sophistication, and the proper display of royal status, and this remained true some fifty years later. By employing Flemish luxuries at key strategic points in his marriage ceremony, James IV reinforced his own kingly status, contrasting with Henry VII.

Considering the reputation of the southern Low Countries as the source of the most sought-after manufactures, it makes sense that James and Margaret’s marriage celebrations were furnished with a considerable quantity of goods from that region. As a highly important diplomatic event, the marriage provided a stage on which James could present his royal identity, financial strength, and cultural sophistication to an elite English audience. The status symbols used to achieve this comprised chairs of state, tapestries, precious metal plate, and a lavish book of hours, of which only the latter survives. Although it has been noted that the book “may have been part of the opulent welcome Margaret received upon her arrival for the festivities, for which James had procured many Flemish goods,” these goods and their role have not yet been examined in any detail.²⁹ Here they will be examined individually and for what they can tell us about Flemish material culture as a whole. They were not just media through which to convey diplomatic messages but were messages in themselves, representing Scottish trade, sophistication, and wealth, and fed into an undercurrent of international tension.

²⁸ *Gilbert of the Haye’s Prose Manuscript (A.D. 1456)*, 2 vols, ed. J. H. Stevenson (Edinburgh and London: Scottish Text Society, 1901–14), vol. 2, 92.

²⁹ Thomas Kren, “Hours of James IV of Scotland,” in *Illuminating the Renaissance: The Triumph of Flemish Manuscript Painting in Europe*, eds. Thomas Kren and Scot McKendrick (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2003), 373.

The Seat of Power

The fineness of James and Margaret's chairs communicated the status of the sitters. James ordered five ornate chairs of state from Bruges via Jerome Frescobaldi, one of his factors in Flanders.³⁰ One was covered in cloth of gold, another in black velvet, and the remaining three in green velvet. All five were decorated with "irnwerk," "balles of lattoun gilt," "frenzeis and ribanis," "braid ribanes," "leddir," and "frenzeis of gold" (perhaps resembling the chair in Fig. 1).³¹ The total cost, including manufacture, materials, packing, and transport from Bruges, was over £170. The huge sum spent suggests that the chairs were a prominent feature of the marriage and may have been used at the ceremony itself. Young recorded the use of two chairs in the marriage and coronation ceremony held in Holyrood Abbey:

After ther Orayfons doon, and laftyng the Letany, wich was fonge and faid by the Arch Byfchop, the Kynge withdrew himself to his Travers, of Blew and Red fraunged, wich ftod on the Left Syde, and ther fettet himself in a ryche Chayre. In fuch wys, the Qwene into her awne Travers of Black, wich was on the Right Side, and fatt downe in a ryche Chayre alfo.³²

A traverse was a screen or curtain which marked the royal couple off from their guests and proclaimed their exalted status. The use of such a structure to conceal and frame the royal person was typical during religious ceremonies such as marriages and coronations at European

³⁰ *Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland*, 13 vols, eds. T. Dickson et al. (Edinburgh: General Register House, 1877–1978) [*Treasurer's Accounts*], vol. 2, 227–8.

³¹ "ironwork," "balls of gilded brass," "fringes and ribbons," "broad ribbons," "leather," and "fringes of gold."

³² Young, "The Fyancells of Margaret," 294.



Fig. 1: National Library of Russia, Saint Petersburg, *Poetic Epistles of Anne of Brittany and Louis XII*, Fr.F.v.XIV.8., f. 40v.

courts.³³ Traverses were frequently employed in combination with X-framed chairs of state, as represented on medieval rulers' seals.³⁴ The chairs employed at James and Margaret's wedding were probably also X-frame chairs, which were similar to the ancient Roman folding stool known as the *sella curulis* and continued to symbolize dignity and honour in rulers' chambers and public ceremonies through to the modern period.³⁵ Such chairs were later employed by James's son, James V, who had "twa folden chyris" made for Mary of Guise's entry into Edinburgh in 1538.³⁶

The chair of cloth of gold probably belonged to Margaret. In December 1503 the Master of the Wardrobe paid "for mending of ane chere of gold of the Quenis."³⁷ Lucinda Dean notes that for the marriage and Margaret's anointing as queen James remained uncrowned, and that there is no evidence of him being seated higher than Margaret, suggesting that she was the star of the show.³⁸ It is clear that the chairs were a central feature of the ceremony, communicating the royal couple's elevated status to an audience

³³ Werner Paravicini, "The Court of the Dukes of Burgundy: A Model for Europe?" in *Princes, Patronage, and the Nobility: The Court at the Beginning of the Modern Age, c. 1450–1650*, eds. Ronald G. Asch and Adolf M. Birke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 88; John Adamson, "The Making of the Ancien Régime Court, 1500–1700," in *The Princely Courts of Europe: Ritual, Politics and Culture under the Ancien Régime, 1500–1750*, ed. John Adamson (London: Seven Dials, 2000), 29.

³⁴ Penelope Eames, "Furniture in England, France and the Netherlands from the Twelfth to the Fifteenth Century," *Furniture History* 13 (1977): 183–4.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 182–7; Ole Wanscher, *Sella Curulis, The Folding Stool: An Ancient Symbol of Dignity* (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1980), 121.

³⁶ *Accounts of the Masters of Works for Building and Repairing Royal Palaces and Castles*, 2 vols, eds. Henry M. Paton, John Imrie, and John G. Dunbar (Edinburgh: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1957–82), vol. 1, 227; Sally Rush, "French Fashion in Sixteenth-century Scotland: The 1539 Inventory of James V's Wardrobe," *Furniture History* 42 (2006): 15.

³⁷ *Treasurer's Accounts*, vol. 2, 238.

³⁸ Lucinda Dean, "Crowns, Wedding Rings, and Processions: Continuity and Change in the Representations of Scottish Royal Authority in State Ceremony, c. 1214–c. 1603" (PhD thesis, University of Stirling, 2013), 270–1.

which included such high-ranking English guests as the earl of Surrey and the archbishop of York. The cloth of gold and velvet, moreover, point to another of the southern Low Countries' luxury industries: the region had begun to manufacture silk fabrics in the late fifteenth century.³⁹

Tapestry's Cultural Currency

Tapestries from the southern Low Countries presented an image of princely magnificence at the celebratory feast in Holyrood Palace. The queen's great chamber contained hangings representing "the Ystory of Troy Towne," while the hangings in the king's great chamber depicted "the Story of Hercules, togeder with other Ystorys."⁴⁰ The Trojan War series was perhaps manufactured according to the drawings or cartoons held by tapestry merchant Pasquier Grenier of Tournai, who is thought to have provided the first series to Charles the Bold of Burgundy in 1471–2.⁴¹ The Trojan theme in tapestry was fashionable among European rulers including Charles VIII of France, Ferdinand I of Naples, Matthias I of Hungary, and Henry VII of England, whose sets were acquired

³⁹ Herman van der Wee, "Structural Changes and Specialisation in the Industry of the Southern Netherlands, 1100–1600," *Economic History Review* 28 (1975): 203–21, at 216; Jeroen Puttevils, "Trading Silks and Tapestries in Sixteenth-Century Antwerp," in *Europe's Rich Fabric: The Consumption, Commercialisation, and Production of Luxury Textiles in Italy, the Low Countries and Neighbouring Territories (Fourteenth–Sixteenth Centuries)*, eds. Bart Lambert and Katherine Anne Wilson (London: Routledge, 2016), 138.

⁴⁰ Young, "The Fyancells of Margaret," 295–6.

⁴¹ George Wingfield Digby, *Victoria & Albert Museum, The Tapestry Collection, Medieval and Renaissance* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1980), 15, 17; Scot McKendrick, "The Great History of Troy: A Reassessment of the Development of a Secular Theme in Late Medieval Art," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 54 (1991): 49; Jean-Paul Asselberghs, "Les Tapisseries Tournaisiennes de la Guerre de Troie," *Revue Belge d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de l'Art – Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Oudheidkunde en Kunstgeschiedenis* 39 (1970): 162–6.

through the Grenier family.⁴² The Hercules tapestries were also Flemish, having been bought from merchant James Homyll in 1503. £160 was spent on “ane pece of Hercules, ane pece of Marcus Corianus, tua pecis of Susanna sewit togiddir, ... [and] ane pece of Salamon,” possibly comprising the “other Ystorys.”⁴³

Chivalric heroes such as Hercules and protagonists of the Trojan War, including Hector and Aeneas, functioned as aristocratic *exempla* of martial prowess.⁴⁴ By displaying tapestries depicting these characters, James made a statement regarding his own chivalric renown. In Scottish literature, representations of the Nine Worthies, which included Hector, identified Robert I as the Tenth Worthy.⁴⁵ By situating himself in the presence of images of the heroes of Troy, James expressed his status as the heir to Robert I, Scotland’s hero against historical English aggression. What’s more, in employing the Trojan legend, he reclaimed an origin myth traditionally used by the kings of England to support their claims to overlordship of the British Isles.⁴⁶ The ancient Britons were thought to have descended from

⁴² McKendrick, “The Great History of Troy,” 51–2, 54, 57, 61; Scot McKendrick, “Tapestries from the Low Countries in England during the Fifteenth Century,” in *England and the Low Countries in the Late Middle Ages*, eds. Caroline Barron and Nigel Saul (Stroud: Sutton, 1995), 44, 49; Asselberghs, “Les Tapisseries Tournaisiennes,” 162–72; Marina Belozerskaya, *Luxury Arts of the Renaissance* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005), 116, 125. Some of these tapestries survive, e.g., one of Charles VIII’s, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 6–1887. For the cartoons see Musée du Louvre, Paris, RF 2140–7.

⁴³ *Treasurer’s Accounts*, vol. 2, 214: i.e., “a piece of Hercules, one piece of [Gaius] Marcius Coriolanus, two pieces of Susanna sewn together, [...] [and] one piece of Solomon.”

⁴⁴ Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 102–24.

⁴⁵ Walter Bower characterized Robert as “like Paris in appearance, like Hector in warfare; [...] He was born of Priam, he was like Achilles the leader of the Greeks, as praiseworthy as Ajax, and as Ulysses the man of wiles; ... He was as conscientious as Aeneas.” Walter Bower, *Scotichronicon*, 9 vols, eds. D. E. R. Watt et al. (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1987–98), vol. 7, 47.

⁴⁶ Pre-dating James’s appropriation of the Arthurian tradition for the same purpose: Stevenson, “Chivalry, British Sovereignty and Dynastic Politics,” 606–8, 611–13; Elizabeth H. Hanna, “Arthur and the Scots:

Brutus, great-grandson of Aeneas; because England was the realm of Brutus's eldest son, English kings claimed superiority to those of Scotland.⁴⁷

These tapestries may have recalled a *tableau*, witnessed by Margaret during her entry into Edinburgh, of the Judgement of Paris, in which Paris awarded a golden apple to Venus, the most beautiful of three goddesses.⁴⁸ While the *tableau* paid a traditional compliment to Margaret's beauty, there was also an undercurrent of impending discord, since this choice led to Paris's elopement with Helen and the beginning of the Trojan War.⁴⁹ Gray characterizes this *tableau* as one that "scrupulously (and obviously deliberately) avoids any suggestion of Scottish nationalism (e.g. the figure of the Bruce [...]), and by implication expresses a hope for peace and harmony between two nations."⁵⁰ However, the inclusion of multiple Trojan stories, in both performance and object, could also be interpreted as a reference to James's martial prowess and readiness for war if necessary.

The acquisition of southern Low Countries tapestries also called attention to James's cultural *savoir faire*. They were known as "arras" as far afield as the Ottoman empire, after the town of Arras in the county of Artois.⁵¹ The name was synonymous with the highest quality pieces woven with silk, gold, and silver thread, but it also encompassed the products of urban centres in Flanders, Brabant, Hainaut, Liège, and Tournai. James was not the first Stewart monarch to recognize their prestige. In 1435 James I employed an

Narratives, Nations, and Sovereignty in the Later Middle Ages" (PhD thesis, University of St Andrews, 2015), 156.

⁴⁷ Roger A. Mason, "Scotching the Brut: Politics, History and National Myth in Sixteenth-Century Britain," in *Scotland and England, 1286–1815*, ed. Roger A. Mason (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1987), 62–3; Stevenson, "Chivalry, British Sovereignty and Dynastic Politics," 609.

⁴⁸ Young, "The Fyancells of Margaret," 289.

⁴⁹ Fradenburg, *City, Marriage, Tournament*, 110–1; Gray, "The Royal Entry," 18–19; Guidicini, *Triumphal Entries and Festivals*, 225–6.

⁵⁰ Gray, "The Royal Entry," 19.

⁵¹ W. G. Thomson, *A History of Tapestry from the Earliest Times until the Present Day*, 3rd ed. (London: EP Publishing, 1973), 73; Marina Belozerskaya, "Critical Mass: Importing Luxury Industries Across the Alps," in *Cultural Exchange between the Low Countries and Italy (1400–1600)*, ed. Ingrid Alexander-Skipnes (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 164.

“Egidie Greinar de Arras,” possibly a member of the Grenier family, who the following year was described as “tapisario, fabricant pannos de attrabato apud Bruges.”⁵² He also purchased “duabus tapetis cum armis domini regis” from Flanders.⁵³ In 1539 James V owned 161 pieces of tapestry.⁵⁴ Thirty-seven of these were acquired in 1538 when he sent a servant “to pas in Flanderis for bringing of certane tapistre.”⁵⁵ Such tapestries was also appreciated in England, to which large quantities were exported in the late Middle Ages.⁵⁶ As noted above, Henry VII owned a series representing the Trojan War, and Margaret brought seventy-four “Flemmych stikks’ arras” of tapestry with her in 1503.⁵⁷ These objects were eloquent tools in the communication of wealth, prestige, and cultural power. The combination of chivalric and militaristic themes with the material sophistication of the Low Countries links back to the idea that James was actively competing with Henry, both in owning the tapestries themselves and in the messages they conveyed.

Fine Dining

Precious metal plate had likewise become a standard element of European elite display, and significant prestige was associated with Flemish metalwork. Workshops in Bruges produced gold and silver

⁵² *The Exchequer Rolls of Scotland*, 23 vols, eds. John Stuart and G. Burnett (Edinburgh: General Register House, 1878–1908), vol. 4, 620, 678: “Giles Greinar of Arras”; “tapissier, [paid] for making cloths of Arras in Bruges.”

⁵³ *Ibid.*, vol. 4, 679–80: “two tapestries with the arms of the lord king.”

⁵⁴ NRS, E 35/1, fols 24r–24v; *A Collection of Inventories*, ed. Thomson, 49–51.

⁵⁵ NRS, E 35/1, fols 24r–24v; *A Collection of Inventories*, ed. Thomson, 49–51; *Treasurer’s Accounts*, vol. 7, 17–8, 257, 471: “to go to Flanders for the bringing of certain tapestries.”

⁵⁶ McKendrick, “Tapestries from the Low Countries in England,” 43–60; Scot McKendrick, “Edward IV: An English Royal Collector of Netherlandish Tapestry,” *The Burlington Magazine* 129 (1987): 521–4; Marie-Rose Thielemans, *Bourgogne et Angleterre: Relations Politiques et Economiques entre les Pays-Bas Bourguignons et l’Angleterre, 1435–1467* (Brussels: Presses Universitaires de Bruxelles, 1966), 232–3.

⁵⁷ *CDS*, vol. 4, 441: “Flemish pieces of [tapestry].”

items for elite consumers including the dukes of Burgundy.⁵⁸ Although Scotland had its own organized and legally regulated goldsmithing craft, imported pieces from Flanders held greater cultural cachet.⁵⁹ Halyburton exported silver chalices and goblets for high status clients including Robert Wells, archdeacon of St Andrews, William Elphinstone, bishop of Aberdeen, and James, duke of Ross, archbishop of St Andrews, and James IV's brother.⁶⁰ Considerable quantities of plate were imported into Tudor England from Flanders, too; they were more expensive than English-made wares and very highly prized.⁶¹

In 1502 James Merchamestoun purchased for James IV in Flanders “sex stopes, vj flacatis, viij cases pecis, in ilk case vj pecis with ane covir, xxiiij platis, xxiiij dishes, xxiiij salsaris of silver quhit, [and] vj goblatis with ane covir ovirgilt.”⁶² These objects were not for eating but were for display on a dresser, buffet, or cupboard (as in Fig. 2).⁶³ Young noted that “riche Dressor[s]” were displayed

⁵⁸ Élisabeth Taburet-Delahaye, “Gold and Silver,” in *Art from the Court of Burgundy: The Patronage of Philip the Bold and John the Fearless, 1364–1419*, eds. Stephen N. Fliegel and Sophie Jugie (Paris and Cleveland: Éditions de la Réunion des Musées Nationaux and the Cleveland Museum of Art, 2004), 131.

⁵⁹ George Dagleish, Henry Steuart Fotheringham, et al., *Silver: Made in Scotland* (Edinburgh: National Museums Scotland, 2008), 16, 18, 20–1, 87; Ian Finlay, *Scottish Gold and Silver Work*, rev. and ed. Henry Fotheringham (Stevenage: Strong Oak Press, 1991), 34–6.

⁶⁰ *Ledger of Andrew Halyburton*, 160, 184, 218, 249–51.

⁶¹ Philippa Glanville, *Silver in Tudor and Early Stuart England: A Social History and Catalogue of the National Collection, 1480–1660* (Victoria and Albert Museum: London, 1990), 101, 111, 113.

⁶² *Treasurer's Accounts*, vol. 2, 241: “six pitchers, six flagons, eight cases of cups, in each case six cups with one cover, twenty-four plates, twenty-four dishes, twenty-four saucers of white silver, [and] six goblets with a cover overgilt.” These items, together with the “cheris of estait, and certane othir gere,” cost a total of £703 14s.

⁶³ Michael Pearce, “Approaches to Household Inventories and Household Furnishing, 1500–1650,” *Architectural Heritage* 26 (2015): 80; Richard Barber, *Magnificence and Princely Splendour in the Middle Ages* (The Boydell Press: Woodbridge, 2020), 245–6; Glanville, *Silver in Tudor and Early Stuart England*, 40; Carl Hernmarck, *The Art of the European*



Fig. 2: Master of James IV of Scotland (Flemish, before 1465 – about 1541), *The Feast of Dives*, about 1510–1520, Tempera colors, gold, and ink on parchment. Leaf: 23.2 × 16.7 cm (9 1/8 × 6 9/16 in.), Ms. Ludwig IX 18 (83.ML.114), fol. 21v (detail). The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, Ms. Ludwig IX 18, fol. 21V. Digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program.

Silversmith, 1430–1830, 2 vols (London: Sotheby Parke Bernet, 1977), vol. 1: Text, 175.

at the feasting, both in the king's hall and the queen's.⁶⁴ These likely displayed the costly imported metalwork, as such collections were a typical element of princely marital display. For example, at the wedding banquet of Charles the Bold and Margaret of York in 1468, a dresser displayed large silver vessels, gem-studded golden vessels, and, crowning the entire arrangement, “une riche coupe garnye de pierrerie.”⁶⁵

Such displays were public demonstrations of wealth. In 1456 Philip the Good of Burgundy heard it rumoured that he could not afford an army with which to conquer Utrecht, so he staged an exhibition of silver plate and gold coins as evidence of his riches.⁶⁶ Buffets were also employed in Tudor England, where “the size and splendour of the display of plate was interpreted both as a compliment to the chief guest and as an indication of the rank of the host.”⁶⁷ Collections of gold and silver plate were thus a typical element in the Renaissance prince's repertoire, signifying their wealth, cultural awareness, and ability to command the finest materials for their table. Fittingly, at the proxy marriage of James and Margaret in London on 15 January 1503, Henry VII gave the Scottish representatives, the archbishop of Glasgow and the earl of Bothwell, cupboards containing precious metalware. These included “A Cupp of Gold covered, / Six great fstanding Potts of Silver pounced, / XXIII great Bowles of Silver, with their Covers, / A Bafon and a Ewer of Silver, / [and] A Chafoir of Silver,” demonstrating his largesse and wealth to his new allies.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Young, “The Fyancells of Margaret,” 295–6.

⁶⁵ *Mémoires d'Olivier de la Marche, Maître d'Hotel et Capitaine des Gardes de Charles le Téméraire*, 4 vols, eds. Henri Beaune and J. d'Arbaumont (Paris: Librairie Renouard, 1883–8), vol. 3, 119–20: “a rich cup garnished with pearls.”

⁶⁶ *Œuvres de Georges Chastellain*, 8 vols, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove (Brussels: F. Heussner, 1863–6), vol. 3, 92.

⁶⁷ Glanville, *Silver in Tudor and Early Stuart England*, 36; see also 204.

⁶⁸ Young, “The Fyancells of Margaret,” 264: “a cup of gold with a cover, six great standing pots of pounced silver, twenty-four great bowls of silver with their covers, a basin and a ewer of silver, [and] a chafer of silver.” I am grateful to Philippa Glanville and the Victoria and Albert Museum for assisting with identification of the chafer: a warming vessel, possibly to

There was clearly an element of competitive display to the material culture associated with the Anglo-Scottish marriage, and James had to respond with his own display of precious metalware. Such objects signified not only the splendour expected of a prince but also the financial means with which they could defend the interests of their realm, so James was making a statement regarding his continuing threat to the English crown. This was indeed realized in the following years through his continuing expenditure on expensive guns and his navy, with the ship the *Margaret* under construction from late 1502.⁶⁹ That the metalwork displayed at the wedding was imported from Flanders, the centre of an industry which was highly regarded internationally, added an extra layer of significance to what was already a powerful message: that James had the wealth and means to purchase the finest goods and to threaten England militarily.

Illuminating the Marriage

The final Flemish object associated with the marriage is a luxurious book of hours given by James to Margaret.⁷⁰ Intriguingly, it is absent

heat the water for baptism. Basins and ewers were used at christenings and for ceremonial handwashing during and after dining: Glanville, *Silver in Tudor and Early Stuart England*, 295; Hernmarck, *The Art of the European Silversmith*, vol. 1, 230.

⁶⁹ David H. Caldwell, “How Well Prepared was James IV to Fight by Land and Sea in 1513?” *Journal of the Sydney Society for Scottish History* 14 (2013), 45, 51–5; Norman Macdougall, “‘The Greattest Scheip that ewer Saillit in Inland or France’: James IV’s ‘Great Michael’,” in *Scotland and War, AD 79–1918*, ed. Norman Macdougall (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1991), 42–5; Macdougall, *James IV*, 228–38, 264, 271.

⁷⁰ Codex 1897, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna (ÖNB). See Franz Unterkircher, *Das Gebetbuch Jakobs IV. von Schottland (und seiner Gemahlin Margaret Tudor)*, *Codex Vindobonensis 1897* (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1897); Suzanne Lyle, “The Patronage and Production of the Book of Hours of James IV and Margaret Tudor” (PhD thesis, University of St Andrews, 1999); Leslie Macfarlane, “The Book of Hours of James IV and Margaret Tudor,” *Innes Review* 11 (1960): 3–21; Ishbel Barnes, “The Book of Hours of James IV and Margaret Tudor, Austrian National Library, Vienna,” *The Forth Naturalist*

from the *Treasurer's Accounts*, Halyburton's ledger, and Young's account.⁷¹ However, marriage was an event at which books were traditionally presented as gifts, and Henry gave Margaret another lavish Flemish book of hours bearing typical Flemish motifs including *trompe l'oeil* birds, flowers, and insects.⁷² It is possible, considering the intimate and personal nature of books of hours, that James's presentation of his gift was private and thus was not witnessed by Young. The book is therefore something of an anomaly, sitting apart from the more public elements of the wedding.

The manuscript contains considerable visual evidence that it was intended to symbolize and solidify the Anglo-Scottish alliance. Full-page illuminations depict typical marital and parental themes such as the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Nativity, and the Adoration of the Magi, which, as well as being popular devotional images, offered models for Margaret in her new role as wife and future mother.⁷³ Also present are portraits of James and Margaret, the former presented by St James the Greater to an altarpiece depicting Christ

and Historian 25 (2002): 85–6; Michaela Krieger, *Gerard Horenbout und der Meister Jakobs IV. von Schottland: Stilkritische Überlegungen zur flämischen Buchmalerei* (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2012), 48–60; Kren, "Hours of James IV of Scotland," no. 110, 371–3; David Caldwell, ed., *Angels, Nobles and Unicorns: Art and Patronage in Medieval Scotland* (Edinburgh: National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland, 1982), 84; Duncan MacMillan, *Scottish Art, 1460–2000* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 2000), 24–7.

⁷¹ It has been argued that these absences are suggestive that the book was not given at the time of the marriage, but perhaps on the birth of their first son in 1507: Barnes, "The Book of Hours of James IV and Margaret Tudor," 85. Another possible gift given by James to Margaret is a panelled oak chest carved with flamboyant tracery and the initials I and M joined by a love knot: National Museums Scotland, Edinburgh, IL.2015.10, on loan from a private collection; Aidan Harrison, "A Small Scottish Chest," *Regional Furniture* 26 (2012): 1–22.

⁷² Hours of Henry VII, Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth House. See *Treasures from Chatsworth: The Devonshire Inheritance, organised and circulated by the International Exhibitions Foundation, 1979–1980*, ed. Anthony Blunt (Washington: International Exhibitions Foundation, 1979), 65, no. 132.

⁷³ Codex 1897, ÖNV, fols 59v, 73v, 86v, 98v. See Lyle, "The Patronage and Production of the Book of Hours," 8, 131, 137.

and St Andrew, and the latter presented, possibly by St Cyriacus, whose feast was celebrated on the marriage date of 8 August, to an image of the Virgin and Child.⁷⁴

Throughout are James and Margaret's coats of arms, their mottoes—"In my defens" and "God us defend"—and their initials.⁷⁵ "In my defens" was first used by James III on a gold medallion of 1475: one of several elements linking to James IV's uncontested royal lineage.⁷⁶ Further references to James III include the compositional similarity between the portraits of James and Margaret and those of James III and Margaret of Denmark in the Trinity Altarpiece by Hugo van der Goes, in which the future James IV appeared behind his father.⁷⁷ By employing the same composition, the illuminator visually linked James to his kingly father, again elevating him above Henry VII. Elsewhere, the unicorn supporting the royal arms evokes the unicorn coinage issued by James III.⁷⁸

Leonine symbolism is visible in a lion supporting the Scottish royal arms and in a full-page illumination of St Jerome.⁷⁹ In the latter, the lion's forefoot is raised to allow the saint to remove a thorn, which, Bryony Coombs argues, visually evoked the lion rampant of the royal arms. The connection is reinforced by the appearance of James's motto and that of his father, "In my defens," on the same page.⁸⁰ The lion represented not only the Scottish crown but James's

⁷⁴ Codex 1897, ÖNV, fols 24v, 243v.

⁷⁵ Coats of arms: *ibid.*, fols 9r, 14v, 21r, 24v, 109v, 141v, 243v; mottoes: fols 14v, 24v, 109v, 183v, 189v, 202v, 243v; initials: fols 14v, 183v, 202v, 243v.

⁷⁶ Fradenburg, *City, Marriage, Tournament*, 179.

⁷⁷ National Galleries Scotland, Edinburgh, NG 1772, on loan from the Royal Collection, RCIN 403260. See Colin Thomson and Lorne Campbell, *Hugo van der Goes and the Trinity Panels in Edinburgh* (Edinburgh: National Galleries of Scotland, 1974), 15.

⁷⁸ Codex 1897, ÖNV, fol. 109v; Bryony Coombs, "Artistic Continuity in Late Medieval Scotland: James III, James IV, and the Artists of Ghent," (paper presented at *Reviving the Trinity: New Perspectives on 15th Century Scottish Culture*, University of Edinburgh, 27 March 2021).

⁷⁹ Codex 1897, ÖNV, fols 21r, 189v.

⁸⁰ Coombs, "Artistic Continuity in Late Medieval Scotland." Another motto, "Parcere prostratis scit nobilis ira Leonis," linked the lion to the

bravery and military prowess, since it was “in all perellis [...] rycht glorius and richt vaillant.”⁸¹ The book visually connected to performative, symbolic elements of the alliance: a panegyric written by Walter Ogilvie for Henry VII in 1502 characterized James as “that chivalrous and most noble lion,” and William Dunbar, in his poem *The Thrissil and the Rois*, described Nature crowning the lion as the king of beasts.⁸²

However, the cultural significance of the book lay not just in its visual symbolism but also in the prestige associated with its Flemish origin. The southern Low Countries was a centre of luxury manuscript production thanks to the concentration of artisans and merchants in its cities and the patronage of Burgundian and international elites. From the 1470s to c. 1561 the region’s artists, known as the “Ghent-Bruges school,” developed a distinctive style of illumination. Their work is characterized by illusionistic borders of flowers, acanthus leaves, insects, and jewels rendered in rich, vivid colours, with realistic shadows and other *trompe l’oeil* effects.⁸³ These features are manifest throughout James and

Scottish crown: Bryony Coombs, “Material Diplomacy: A Continental Manuscript Produced for James III, Edinburgh University Library, MS 195,” *The Scottish Historical Review* 98, no. 247 (October 2019): 190, 193–4.

⁸¹ *The Deidis of Armorie: A Heraldic Treatise and Breviary*, ed. L. A. J. R. Houwen, 2 vols (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 1994), vol. 1, 20.

⁸² “Magnanimus sibi illum generosissimumque leonem”: Adv. 33.2.24, National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh, fol. 4v; Carpenter, ““Gely with tharmys’,” 167; *The Poems of William Dunbar*, 2 vols, ed. Priscilla Bawcutt (Glasgow: The Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 1998), vol. 1, 166, lines 101–3.

⁸³ Georges Dogaer, *Flemish Miniature Painting in the 15th and 16th Centuries* (Amsterdam: B. M. Israël, 1987), 16; Thomas Kren and Scot McKendrick, “Introduction,” in Kren and McKendrick, *Illuminating the Renaissance*, 1–2, 6; Maurits Smeyers, *Flemish Miniatures from the 8th to the mid-16th Century: The Medieval World on Parchment* (Leuven: Brepols, Davidsfonds, 1999), 419–24; James Snyder, *Northern Renaissance Art: Painting, Sculpture, the Graphic Arts from 1350 to 1575*, 2nd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2005), 170–1; Erwin Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting: Its Origins and Character*, 2 vols (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), vol. 1, 27.



Fig. 3: Gebetbuch Jakobs IV. von Schottland, c.1500,
<http://data.onb.ac.at/dtl/3044203> / Austrian National Library,
 ONB/Vienna Cod. 1897, fol. 56r.

Margaret's book of hours, for example in the depiction of thistles and *marguerites* or daisies together, symbolizing the royal couple, including those on a page dedicated to St Margaret of Antioch, again linking to her namesake Margaret Tudor (Fig. 3).⁸⁴

The illuminations are the work of several hands including Simon Bening and the Master of James IV of Scotland, the latter widely identified as Gerard Horenbout.⁸⁵ These were among the most renowned artists in Flanders. Bening (c. 1483–1561) resided in Ghent and was a member of the Bruges image makers' guild. His skilful use of vivid colours and fleck-like brushwork earned him commissions from elite patrons including Dom Fernando, son of Manuel I of Portugal, Mencía de Mendoza, countess of Nassau, and Cardinal Albrecht of Brandenburg.⁸⁶ Gerard Horenbout (c. 1465–1540/1) was a member of the Ghent image makers' guild and his work is characterized by dynamism, plasticity, and a rich colour palette. He later carried out work for Margaret of Austria, Christian II of Denmark, and Henry VIII of England.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Codex 1897, ÖNV, fol. 56r. For further thistles with daisies and roses see fols 14v, 23r, 33v, 53v, 148v, 150v, 218v.

⁸⁵ Krieger, *Gerard Horenbout und der Meister Jakobs IV.*, 503–15; Robert G. Calkins, "Gerard Horenbout and His Associates: Illuminating Activities in Ghent, 1480–1521," in *In Detail: New Studies of Northern Renaissance Art in Honor of Walter S. Gibson*, ed. Laurinda S. Dixon (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), 55–6; Dogaer, *Flemish Miniature Painting*, 166; Thomas Kren, "New Directions in Manuscript Painting, circa 1510–1561," in Kren and McKendrick, *Illuminating the Renaissance*, 427–8; Macfarlane, "The Book of Hours of James IV and Margaret Tudor," 16–17.

⁸⁶ Maryan W. Ainsworth, "Was Simon Bening a Panel Painter?" in *Als Ich Can: Liber Amicorum in Memory of Professor Dr Maurits Smeyers*, eds. Bert Cardon, Jan van der Stock, and Dominique Vanwijnsberghe (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 1–25; Maryan W. Ainsworth, "Diverse Patterns Pertaining to the Crafts of Painters or Illuminators': Gerard David and the Bening Workshop," *Master Drawings* 41, no. 3 (Autumn 2003): 244–5, 247, 252–3; Paul Wescher, "Sanders and Simon Bening and Gerard Horenbout," *Art Quarterly* 9 (1946): 191–209; François Avril, Nicole Reynaud, and Dominique Cordellier, *Les Enluminures du Louvre: Moyen Âge et Renaissance* (Paris: Musée du Louvre, 2011), 324.

⁸⁷ Krieger, *Gerard Horenbout und der Meister Jakobs IV.*, 41–8; Lorne Campbell and Susan Foister, "Gerard, Lucas and Susanna Horenbout,"

Flemish manuscripts clearly possessed international prestige, and examples with Scottish provenances survive from as early as the thirteenth century.⁸⁸ In England, too, Flemish manuscripts were highly sought after by the crown and other elites.⁸⁹ Edward IV had a sizeable collection which Henry VII inherited.⁹⁰ In contrast, “Henry himself seems to have been more interested in the acquisition of printed books than in contemporary manuscripts,” and the artistic quality of his own gift to Margaret has been described as modest in comparison with that from James.⁹¹ Although printing made the written word more readily available, Flemish manuscripts retained their luxury status well into the sixteenth century.

James and Margaret’s book of hours married a high degree of personalization and political symbolism with the prized artistic output of the Ghent-Bruges school. It represented the cultural

The Burlington Magazine 128, no. 1003 (Oct. 1986): 719–21; Calkins, “Gerard Horenbout and His Associates,” 49–67; Georges Hulin de Loo, “Comment J’ai Retrouvé Horenbout,” *Annuaire des Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique – Jaarboek der Koninklijke Museums voor Schoone Kunsten van België* 2 (1939): 3–21; Wescher, “Sanders and Simon Bening and Gerard Horenbout,” 191–209. For Horenbout as a distinct artist to the Master of James IV, see Smeyers, *Flemish Miniatures*, 428–9; Hulin de Loo, “Comment J’ai Retrouvé Horenbout,” 18.

⁸⁸ Stephen Mark Holmes, “Catalogue of Liturgical Books and Fragments in Scotland before 1560,” *Innes Review* 62 (2011): nos 29, 52, 78, 82, 110, 114–5.

⁸⁹ J. J. G. Alexander, “Painting and Manuscript Illumination for Royal Patrons in the Later Middle Ages,” in *English Court Culture in the Later Middle Ages*, eds. V. J. Scattergood and J. W. Sherborne (London: Duckworth, 1983), 159–6.

⁹⁰ Janet Backhouse, “Founders of the Royal Library: Edward IV and Henry VII as Collectors of Illuminated Manuscripts,” in Williams, *England in the Fifteenth Century*, 24–8; Janet Backhouse, “The Royal Library from Edward IV to Henry VII,” in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, 7 vols, eds. John Barnard et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999–2019), vol. 3, 272.

⁹¹ Backhouse, “Founders of the Royal Library,” 33; Janet Backhouse, “Illuminated Manuscripts Associated with Henry VII and Members of his Immediate Family,” in *The Reign of Henry VII: Proceedings of the 1993 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. Benjamin Thompson (Stamford: Paul Watkins, 1995), 184.

sophistication of the Scottish crown by means of the mutually understandable language of wealth, grandeur, and familiarity with the luxury output of Flanders. In emphasizing his close mercantile and artistic links with Flanders, James utilized a Renaissance culture of display to express not only his status as head of a stable dynasty, directly descended from kings, but also of a materially rich Scottish court. This was inextricably tied up with the book's distinctively Flemish illumination, created at the peak of the region's production of luxurious manuscripts.

Conclusion

The objects discussed above demonstrate that James IV was fully aware of the prestige associated with southern Low Countries luxuries and employed them at ceremonially significant points in his marriage to Margaret Tudor. Although only the book of hours has survived, it, alongside the chairs, tapestries, and metalware, was sourced from Flanders and the surrounding area for a critical diplomatic alliance with neighbouring England, showing the region's continuing importance as a provider of visible and tangible symbols of power and status. James used these status symbols to communicate and consolidate his standing in terms of martial prowess, dynastic stability, and lineage, with considerable visual symbolism linking back to his father, James III, and further back to the heroes of mythology. At the same time, these objects represented "the historic, genealogic linking of nations," creating a multi-layered and complex collection of messages for the English attendees.⁹² Furthermore, as argued here, the Flemish origin of the luxuries used to convey such messages should be considered a statement in itself: an assertion of Scotland's place in international trade and in European courtly culture.

⁹² Carpenter, "'Gely with tharmys'," 170.

**ILLEGITIMACY IN THE HIGHEST
ORDERS OF THE KINGDOM:
THE MACBETH NARRATIVE IN ANDREW
OF WYNTOUN'S *ORYGYNALE CRONIKYL***

*Marian Toledo Candelaria,
Rare Book School, University of Virginia*

ABSTRACT

This article examines the portrayal of Macbeth and Malcolm Canmore as illegitimately born men in Andrew of Wyntoun's *Orygynale Cronikyl*. Portraying two kings of Scots as illegitimate sons was an unusual choice and was one that had textual and narrative implications. Wyntoun increased the role and political agency of Macduff of Fife in the narrative to create an eleventh-century precedent that explained the political career of Robert Stewart, Duke of Albany and Earl of Fife and Menteith, as a regent for three Scottish kings. In order to make sense of Macbeth and Malcolm's portrayals, it is crucial to differentiate between different types of illegitimacy in early fifteenth-century Scotland, as well as identify how each type of illegitimacy impacted issues of good kingship and magnate-noble relations in the text. Although illegitimacy did not outright prevent Malcolm and Macbeth from becoming kings, it did explain Macbeth's descent into tyranny and Malcolm Canmore's political impotence. In both cases, the intervention of Macduff of Fife as a kingmaking figure and as representative of the community of the realm of Scotland guaranteed the proper functioning of governance in a manner similar to how Albany served as regent in Scotland at the time.

Keywords: Scotland, Medieval Scotland, Malcolm Canmore, Macbeth, Macduff of Fife, Robert Stewart, Albany, Andrew of Wyntoun, *Orygynale Cronikyl*, kingship, regency, kingmaking, illegitimacy

Introduction

In 2016, Rhiannon Purdie published one of the few studies of the “Macbeth narrative” found in Andrew of Wyntoun’s *Orygynale Cronikyl* (1406 x 24), the earliest extant full history of Scotland written in the vernacular.¹ Spanning an impressive 30,000 lines and written in octosyllabic meter, the *Orygynale Cronikyl* remains influential in shaping the narrative of eleventh-century Scottish historical events while paradoxically being understudied as a historical source. Remarking on the unusual narrative of eleventh-century Scottish events presented in the *Cronikyl*, Purdie was, as many scholars, puzzled by the chronicler’s depiction of Malcolm III Canmore (r. 1058–1093) as an illegitimate son of King Duncan and the miller of Forteviot’s daughter (*Cronikyl*, VI: 17).² Malcolm’s predecessor, Macbeth (r. 1040–1057/8) was also portrayed in the narrative as an illegitimate son of King Duncan’s sister and the devil himself disguised as a handsome knight (*Cronikyl*, VI: 18). The predominance of illegitimate-born monarchs is striking considering the implications a bastard birth might have on noblemen’s ability to inherit property or kingdoms. But as Purdie observed, Wyntoun’s decision to attribute an illegitimate birth to these kings reflects fifteenth-century politics, where some of the predominant noblemen in Scotland—including Robert Stewart, duke of Albany and earl of Fife and Menteith—demonstrated that an illegitimate birth was not an impediment to acquiring political support and power.³ By

¹ Andrew of Wyntoun, *The Original Chronicle of Andrew of Wyntoun Printed on Parallel Pages from the Cottonian and Wemyss Mss., with the Variants of the Other Texts*, ed. F. J. Amours, Scottish Text Society (Edinburgh: Printed for the Society by W. Blackwood and sons, 1903). Citations from this edition will be included in the text as *Cronikyl*, with the manuscript they come from (either Wemyss or Cotton manuscripts) when appropriate.

² Rhiannon Purdie, “Malcolm, Margaret, Macbeth and the Miller: Rhetoric and the Re-Shaping of History in Wyntoun’s *Original Chronicle*,” *Medievalia et Humanistica*, New Series, 41 (December 2015): 45–63.

³ Purdie, “Rhetoric and the Re-Shaping of History,” 58; Emily Wingfield, “‘Qwhen Alexander Our Kyng Was Dede’: Kingship and Good

interrelating the fortunes and stories of Macbeth and Malcolm Canmore, Purdie argued, Wyntoun reimagined the eleventh-century Scottish past to promote the Canmore dynasty to a fifteenth-century audience.⁴ The *Orygynale Cronikyl*'s portrayal of Malcolm Canmore and Macbeth testifies to how engrained the image of the often-called 'Canmore dynasty' as forefathers of a more modern Scottish kingdom was in the late-medieval Scottish psyche.

While Wyntoun's "reimagining" of the mid-eleventh century does highlight the importance of Malcolm's reign as the foundation of a modernized Scottish kingdom, the young prince's illegitimacy in the text does raise some important questions that remain unanswered, as Purdie observed.⁵ Portraying Malcolm Canmore as illegitimate did little to enhance the prince's political agency, which, contrary to what the reader would have expected, was substantially diminished throughout the narrative. Seen as a founding dynast,⁶ Malcolm's illegitimacy also threatened the legitimacy of his descendants and, by association, of their successors, the Stewarts, who had only come to royal power in Scotland in the late fourteenth

Governance in Andrew of Wyntoun's Original Chronicle," in *Premodern Scotland: Literature and Governance 1420–1587*, First Edition, ed. Joanna Martin and Emily Wingfield, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 27. On Robert Stewart, Duke of Albany, see Stephen I. Boardman, *The Early Stewart Kings: Robert II and Robert III, 1371–1406* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1996); K. J. Hunt, "The Governorship of the First Duke of Albany" (PhD, Edinburgh, University of Edinburgh, 1999), <https://www.era.lib.ed.ac.uk/handle/1842/6904>; and Shayna Devlin, "'Whatever the World Admires in a Prince.' Robert Stewart, Duke of Albany: Power, Politics, and Family in Late Medieval Scotland" (unpublished PhD thesis, Guelph, University of Guelph, 2019), <https://atrium.lib.uoguelph.ca/xmlui/handle/10214/16249>. For Archibald, third earl of Douglas, see Michael Brown, *The Black Douglases: War and Lordship in Late Medieval Scotland, 1300–1455* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1998).

⁴ Purdie, "Rhetoric and the Re-Shaping of History," 45–63.

⁵ Purdie, "Rhetoric and the Reshaping of History," 52.

⁶ Richard Oram, *David I: The King Who Made Scotland* (Stroud: Tempus, 2004); R. Andrew McDonald, *Outlaws of Medieval Scotland: Challenges to the Canmore Kings, 1058–1266* (East Linton, Scotland: Tuckwell Press, 2003).

century. Even more puzzling was Wyntoun's continuous exaltation of Malcolm's virtues as a man and prince despite his illegitimacy, contrasting sharply with his condemnation of Macbeth's tyrannical reign. Wyntoun's version of the Macbeth narrative also deviated from the earliest extant version found in the *Chronica gentis Scotorum* (c. 1360s x 80s), formerly attributed to John of Fordun.⁷ The differences between the versions of this narrative in the *Cronikyl* and *Chronica* might be explained by the local character of Wyntoun's sources and political interests.⁸ Therefore, to understand why Wyntoun portrayed Malcolm and Macbeth as illegitimate-born kings, this article examines how local, Fife-centric contemporary politics influenced the portrayal of the Macbeth narrative in the *Orygynale Cronikyl*. Instead of seeing the *Orygynale Cronikyl*'s Macbeth narrative as a reiteration of the politics of dynasty creation and kingly power, as Purdie has argued, this article suggests instead that Wyntoun's reimagining of Malcolm Canmore and Macbeth as kings of illegitimate birth served the purpose of enhancing the political power of the "community of the realm" of Scotland in the narrative, as represented by the figure of Macduff of Fife.

Macduff's political agency is not only rooted in contemporary ideas of royal-magnate relations in Scotland but also reflects the political importance of Robert Stewart (1340–1420) as earl of Fife and Menteith, Duke of Albany, and later, Governor of Scotland.⁹ Politically intrepid and highly ambitious, Albany had a prodigious political career that, for a large portion of his adult life, saw him at

⁷ John of Fordun, *Johannis de Fordun Chronica gentis Scotorum*, ed. W. F. Skene (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1871). This edition will be cited in the text when necessary as "*Chronica*."

⁸ R. James Goldstein, *The Matter of Scotland: Historical Narrative in Medieval Scotland*, Regents Studies in Medieval Culture (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 6; R. James Goldstein, "I Wil My Proces Hald': Making Sense of Scottish Lives and the Desire for History in Barbour, Wyntoun and Blind Hary," in *A Companion to Medieval Scottish Poetry*, ed. Priscilla Bawcutt and Janet Hadley Williams (Cambridge: Boydell, 2006), 40. Rhiannon Purdie has also argued that Wyntoun's re-shaping of the Macbeth narrative responds to the interests of his audience. See Purdie, "Rhetoric and the Re-Shaping of History," 45.

⁹ Devlin, "Whatever the world admires in a prince," 62–98.

the helm of the Stewart dynasty as regent for three Stewart kings: his father, Robert II (r. 1371–90), his brother Robert III (r. 1390–1406), and his nephew James I (r. 1424–37) during his imprisonment in England.¹⁰ Wyntoun's positive appraisal of Albany's leadership in the *Cronikyl* suggests his far-reaching political influence and popularity among nobles and clergy alike. This is especially evident in the fact that the *Orygynale Cronikyl* was commissioned by Sir John Wemyss of Leuchars and Kincaldrum, lord Reres, constable of St Andrews Castle, and a retainer of Albany in the early fifteenth century.¹¹ By demonstrating that Malcolm's and Macbeth's illegitimacy served the purpose of turning Macduff into the more central character of the narrative, Wyntoun highlighted how the main precondition to becoming king of Scots in the narrative was to have Macduff's political support—a reflection of the magnitude of Albany's control over Scotland's affairs. In fact, Wyntoun's political awareness and knowledge, influenced by his relationship with his patron, Sir John Wemyss, impacted his authorial and editorial decisions as he composed and revised the *Cronikyl*.

How is Wyntoun's illegitimate rendition of Scottish kings in the *Cronikyl* connected to Albany, and how exactly does it affect the narrative's reduction of princely agency? First, it is necessary to draw a distinction between types of illegitimacy as defined by canon law and within a Scottish context. These distinctions influenced the depictions of Malcolm and Macbeth as different types of monarchs. Canon law was first used to regulate marriage during the Gregorian reforms, but it was not until the late twelfth and, perhaps, the early thirteenth century that the Church presented a cohesive definition of what illegitimacy meant. Furthermore, canon law was initially concerned with regulating sexual unions, not with dictating dynastic rules of inheritance.¹² Sinful conception guaranteed that offspring would inherit the sins of their parents, a discourse that made its way into later medieval tracts, such as the *Glanvill* (1187 x 89) in England

¹⁰ Devlin, "Whatever the world admires in a prince," 2–3. See also Hunt, "The Governorship of the First Duke of Albany," 3–4; Boardman, *The Early Stewart Kings*.

¹¹ Boardman, *The Early Stewart Kings*, 144–5.

¹² Sara McDougall, *Royal Bastards: The Birth of Illegitimacy, 800–1230* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 10–12.

or, in Scotland, the *Regiam Majestatem* (early 14th c.).¹³ However, while in theory succession by illegitimately-born men was forbidden, in practice many illegitimate nobles enjoyed prominent and productive political careers in late medieval Scotland.¹⁴ An important distinction to make here is between two main types of illegitimate offspring which, according to Susan Marshall, in late medieval Scotland included: natural children, who were born into a long-standing secular marriage or relationship, and spurious children, who were born out of a short-lived sexual liaison.¹⁵ Since the belief children inherited the sins of their parents was persistent in medieval canon law, a child born out of wedlock was seen as a potential immoral adult depending on the sinfulness of the parents' union at the time of conception.¹⁶ Based on the relationship between illegitimacy and sinfulness, Wyntoun carefully crafted the illegitimacies of Macbeth and Malcolm in ways that suited the political interests of his Fife-based audience, showing the influence of contemporary canonical ideas and political awareness on authorial intent.

¹³ The *Regiam Majestatem* incorporates the *Glanvill*, the *Summa super rubricis decretalium* of Godofredus de Treno, and other early medieval Scottish laws, and was compiled during the reign of Robert I as legal propaganda during the early tenure of his kingship. See Alice Taylor, *The Shape of the State of Medieval Scotland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 124–17, for a brief discussion of the development of the *Regiam Majestatem*.

¹⁴ McDougall, *Royal Bastards*, 11; Grant, "Royal and Magnate Bastards," 313–316; see also Purdie, "Rhetoric and the Re-Shaping of History," 52–3.

¹⁵ Marshall, "Illegitimacy," 17–8; McDougall, *Royal Bastards*, 18, 23–4, and 27–8. McDougall explains that in ancient Roman texts, *spurius* implied that the child was born out of adultery or incest, and thus excluded from legitimization and inheritance. Meanwhile, Justinian decreed that *naturalis* was the child born out of parents who could potentially marry at some point. Isidore of Seville differentiated between the *nothus*, the child of a low-status woman, and the *spurius*, the child of a woman of noble birth. During the high Middle Ages, these definitions shifted often depending on the author or canonist using each term.

¹⁶ Marshall, "Illegitimacy," 26–7.

Modifying the portrayals of Malcolm and Macbeth as illegitimate not only impacted both characters' roles in the *Cronikyl*, but also permitted Wyntoun to reinterpret and increase Macduff's political agency in the narrative. As explained previously, the earliest surviving version of the Macbeth narrative is found in the *Chronica gentis Scotorum*; however, the most recent editor of the *Cronikyl*, F. J. Amours, and Dauvit Broun have both argued that Wyntoun did not base his text on the *Chronica*, but possibly on the *Chronica*'s earlier source.¹⁷ Nonetheless, because the *Chronica*'s sources no longer survive, the only feasible way to understand Wyntoun's reinterpretation of Macduff's role is to compare his version of events to the version contained in the *Chronica gentis Scotorum*, a comparison that can be found in Appendix A. The appendix shows that Wyntoun made changes to specific events in the plot to increase Macduff's political agency and importance in the *Cronikyl*. Overall, both Wyntoun and Fordun follow the basic structure of the Macbeth narrative with some key exceptions. In the *Chronica*, Malcolm and his brother Donald Bane are the sons of King Duncan and a cousin of Siward, earl of Northumbria, and Duncan later placed Malcolm in charge of Cumbria during his reign (*Chronica*, IV: 44). In the *Cronikyl*, Malcolm's mother was the miller of Forteviot's daughter, and Malcolm had two other legitimate half-brothers; furthermore, Malcolm himself had no political role in the kingdom during or after Duncan's death until he was crowned king (*Cronikyl*, VI: Ch. 117). Macbeth's conception story also differs between the chronicles: in the *Chronica*, Macbeth was descended from a family of conspirators

¹⁷ Broun, *Irish Identity*; and Dauvit Broun, "A New Look at *Gesta Annalia* Attributed to John of Fordun," in *Church, Chronicle and Learning in Medieval and Early Renaissance Scotland: Essays Presented to Donald Watt on the Occasion of the Completion of the Publication of Bower's Scotichronicon*, ed. Barbara E. Crawford (Edinburgh: Mercat Press, 1999), 9–30. Amours, ed., "Introduction," *Original Chronicle*, I, xxxix; 65, no. 1970. For arguments against Wyntoun's use of Fordun, see Andrew of Wyntoun, *The Orygynale Cronykil of Scotland by Andrew of Wyntoun*. Edited by David Laing, ed. David Laing, *The Historians of Scotland*, V.2, 3, 9 (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1872), I, xxxvi; D. E. R. Watt, "The Sources," in *Scotichronicon / by Walter Bower; General Editor, D.E.R. Watt*, ed. D. E. R. Watt, New ed., 9 vols. (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1987), 234–58.

against the kings of Scots (IV: 45), while the *Cronikyl* portrayed Macbeth as King Duncan's nephew, the son of the king's sister and the devil (VI: 118). Furthermore, Wyntoun stressed how the devil kept in contact with the woman after their sexual encounter; in fact, it was the devil who prophesied to Duncan's sister that Macbeth would rise in the kingdom (VI: 118). After Macbeth usurped the throne, Malcolm and Donald Bane stayed in Scotland for a couple of years before fleeing, according to Fordun's *Chronica* (IV: 45). However, according Wyntoun's *Cronikyl* (VI: 118), Malcolm and his brothers left the kingdom for England. In both accounts Malcolm was sought out by Macduff of Fife to return to the kingdom (*Chronica*, V: 1; *Cronikyl*, VI: 118); however, Macduff's role is more limited in the *Chronica*. In comparison, Macduff exhibits greater agency in influencing the kingdom's politics in the *Cronikyl*.

Conceiving Malcolm Canmore and Macbeth in the Orygynale Cronikyl

Wyntoun's understanding of contemporary ideas of illegitimacy is most apparent in the subtle yet important editorial changes made to the story of Malcolm Canmore's "get" or conception in the three different recensions of the *Orygynale Cronikyl*: the Wemyss, the Royal, and the Cotton manuscripts.¹⁸ One of the most complex aspects of studying the *Cronikyl* is that the surviving manuscripts represent three recensions, yet all extant manuscripts postdate the

¹⁸ The *Orygynale Cronikyl* survives in nine manuscripts that postdate the dates of composition. They are: Wemyss MS (ca. 1500 x 1550), Royal MS 17 D XX (c. 1475 x 1499), Cotton MS Nero D XI (1450 x 1499), Lansdowne MS (c. 1500s), St Andrews MS (ca. 1500 x 1550), Advocates' Library 19.2.3 (First Edinburgh MS, ca. 1480), Advocates' Library 19.2.4 (Second Edinburgh MS, 1550 x 1599), Harleian MS (ca. 1600s), and Auchinleck MS (end of fifteenth century). For an analysis of the surviving manuscripts, see Amours, "Introduction," *Cronikyl*, xlvii–lxvii. Amours also cited information from David Laing "Appendix II: Notices of the Various Known Manuscripts of the *Cronikyl*," in Wyntoun, *Cronikyl*, v. III, xvii–xxxv. For an analysis of the St Andrews MS, which combines the Wemyss and Cotton recensions, see W. A. Craigie, "The St. Andrew MS. of Wyntoun's Chronicle," *Anglia* 20 (1898): 363–80.

composition dates for the text. William Craigie established that the Wemyss manuscript (c. 1500 x 1550) represents the earliest recension of the *Cronikyl*, and the Royal (c. 1475 x 1499) and Cotton (1450 x 1499) manuscripts represent the second and third recensions, respectively. F. J. Amours, the editor of the edition of the *Orygynal Cronikyl* used for this study, suggests that the recensions were created more or less simultaneously by Wyntoun himself during the regency of the Duke of Albany, and thus they represent an excellent example of the editorial processes used to adapt each recension as appropriate to the author's aims and concerns.¹⁹ The Wemyss manuscript is the most distinctive out of the recensions, while the Royal manuscript contains a brief account of the death of David, duke of Rothesay, heir to the Scottish crown and the Duke of Albany's nephew, along with a laudatory passage on Albany. Some manuscripts include an eulogy of Albany ("Resembyll he couth a mychty King," [*Cronikyl*, ed. Laing, IX: 26, l. 2786]) that show that the last revisions to the *Cronikyl* occurred between September 1420, the date of Albany's death, and before 1424, the year of James I's return to Scotland.²⁰ Although the passages concerning the Macbeth/Malcolm Canmore/Macduff narrative differ considerably between the first and following two recensions, there are barely any changes to the text made between the Royal and Cotton manuscripts. Therefore, based on the lack of textual differences, and on the multiple errors and unexplained editorial changes present in David Laing's edition of the Royal manuscript,²¹ the analysis put forward here will focus solely on the versions in the Wemyss and Cotton manuscripts.

Using the notions of illegitimacy and an understanding of the text's recensions, it is possible to better contextualize the portrayal of Malcolm Canmore within the *Orygynale Cronikyl*, particularly as it pertains to the literary implications it has for the narrative's development. In the passage below, taken from the Wemyss

¹⁹ Amours, "Introduction," *Cronikyl*, xxxiii.

²⁰ See W. A. Craigie, "Wyntoun's 'Original Chronicle,'" *The Scottish Review; Edinburgh* 30, no. 59 (July 1, 1897): 3–24, at 51, for the date of composition of Chapter 26; and Amours, "Introduction," *Cronikyl*, xxx, for the composition dates of the Royal MS.

²¹ Broun, *Irish Identity*, 97, fn. 51.

manuscript, King Duncan was hunting one day with his noblemen and decided to part from their company, a recurring theme in chivalric romances, to stay the night with the miller of Forteviot.²² Wyntoun explains that,

This myllare had a dochter faire
 That maid to þe king þat nycht repaire
 And till hir fadir displesit it nocht
 To be relevit þar throu he thoct
 Off þe king baith he and scho
 His will þe better wes þar to
 Sa scho baire him a presand
 That scho wist wes till him plesand
 And he resaut it curtasly
 Hir and hir presand thankfully
 And chesit þare þat faire woman
To be fra þin his luffit lemman (*Cronikyl* [Wemyss], VI:
 116, ll. 1653–1664).

Lemman is the Scots word for lover or sweetheart but it is specifically used by Wyntoun here to describe a mistress or concubine.²³ Both the Wemyss and Cotton manuscripts use *lemman* to describe the miller's daughter, although the narrative later explains that Malcolm was conceived of this first sexual encounter. After using the word *lemman* in this passage, the Wemyss manuscript does not use this word to refer to the miller's daughter again in the *Cronikyl*, opting instead to call her "woman":

Thus quhen þis king Duncane wes deid
 This *woman* wes rycht will of reid
 Bot scho a baitwart efter þat

²² Purdie, "Rhetoric and the re-shaping of history," 51.

²³ "Lemman (2.)," *Dictionary of the Scottish Language (DSL)*, <https://dsl.ac.uk/entry/dost/lemma>. According to the DSL, one of the meanings of "lemman" is "An unlawful lover or paramour; (a woman's) gallant; (a man's) light-of-love, mistress, or concubine." As an example of this specific meaning, the DSL quotes the aforementioned passage from Wyntoun.

Till hir spousit husband gat (*Cronikyl* [Wemyss], VI: 118, ll. 1691–4).

What is implied in this passage is that King Duncan’s relationship with the miller’s daughter was one that was sexual in nature and little else, since she is later described as a “woman” that eventually married a boatman. Although King Duncan granted the woman lands “in heritage” (presumably for her maintenance and Malcolm’s), there is no indication in the account that he maintained a romantic relationship with the woman after conceiving Malcolm. The lack of a romantic, long-standing relationship between King Duncan and the miller of Forteviot’s daughter would effectively make Malcolm a spurious son conceived out of an uncommitted—and therefore more sinful—sexual relationship. This passage was amended in the Cotton manuscript, which represents the third recension of the *Orygynale Cronikyl*. This recension refers to the miller’s daughter as *lemman* consistently throughout the narrative, particularly in this passage: “Thus Bis kynge Duncan dede / His *lemman* was wil of gud red” (*Cronikyl* [Cotton], VI: 18, ll. 1651–2). By subtly changing the terminology used to describe Malcolm’s mother, the *Orygynale Cronikyl* corrected its earlier statement that the relationship between Duncan and the miller’s daughter was merely a casual sexual encounter, and instead conveyed the idea of the relationship as a longstanding, if extramarital, relationship. Wyntoun’s version of the story of Malcolm’s “get” in the Cotton manuscript portrays Malcolm’s mother as King Duncan’s long-standing mistress, which meant Malcolm was a natural-born son of King Duncan and could be legitimized if necessary. The consistency of the term used to refer to Malcolm Canmore’s mother in the Cotton manuscript demonstrates how the author revised and corrected the account to construct Malcolm as a young prince whose conception allowed for later legitimization and, as a consequence, accession as king of Scots.

The change Wyntoun made to the third recension provides evidence of how specific political events influenced editorial choices in the *Cronikyl*, showing the relationships between textual content, authorial and editorial decisions, and political influence. Correcting the references to Malcolm Canmore’s mother in the *Cronikyl* was no doubt inspired by the uncanonical marriage between the future Robert II of Scotland (r. 1371–1390), a grandson of Robert Bruce,

and Elizabeth Mure in 1336.²⁴ All children born of this union—John, earl of Carrick (later Robert III); Robert, earl of Fife and Menteith; Walter, lord of Fife; and Alexander, earl of Buchan (known as the Wolf of Badenoch)—were illegitimate according to canon law. As Susan Marshall has demonstrated, Scottish nobility would contract secular marriage and cohabit before requesting for a papal dispensation for their marriage, a process that was lengthy and expensive to pursue.²⁵ Robert's situation was not unusual, especially during the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, as Alexander Grant has shown, when the number of illegitimate-born men of royal and noble descent occupying important positions in Scotland was considerable.²⁶ Scottish nobles, in contrast with their English and continental counterparts, were more successful at producing direct male heirs, and the fact that many of them were conceived illegitimately, yet still acquired political positions, implies that illegitimacy itself was not an insurmountable hindrance to securing inheritance and power in this period.²⁷

But the Stewart's position as grandson to Robert Bruce and one-time heir presumptive to the Scottish throne made his predicament more concerning as his young uncle, David II (r. 1336–1371), sought to replace him as heir in case he was unable to procreate a son.²⁸ Friction between David II and Robert Stewart was exacerbated when, in November 1363, David negotiated the designation of

²⁴ Boardman, *The Early Stewart Kings*, 8 and 19–20.

²⁵ Susan Marshall, "Illegitimacy in Medieval Scotland" (PhD, Aberdeen, University of Aberdeen, 2013), 17.

²⁶ Alexander Grant, "Royal and Magnate Bastards in the Later Middle Ages: A View from Scotland," in *La bâtardise et l'exercice du pouvoir en Europe du XIIIe au début du XVIe siècle*, ed. É. Bousmar, A. Marchandise, C. Masson and B. Schnerb (Bruxelles: Publications des Facultés Universitaires Saint-Louis, 2015), 313–68; Alexander Grant, "Extinction of Direct Male Lines Among the Scottish Noble Families in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries," in *Essays on the Nobility of Medieval Scotland*, ed. Keith J. Stringer (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1985), 210–24.

²⁷ Grant, "Royal and Magnate Bastards," 325–345; Grant, "Extinction of Direct Male Lines Among the Scottish Noble Families," 210–24.

²⁸ Boardman, *The Early Stewart Kings*, 19–21.

Edward III as heir presumptive of the kingdom in the eventuality that the king could not produce legitimate male issue—a proposal that was rejected by the Scottish parliament but that was not without support in Scotland.²⁹ David also attempted to name John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster, and Edward III of England's son, as heir to the Scottish crown, a proposal designed to bypass Robert and his sons as heirs.³⁰ According to Stephen Boardman, David II's proposal was an incentive for Robert Stewart to seek papal recognition of his marriage and a retroactive legitimization of his sons. On 22 November 1349, Pope Clement VI gave Robert a dispensation to marry Mure in a canonical ceremony, making their sons legitimate.³¹ Eventually, Robert Stewart would succeed to the throne of Scotland as the first king of the Stewart dynasty, despite David II's attempts to curtail his succession and despite the pushback of David II's allies, particularly William, earl of Douglas.³²

In contrast to the picture of Malcolm, Wyntoun's portrayal of Macbeth's character and reign is less than favourable. The *Oryginale Cronikyl* states that "[...] as we fynd in his [Macbeth's] storyis / That he wes gottin on selcouth [strange] wiss"; Macbeth was conceived by King Duncan's sister through her sexual liaison with a handsome knight, who revealed himself to be the Devil in disguise (*Cronikyl* [Wemyss], VI: 118, l. 1957). Learning about the identity of her suitor did not stop the noblewoman from communicating with him afterwards: the Devil gave her a jewel that he used to communicate to her and even prophesied that Macbeth would rise to power (*Cronikyl* [Wemyss], VI: 118, l. 1987–1993). As a man conceived by incubus, Macbeth carried the sins of his parents, confirming

²⁹ Ibid., 19.

³⁰ Ibid., 20–1.

³¹ Ibid., 8 and 20.

³² Men who built their fortunes on their relationship with David II, such as Sir Robert Erskine, George Dunbar, earl of March, and John Dunbar, lord of Fife, among others, saw their power in Scotland threatened by the coronation of Robert Stewart as king of Scots. Many of them obtained safe-conduits to England from Edward III as they sought to escape from a Stewart-controlled Scotland. See Boardman, *The Early Stewart Kings*, 25; 39–40.

religious notions that the manner of conception determined the character and morality of a man.³³

Portraying a king as descended from the devil and, in the case of Macbeth, as the product of an incubus is a rather uncommon claim in late medieval chronicles but there are several precedents for this practice originating from Scotland. The mid-fifteenth century *Scottis Originale* depicts Henry II of England as descended from the devil, thus making the king a tyrant:

Suppos Þai [the English] be werray fals, and Þar caus quhy: *Þar king is cummyn dovne lyne be lyne fra Þe Devill*, as Þar awne cronikle callit Policornica propotis and beris witness [...] the quhilk emprice was weddit with Þe Erll of Angeos, and he gat apon hir *Þis Henry Þe Tyrand, the quhilk was second fra Þe Devill carnate*, as Þar awne ald writ beris witness.³⁴

The author of the *Scottis Originale* deployed genealogy against the legitimacy of the king of England's claims over Scotland, a way in which the chronicle presented the "uninterrupted independence and freedom of the Scots" against England.³⁵ Another source, a short sonnet titled *Ane anser to ane Ingliss railer praysing his awin genealogy*, countered claims of English sovereignty over Scotland by claiming that the mythological Brutus, from whom the English claimed their ancestry, was descended from the devil himself.³⁶ Although these examples of Scottish literary and historical sources postdate the *Orygynale Cronikyl* by several decades (having been composed between 1460 and 1490), these Scottish authors did not hesitate to assign a devilish origin to the English kings who were

³³ Marshall, "Illegitimacy," 26–7.

³⁴ Dan Embree, Edward Donald Kennedy, and Kathleen Daly, eds., "The Scottish Originale," in *Short Scottish Prose Chronicles* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2012), 111–136, at 131, f. 303v (ll. 214–220) and f. 98r (ll. 206–214, quoted, my emphasis).

³⁵ Embree, et al., eds., "Introduction," *Prose Chronicles*, 24.

³⁶ Katherine H. Terrell, "'Lynealy descendit of Þe devill': Genealogy, Textuality, and Anglophobia in Medieval Scottish Chronicles," *Studies in Philology*, Vol. 108, No. 3 (Summer, 2011): 320–344.

perceived as infringing upon Scotland's longstanding sovereignty and independence. It was more common to see portrayals of illegitimate-born kings in medieval romances; examples of these include romances on Alexander the Great and King Arthur. Geoffrey of Monmouth's *De gestis Britonum* famously depicted Arthur as illegitimate, and this trend is also seen in Scottish chronicles like the *Chronica gentis Scotorum*, Walter Bower's *Scotichronicon*, and Hector Boece's *Scotorum Historia*. Likewise, medieval romances about Alexander the Great, many of them derived from the French *L'Roman de Alexandre*, portrayed the young king as the illegitimate son of Olympias and Nectanebus, an Egyptian priest disguised as the god Ammon. Sir Gilbert Hay's *The Buik of Alexander the Conquerour* has particular interest in Alexander's illegitimacy, so it is most likely that Wyntoun's portrayal of Macbeth as the son of the devil was inspired by romances popular at the time he was writing.³⁷

Evidently, the portrayal of a Scottish king as the product of incubus is not reflective of antagonistic Anglo-Scottish relations in the *Cronikyl*. Rather, Wyntoun signals the perils of having a ruler who was conceived in a spurious manner as a threat to the freedoms of nobility in a given kingdom. As Purdie has noted, Macbeth's rule is comparable to that of William the Conqueror, called William the Bastard in the *Cronikyl* because he was also of illegitimate origin, conceived by a high-status father and a low-birth mother.³⁸ According to twelfth-century uses of the French-originated term *bastardus*, William would have been treated as part of his father's family and had legal claims to property.³⁹ Wyntoun's initial

³⁷ Marshall, "Illegitimacy," 92–106, also cited in Purdie, "Rhetoric and the Re-Shaping of History," 52–3, note 31. Purdie notes that Wyntoun made no attempts to tie the illegitimacy of Alexander and Arthur to his portrayal of Malcolm and Macbeth. See also Victoria Shirley, "The Scottish Reception of Geoffrey of Monmouth," in *A Companion to Geoffrey of Monmouth*, eds. Joshua Byron Smith and Georgia Henley (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 487–493; and Matthew P. McDiarmid, "Concerning Sir Gilbert Hay, the Authorship of Alexander the Conquerour and The Buik of Alexander," *Studies in Scottish Literature* 28, no. 1 (1993): 28–54.

³⁸ Purdie, "Rhetoric and the Re-Shaping of History," 57–8.

³⁹ McDougall, *Royal Bastards*, 45–46, specifically for the first denominations of William the Conqueror as "bastard" in twelfth-century chronicles.

description of William as a king of “lauchfull and be lele lynnage” ([Wemyss], VI: 120, l. 2520) indicates that he understood *bastardus* to have this specific meaning. But William’s reputation in the *Cronikyl* is one of a traitor to the English nobility; like Macbeth in Scotland, William Bastard mistreated English nobles after usurping the kingdom and after an initial period of effective rule.⁴⁰ In the first recension of the *Cronikyl*, William came from Normandy after King Harold, “Off Denmark’s be nacioun/Off traytouris generacioun,” and usurped the English throne ([Wemyss], VI: 120, ll. 2505–6). The English accepted William as their king until he lost his mind and, with “outrageousse extorcionys,” stole the lands and riches of the English barons ([Cotton], VII: 3, l. 254). Thus, William’s and Macbeth’s spurious origins were not, at least for the purposes of Wyntoun’s narrative, as detrimental to their reign initially; soon enough, however, the sinful manner of their conception was revealed in their abuse of the nobility and their tyranny. Taking his information from the thirteenth-century *Chronicle of Melrose* or a derivative,⁴¹ Wyntoun echoed the idea that Macbeth was, initially, a competent and charitable ruler, although such qualities were not to last for long (VI: 118, ll. 1935–6). Both William’s and Macbeth’s characters would eventually reflect the sins of their parents. Like William’s descent into tyranny, the earliest symptom of Macbeth’s descent into tyrannical rule was his mistreatment of Scotland’s nobility, in particular the way he mistreated Scotland’s premier noble, Macduff of Fife.

Macbeth’s downfall began with his desire to build “a haus of fenss” in Dunsinane that he constructed by gathering materials and oxen from Fife and Angus. Some of the oxen belonged to Macduff of Fife, and when they failed in the field, Macbeth was quick to scold his nobleman:

Than spak makbeth dispitously
And said to þe thayne angrely
As he were writing in his will
Me think, he said, it were nocht ill

⁴⁰ Purdie, “Rhetoric and the Re-Shaping of History,” 57.

⁴¹ Amours, “Introduction,” *Cronikyl*, 1, Section 7.

To put Pin awne nek in zone zoke
 For Pi stottis to draw zone stok
 To Dov and all Pin were wraith
 A blasé I set nocht by zow baith (*Cronikyl* [Wemyss],
 VI: 118, ll. 2157-2163).

This threat prompted Macduff to escape to England to Edward the Confessor's court, where he found Malcolm and his brothers. King Edward received him, "and quhen he [Macduff] had salust be king/ He tald be caus of his cummyng/And be king herd him soberly/ And ansuered him full gudly" (*Cronikyl*, VI: 118, ll. 2133–6). Macduff negotiates Malcolm's return to Scotland with King Edward, who agreed to provide military support for the endeavour, whereas in the *Chronica*, it is Malcolm who requests military help from King Edward (*Chronica*, V: 7). This passage is based on the version found in Book IV, chapter 46 of the *Chronica gentis Scotorum*, but the motivation behind Macbeth's insult is different in that version. In the *Chronica*, Macduff was already working against Macbeth to help Malcolm return to Scotland, and it was Macduff's machinations which prompted Macbeth's threat to Macduff: "[...] and then he added plainly that he should stoop his neck under the yoke, as that of an ox in a wain; and he swore it should be so before long" (*Chronica*, IV: 46). Wyntoun's expansion of the conflict between Macbeth and Macduff served to exculpate the latter from betraying the monarch, instead focusing on how the monarch slighted his nobleman by taking his oxen to construct a castle for himself and later threatening the nobleman for the oxen's failures. It also highlights how Macduff's decision to substitute Macbeth as a king was the result of Macbeth's abuses against his person, suggesting Macduff's right to combat tyranny by supporting a candidate to the throne who not only had the legal right to inherit the kingdom but who also built positive and collaborative relationships with his nobility.

The conflict between Macbeth and Macduff of Fife in the *Cronikyl* benefits from contextualizing the contents of the text, as well as Wyntoun's changes to the narrative, with the events that marked Scottish politics in the first few years of the fifteenth century. Macbeth's threatening behaviour against Macduff is reminiscent of one of the most difficult episodes of Albany's political career: the death of David, duke of Rothesay and heir to the throne, in 1402

under Albany's custody.⁴² As heir to the throne and lieutenant of the kingdom, Rothesay had been given the power and authority of a king in January 1399 without having to respond to Robert III, an indication of the loss of the political community's confidence in the king's abilities to govern Scotland effectively.⁴³ Albany, as well as other leading magnates like Archibald, third earl of Douglas, supported Rothesay's lieutenancy. However, Rothesay's political dealings and attitude grew increasingly defiant of political counsel. As a result, Rothesay was imprisoned by Albany and Archibald, fourth earl of Douglas, after his increasingly despotic behaviour threatened to verge on the tyrannical. In 1397, the young Rothesay initially agreed to but later rejected a marriage to Elizabeth Dunbar, daughter of the earl of March. This rejection prompted the earl of March to align himself with Henry IV of England on an invasion of Edinburgh in 1400. Albany blamed Dunbar's defection and the English invasion on Rothesay and refused to provide his nephew with military support to defend the city.⁴⁴ Rothesay's relationship with Albany and the rest of the Scottish parliament continued to deteriorate as Rothesay, who was initially praised for his handling of the daily affairs of the kingdom, increasingly ignored his uncle's counsel as he attempted to govern as if he was already king.⁴⁵ Rothesay attempted to take St Andrews Castle, a feat that propelled Albany to imprison him there, and which would have placed him under the watch of Sir John Wemyss, the commissioner of the

⁴² For the reputation of Rothesay before his death in 1402, see Devlin, "Whatever the world admires in a prince," 82–91; and Boardman, *The Early Stewart Kings*, 223–54. For his reputation post mortem, see Steve Boardman, "A Saintly Sinner? The 'martyrdom' of David, Duke of Rothesay," in *The Cult of Saints and the Virgin Mary in Medieval Scotland* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2010), 87–104.

⁴³ Devlin, "Whatever the world admires in a prince," 84; Boardman, *The Early Stewart Kings*, 206, 223–25.

⁴⁴ Devlin, "Whatever the world admires in a prince," 85; Boardman, *The Early Stewart Kings*, 203–4, 227–8; Michael Brown, *The Black Douglases: War and Lordship in Medieval Scotland, 1300–1455* (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1998), 99–100.

⁴⁵ Devlin, "Whatever the world admires in a prince," 86–7; Boardman, *The Early Stewart Kings*, 235.

Orygynale Cronikyl, who was constable of the castle at the time.⁴⁶ After he was transferred to Falkland Castle in 1402, Rothesay died under mysterious circumstances, either due to illness or possibly starvation. Rumours seem to have circulated among Scotland's magnates that the duke's death was the result of foul play, and perhaps this was the reason why the parliament exonerated Albany and Douglas of any involvement in Rothesay's death on 16 May 1402. Additionally, parliament decided to reinstate Albany as guardian of the kingdom in 1403.⁴⁷

Whether Albany intentionally killed Rothesay or not has been contested in recent historiography, but what is clear is that Albany's portrayal in contemporary histories, such as Wyntoun's *Cronikyl* and later, Walter Bower's *Scotichronicon*, lauded the governor's life and career.⁴⁸ At the same time, contradictory portrayals of Rothesay emerged, some accusing him of tyranny while others praised his career.⁴⁹ Shayna Devlin has recently argued that Albany's role as regent, and particularly his imprisonment of Rothesay, was influenced by an understanding of regency as a component of corporate monarchy that sought to remediate the lack of an able king since Robert III was deemed unfit to rule by his own parliament.⁵⁰ When Rothesay exceeded the limits of his office, his uncle's response might have been a "check" on the young prince's power rather than an attempt to usurp royal authority.⁵¹ As earl of Fife and Menteith and uncle to the kingdom's regent, Albany's role in keeping royal power and authority in check seems a likely and

⁴⁶ Devlin, "Whatever the world admires in a prince," 82–7; Boardman, *The Early Stewart Kings*, 194–7 and 236; Steve Boardman, "A Saintly Sinner?" 87–104.

⁴⁷ Devlin, "Whatever the world admires in a prince," 87–8; Boardman, *The Early Stewart Kings*, 244–5.

⁴⁸ Michael Brown, "'I Have Thus Slain a Tyrant': The Deth of the Kyng of Scotis and the Right to Resist in Early Fifteenth-Century," *Innes Review* 47 (1996): 24–44; Boardman, *The Early Stewart Kings*, 241–3.

⁴⁹ Boardman, "A Saintly Sinner," 87–90.

⁵⁰ Devlin, "Whatever the world admires in a prince," 87–8; Boardman, *The Early Stewart Kings*, 214–5.

⁵¹ Devlin, "Whatever the world admires in a prince," 89. For a different view on Albany's motivations, see Boardman, *The Early Stewart Kings*, 244.

relevant inspiration for Macduff's actions against Macbeth in the *Cronikyl*, especially when Sir John Wemyss witnessed these events himself.

Macduff the “Kingmaker” and Fife-centric Politics in the Cronikyl

The influence of Albany's political actions and daily governance of the kingdom is the likely inspiration for the way Wyntoun ascribed a kingmaking role to Macduff in the *Cronikyl*. According to Wyntoun, Macduff first asked Malcolm's two legitimate brothers whether one of them would become king, “Bot schortly þe lauchfull brøðer twa / Forsuke to pass for gret perile” (*Cronikyl*, VI: 118, ll. 275–6). While these two lines remain unconvincing as a motive behind Malcolm's eventual coronation, they establish the reason why Macduff chose Malcolm, Duncan's illegitimate son, to become king: he was left without another viable option. The passage in the Wemyss manuscript states that,

Than Makduf counsalit rycht thraly
 Malcome the thrid brøðer [brother] þaim by
 Set he wes nocht of lauchfull bed
 As ze before þis has hed red
 To pass with him sen þai forsuke
 To follow þar rycht and vndertuke
 That *he suld mak him of Scotland king* (*Cronikyl*, VI:
 118, ll. 2157–2163 [my emphasis]).

The idea of Macduff as a kingmaker is noticeably absent from the text of the *Chronica gentis Scotorum*. The specific phrasing of this passage should not be attributed to Wyntoun, however. A passage in Latin containing similar phrasing is found in Walter Bower's *Scotichronicon* (c. 1440s), evidence that Bower and Wyntoun were consulting the same Latin source independently at St Andrews some twenty years apart:⁵²

⁵² Dauvit Broun, “A New Look at Gesta Annalia Attributed to John of Fordun,” in *Church, Chronicle and Learning in Medieval and Early*

In triumphant progress you will approach your
father's kingdom.

*You will gain the crown of the kingdom by right, I
promise.*

All rights are due to you, not to him (*Scotichronicon*
Vol. 3, V: 6, 14–17).

Both Bower's and Wyntoun's passages focus on two important and interconnected ideas: the hereditary right of Malcolm to the Scottish throne and Macduff's role in enforcing this right. The traditional notion of the earls of Fife as inauguration officers of the kings of Scots and as having received special privileges from Malcolm III himself has been perpetuated in Scottish historiography, most notably in John Bannerman's 1993 study of the Macduffs of Fife. Relying on the information about Macduff contained in the *Cronikyl* and the *Scotichronicon*, Bannerman considered both chronicles to be based on contemporary accounts of eleventh-century historical events.⁵³ An example of this is that A. D. M. Forte, in his analysis of the Law of Clan Macduff, relies on Bannerman's assessment that this law was possibly implemented during the reign of Malcolm III. Yet the earliest example provided by Forte to support this assessment is a charter from David II of Scotland to Walther Ramsey of Colluthie dated to 1358.⁵⁴ Likewise, Robert Stewart, the future Duke of Albany, was explicitly called the "head of the law of Clan Macduff"

Renaissance Scotland: Essays Presented to Donald Watt on the Occasion of the Completion of the Publication of Bower's Scotichronicon, ed. Barbara E. Crawford (Edinburgh: Mercat Press, 1999), 21; and Stephen Boardman, "Chronicle Propaganda in Fourteenth-Century Scotland: Robert the Steward, John of Fordun and the 'Anonymous Chronicle,'" *The Scottish Historical Review* 76, no. 201 (April 1, 1997): 25–8.

⁵³ John Bannerman, "Macduff of Fife," in *Medieval Scotland: Crown, Lordship and Community: Essays Presented to G. W. S. Barrow*, ed. Alexander Grant and K. J. Stringer (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), 26–7.

⁵⁴ A. D. M. Forte, "A Strange Archaic Provision of Mercy: The Procedural Rules for the Duellum under the Law of Clann Duib," *Edinburgh Law Review* 14 (2010): 423.

in legislation by Robert II's parliament in November 1384.⁵⁵ The anonymous source from which Wyntoun and Bower take their information on Macduff of Fife, specifically but not exclusively in the passages cited above, should not be so readily accepted as evidence of an eleventh-century origin to the role ascribed to the earls of Fife during late medieval Scotland.

Rather, the portrayal of Macduff as a kingmaker is unique to the *Orygynale Cronikyl*: it relies on the concept of contractual monarchy that was developed in Scotland during the fourteenth century in order to aggrandize Macduff's political role in the kingdom. Macduff's role as a kingmaker is justified by Malcolm's illegitimacy, turning the traditionally ascribed role of the earls of Fife as heads of the king's enthronement ceremony into one of choosing the Scottish monarch themselves.⁵⁶ However, and as explained earlier, the explicit allusion to Macduff as a kingmaker is exclusive to the Wemyss manuscript: the third recension, represented by the Cotton manuscript, words this passage differently:

Malcolm, Be thride, to say schortly,
 Makduff counsalit richt thraly,
 Set he was noucht of lauchful bede,
 As in Dis buk zhe [ye] haf herde rede;
 Makduff hym tretit neurBeles
To be of stark hart and stoutnes,

⁵⁵ See RPS 1384/11/12, in *Records of the Parliament of Scotland*, accessed January 14, 2018, <http://www.rps.ac.uk/>.

⁵⁶ For example, the account of the inauguration of Alexander III had the earls of Fife and Strathearn enthrone the young Alexander, while Robert Bruce had two inauguration ceremonies, in one of which he was enthroned directly by Isabella (Macduff) Comyn, countess of Buchan in representation of her nephew, the underaged earl of Fife, Duncan IV. Neither case represents evidence that, apart from the role in the inauguration ceremony of the king of Scots, the Macduff earls of Fife had a role in choosing the king themselves. See Dauvit Broun, *Scottish Independence and the Idea of Britain from the Picts to Alexander III* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 176–82; G. W. S. Barrow, *Robert Bruce and the Community of the Realm of Scotland*, 3rd ed. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1988), 151–2.

And namly to tak on hande
 To bere þe crowne þan of Scotlande;
 And bad hym þar of haf na dreide;
*For kynge he sulde be made in deide (Cronikyl [Cotton], VI:
 18, ll. 2105–14).*

Here, Wyntoun expanded the passage to include the reasons why Macduff chooses Malcolm Canmore as heir presumptive over his brothers, highlighting Malcolm's "stark hart and stoutnes" as personal qualities that merited Malcolm the crown and stressed his martial prowess and bravery in battle.⁵⁷ Placing this addition before the next passage, the "advice to princes" passage where Malcolm invents three vices to test Macduff's loyalty, contextualizes the said passage more carefully, suggesting to the reader beforehand that Malcolm's vices were a ruse and that he had all the characteristics necessary for good kingship. Instead of concentrating the power of making kings on Macduff alone, Wyntoun emphasizes the thane's role in selecting a candidate that would be presentable, and indeed, electable, to the kingship by the community of the realm. Contemporary political theory highlighted the nobility's role and duty to regulate royal power,⁵⁸ a role that Macduff of Fife in the *Cronikyl* and the Duke of Albany in early fifteenth-century Scotland performed admirably.

It is worth clarifying that Albany's initial illegitimacy mattered little to Wyntoun's portrayal of Macduff of Fife. The parallels that Wyntoun draws between Albany and Macduff are based on Albany's political role as earl of Fife and regent, not on his illegitimate birth. This is especially apparent in two important events. First, Albany was designated earl of Fife in March 1371 upon the accession of

⁵⁷ "Stark, adj.," and "Stoutness," *Dictionary of the Scots Language*.

http://www.dsl.ac.uk/entry/dost/stark_adj_adv and

<http://www.dsl.ac.uk/entry/dost/stoutnes>.

⁵⁸ Roger A. Mason, "Beyond the Declaration of Arbroath: Kingship, Counsel and Consent in Late Medieval and Early Modern Scotland," in *Kings, Lords and Men in Scotland and Britain, 1300–1625: Essays in Honour of Jenny Wormald.*, ed. Stephen Boardman and Julian Goodare (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 265–82; Brown, "I Have Thus Slain a Tyrant'."

Robert II to the throne. Isabella, countess of Fife and Albany's sister-in-law, recognized him as heir to the earldom.⁵⁹ Furthermore, the council records from November 1384 show that Albany was not only earl of Fife, but also controlled Fife as "head of the law of Clan MacDuff," a designation that shows Albany as heir of both the earldom and the clan historically associated with the Macduffs. As John Bannerman has argued, both roles were not always held by the same individual;⁶⁰ Albany's position as both earl and clan chief made him a distant, legal heir to the quasi-historical Macduff of Fife even when, as a Stewart, he was not a direct descendant of the Macduffs.

Another of Macduff's roles in the *Cronikyl* had a contemporary precedent: the return of Malcolm Canmore to Scotland from England. Albany sought to negotiate the return of James I to Scotland, and in May 1412 and April 1413, Sir John Wemyss was one of the men given safe conducts to England for this purpose.⁶¹ Although James did not return to Scotland on that occasion, Wemyss was again given safe passage to England on December 13, 1423 to

⁵⁹ Such action was based on two entails, one dated from 1360–2 by Isabella and her then-husband, Walter Stewart, Albany's elder brother, and a second one from 1315 between Duncan, earl of Fife, and Robert I. See Boardman, *The Early Stewarts*, 50–2.

⁶⁰ Bannerman, "Macduff of Fife."

⁶¹ "Rymer's Foedera with Syllabus: May 1412 | British History Online," accessed January 14, 2018, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/rymer-foedera/vol8/pp733-745>, at "Pro quibusdam de Scotia," (May 15 1412); and "Rymer's Foedera with Syllabus: April 1413 | British History Online," accessed January 14, 2018, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/rymer-foedera/vol9/pp2-6>, at "De Tractando super Liberatione Regis Scotiae." In 1412, the Scotsmen given passage to England were: Walter, bishop of Brechin; William, lord Graham; Alexander Ogilvy, earl of Angus; Master Robert de Lany; and Sir John Wemyss. In 1413, the bishop of Brechin, William lord Graham, Alexander Ogilvy, and Sir John Wemyss returned to England for the liberation of James I, but the following men were also given safe conducts: David Benigne, abbot of Melrose; William Douglas of Drumlangrig; John Sinclair; Robert Erskine; Patrick Dunbar; Alexander Haliburton; James Douglas, brother of the Earl of Douglas; John, lord of Montgomery; and William Wallace.

meet with James at Durham.⁶² Other knights of the Wemyss family had similar roles in previous centuries, most notably Sir David Wemyss, Sir John's uncle, who was one of the knights that helped negotiate David II's ransom in 1346 after the Battle of Neville's Cross, and another Sir David Wemyss, who was one of the knights assigned as ward of Margaret, Maid of Norway (d. 1290) upon her arrival to Scotland.⁶³ Wemyss's own family history was embedded with examples of their political involvement in negotiating ransoms and returns of kings of Scots to Scotland, and no doubt Wyntoun capitalized on his reader's interest here. But Malcolm Canmore's predicament as an exile in the English court also mirrors James I's own political impotence. Despite being king of Scots, James lacked political power in his own kingdom as the Scots were able to negotiate the release of his cousin Murdoch, Albany's son, before his release. James was closely monitored by Henry IV and Henry V from the time he was captured in 1406. Indeed, Henry V required James to issue letters to the Scottish nobles asking them to join him and the English in fighting against France and its Scottish allies, but the Scots refused to serve the king while he was in English hands.⁶⁴ Despite his position, James's situation as a political prisoner rendered him incapable of wielding any authority over the country he was supposed to rule, a situation that bore strong similarities with how Malcolm Canmore was portrayed in the *Cronikyl*.

Thus, Malcolm's success in gathering political support for his return to Scotland depended almost exclusively on Macduff of Fife's agency. The illegitimacy of Malcolm and Macbeth in the *Orygynale Cronikyl* allowed Wyntoun to invent an eleventh-century precedent that would explain the heightened political role wielded by the Duke of Albany in the early fifteenth century. Macduff is transformed from

⁶² "Rymer's Foedera with Syllabus: July–December 1423 | British History Online," BHO, accessed January 14, 2018, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/rymer-foedera/vol10/pp294-316>, at "Pro Scotis."

⁶³ Wyntoun, *Original Chronicle*, Bk. VIII, Ch. 1, ll. 83–92; John of Fordun, *John of Fordun's Chronicle of the Scottish Nation*, ed. W. F. Skene, trans. Felix James Henry Skene (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1872), 306.

⁶⁴ Hunt, "First Duke of Albany," 31–2; Michael Brown, *James I* (Glasgow: Tuckwell, 2000), 18.

a leading Scottish noble with a more limited role in the *Chronica gentis Scottorum* into a kingmaker who, with his influence and authority, was responsible for selecting the most apt candidate to occupy the Scottish throne. The emphasis on Malcolm's and Macbeth's illegitimacy served to turn Macduff into the more central character of the narrative, allowing Wyntoun to highlight how the main precondition to becoming king of Scots was to have Macduff's political support. The importance of Macduff in the narrative was inspired by the importance that Albany had in Scotland as earl of Fife during Wyntoun's lifetime. Wyntoun's editorial changes to the Macbeth narrative reveal not only the far-reaching influence Albany had on Scottish politics and history, but also the enduring legacy of this particular story as the point in time where the modernized kingdom of the Scots was born.

Appendix A: Differences in the events of the Macbeth narrative between *Chronica gentis Scotorum* and the *Orygynale Cronikyl*.

| <i>Chronica gentis Scotorum</i>, attributed to John of Fordun (1380s) | <i>Orygynale Cronikyl</i>, by Andrew of Wyntoun |
|--|---|
| Duncan had Malcolm and Donald from the cousin of Earl Siward (IV: 44) | Duncan had Malcolm from the miller’s daughter, but had other two legitimate sons (VI: 117) |
| Malcolm was put in charge of Cumbria (IV: 44) | <i>no mention of what happened to Malcolm after Duncan had him</i> |
| Duncan had Malcolm while he was king for a short time (IV: 44) | Duncan had Malcolm young. (VI: 117) |
| Macbeth came from a family of royal conspirators (IV: 45) | Macbeth was the son of Duncan’s sister and the devil, and later he killed his uncle. (VI: 118) |
| Macbeth reigned 17 years (IV: 45) | Macbeth reigned for 17 years. (VI: 118) |
| N/A | Macbeth dreams of three Weird Sisters whose prophecies led him to murder Duncan. (VI: 118) |
| N/A | Macbeth married his uncle’s wife, which is a sin. (VI: 118) |
| N/A | Macbeth went to Rome and was most charitable. (VI: 118) |
| N/A | Conception of Macbeth: Macbeth’s mother slept with a handsome man that was the devil in disguise. (VI: 118) |

| | |
|--|--|
| N/A | The devil gave her a ring and told her his son would rise in the world. (VI: 118) |
| Macbeth sought to kill Malcolm and Donald (IV: 45) | Duncan's two sons fled and were banished to England. (VI: 118) |
| Malcolm and Donald remained in Scotland for two years, then Malcolm fled to Cumbria and Donald to the Isles (IV: 45) | Malcolm was also banished, and he fled to Edward's court. (VI: 118) |
| Malcolm sought advice from Siward and went to King Edward for advice and protection (IV: 45, 46) | N/A |
| Edward was kind to Malcolm because he was recently an exile, like Malcolm was (IV: 45) | N/A |
| Many in Scotland clamoured for Malcolm's return (IV: 46) | <i>No one was clamouring for Malcolm's return.</i> |
| Macbeth punished those who sided with Malcolm (IV: 46) | Macbeth worked on making a "haus of fenss" in Dunsinane: he drew materials and oxen from Fife and Angus for his house. (VI: 118) |
| Macduff worked to advance Malcolm's cause before being sent to Macbeth (IV: 46) | N/A |
| Macduff was denounced to Macbeth (IV: 46) | N/A |

| | |
|---|--|
| Macbeth menaces Macduff to place his neck under the yoke (IV: 46) | Macbeth menaces to place Macduff's neck on a yoke after his oxen failed in the field. (VI: 118) |
| Macduff replied "with a certain shrewd softness of his words" (IV: 46) | Macduff does not reply. Decided to flee from the court to the water of Erne without Macbeth's consent. (VI: 118) |
| Macduff went on a small vessel to England. (IV: 46) | Macduff went on a small vessel in England and Macbeth pursued him. Macduff's wife reprimands Macbeth. (VI: 118) |
| Macduff was received by Malcolm in England. (IV: 46) | Macduff was received by King Edward in England. (VI: 118) |
| Macduff was dispossessed and exiled. (IV: 46) | N/A |
| Nobles were shocked by Macbeth's treatment of Macduff. (IV: 46) | N/A |
| Malcolm comes to the court of King Edward during the first year of Edward's reign (IV: 47) | Malcolm had been exiled in the English court all along. (VI: 118) |
| Macduff holds an audience with Malcolm. Most nobles pledged allegiance to Macduff and Malcolm. (V: 1) | N/A |
| Malcolm's first fault: lust. (V: 1, 2) | Malcolm's first fault: lust. (VI: 118) |
| Macduff replies: he can have all the women he wants, except noble's daughters and wives (V: 3) | Same, but less specific. (VI: 118) |

| | |
|---|---|
| Malcolm's second fault: thievery (V: 4) | Malcolm's second fault: thievery. (VI: 118) |
| Macduff's replies this is not a valid excuse to reject the throne. (V: 4) | Macduff's replies that he can have all the riches in Scotland. (VI: 118) |
| Malcolm's third vice: falsehood. Macduff's response is to retire in sorrow (V: 5) | Malcolm's third vice: falsehood. Macduff's response is to retire in sorrow. (VI: 118) |
| Malcolm tells Macduff he was only testing his loyalty (V: 6) | Malcolm tells Macduff he was testing his loyalty. (VI: 118) |
| Malcolm sends Macduff to Scotland with a secret message (V: 7) | N/A |
| Malcolm seeks help from King Edward: English nobles (V: 7) | Malcolm and Macduff seek help from King Edward (Wemyss MS, VI: 118); Macduff and Malcolm "hand in hand" to King Edward for help (other MSS; VI: 18) |
| Only took Earl Siward (V: 7) | King Edward ordered Earl Siward to help Malcolm: This is Siward's only mention in the narrative. (VI: 118) |
| People divided between Macbeth and Macduff (V: 7) | N/A |
| Malcolm increases his army and follows Macbeth north to Lumphanan. (V: 7) | Malcolm and Siward to Birnam Wood: men hold branches from the wood and bring them to Dunsinane Hill. (VI: 118) |
| Malcolm kills Macbeth on 5 Dec 1056. (V: 7) | Macduff's knight kills Macbeth: he reveals he was not born of a woman. (VI: 118) |

| | |
|--|--|
| The <i>Chronica</i> criticizes Malmesbury for saying Siward killed Macbeth. (V: 7) | N/A |
| | Macduff asks Malcolm for three guarantees for the earls of Fife. (VI: 119) |

REVIEW

Joanna Tucker. *Reading and Shaping Medieval Cartularies: Multi-Scribe Manuscripts and their Patterns of Growth. A Study of the Earliest Cartularies of Glasgow Cathedral and Lindores Abbey. Studies in Celtic History XLI. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2020. Pp. xiv, 315pp. ISBN 978-1-78327-478-9. £75.00*

This is an excellent book; it should be read by all medieval scholars working with multi-scribal manuscripts, and especially cartularies, broadly defined as collections of original documents copied and gathered into one place. As Joanna Tucker argues, such sources need to be considered as ‘active manuscripts’ with their own life cycle, expanding and changing over time. Historians (including the writer of this review) have tended to treat them as simple repositories of documents, and as accurate reflections of the total archives of an institution. Moreover, many aspects are obscured by the later printed editions on which Scottish medieval historians have tended to rely, having lost such a large proportion of the original documents from the period. Editors have sometimes omitted documents, added others from different sources, and imposed their own scheme of organization (usually chronological), without indicating how their editions differed from the original. The appendix, comparing the manuscript and printed edition organization of the two cartularies studied here, provides a striking illustration of this.

In the book, Tucker reveals how the various scribes actively interacted with the manuscripts over time to serve the interests of the community where they were produced. She proposes a new methodology for analyzing such works that “aims to understand their function as far as possible through their materiality and the patterns of their scribal activity” (p.1). An illustration of her methodology, based on identifying ‘scribal profiles’ and physical characteristics to reveal how the manuscript was constructed over time, is provided through a detailed analysis of two cartularies from Glasgow Cathedral and Lindores Abbey, both begun in the thirteenth century but with additions made into the fifteenth century. Through a close study of the paleography in Chapters 2–4, the organization of the contents, and the physical construction of the manuscripts (the

separate gatherings and later bindings), she demonstrates the nature of the multi-scribal work that created them, a feature lost to view in the printed editions. These are the most technical and specialist parts of the book, but they are very valuable for all users of cartularies as they explain how their sources came to be constructed.

Throughout the study of these active manuscripts, Tucker demonstrates how they were used in different ways by the scribes themselves. Individual scribes were selective in what was included and where. In the earliest period of creation, the cartulary existed as a series of unbound units, allowing great flexibility in organization; even after binding, blank spaces provided some choice. So, for example, papal and royal documents might be gathered in their own separate sections, or documents arranged according to the properties involved. These works were meant to be used alongside an existing archive, not merely as a backup. Considering the work of the later scribes, as well as that of the earliest ones, provides an insight into how communities interacted with their archives over time. In her introductory chapter and returning to the issue in Chapter 5, Tucker considers the purpose for creating these manuscripts. Previous studies have focused on administrative, memorial, and legal uses as the primary goals, but Tucker argues convincingly that their primary use was as “a shared space for the community” (p. 219). In her final chapter, the author suggests directions for the future. The valuable insights and arguments of this book should be taken into account by all medieval historians who rely on cartularies, and indeed any multi-scribal manuscripts, as major sources for their research.

Elizabeth Ewan
University of Guelph

REVIEW

Meg Bateman and John Purser. *Window to the West: Culture and Environment in the Scottish Gàidhealtachd*. Sleat, Isle of Skye: Clò Ostaig, 2020. Pp. 960. ISBN: 978-0-9562615-7-1.

Window to the West is an encyclopedic compendium of Scottish Gaelic culture, one of the outcomes of a sustained, multi-institutional collaboration about the history and role of visual arts in Scottish Gaeldom. The volume was produced by two veteran scholars, Meg Bateman, a Gaelic literary scholar and poet in her own right, and John Purser, best known for his BBC series *Scotland's Music*.

It will surprise most people that there is a history of visual arts worthy of the name in Gaelic culture and that such an extensive volume could be written about them. In a 2010 address describing the *Window to the West* research initiative, Murdo Macdonald, Professor Emeritus of the History of Scottish Art at the University of Dundee, remarked:

The fact that visual art is not properly articulated as an integral part of Gaelic culture has left the Scottish Gàidhealtachd without a key marker of cultural status, namely a history of art. That is a crucial absence—for the recognition of visual traditions, both in terms of history and contemporary activity, is fundamental to the international perception and everyday well-being of any culture. A history of art has now been restored to Scotland as a whole, and the same must be done for the Gàidhealtachd.¹

¹ Murchadh Dòmhnallach, Lesley Lindsay, Lorna Waite and Meg Bateman, eds., *Sealladh Às Ùr Air Ealain na Gàidhealtachd: Brìgh Lèirsinn ann an Dualchas nan Gàidheal / Rethinking Highland Art: The Visual Significance of Gaelic Culture*. (Edinburgh: The Royal Scottish Academy, 2013), 94.

As Bateman and Purser note in the volume's Introduction, this research is essentially an act of decolonization, as it is necessary not only to look past the ethnocidal damage wrought by the anglophone world to retrieve the relevant material evidence, but also the very definition of art and "ways of seeing" imposed by anglocentric cultural norms and institutions which have served to obscure and delegitimize those operative and normative in Gaeldom.

Visual art is, by definition, a form of representation, and so the volume is a massive exploration of the variety of manifestations of representations, symbols, patterns, and aesthetics in Gaelic culture, including but not limited to the visual. The authors begin, in fact, by examining the entire concept of sight and blindness, and the various forms of which these are understood in Gaeldom, such as the Second Sight. They go on to consider the environmental context of Gaelic communities, the effects of climate, latitude, and light, the musical, martial, cosmological, and epistemological paradigms that have been central in Gaelic life, and more, all of which shape and influence artistic expression.

Throughout the text is a careful treatment and consciousness of language, and the ways in which words shape and negotiate a Gaelic worldview that in turn informs the expectations around and understandings of visual representations. Each section connects these conceptual foundations to manuscripts, sculptures, paintings, metalwork, wood carvings, and other forms of artisanship that Scottish Gaels have produced over the course of millennia.

One of the more interesting discussion points in the book relates to the motifs of Highlandism that were selected from Gaelic culture itself, rather than being entirely fabricated from thin air, as is often asserted from the work of Hugh Trevor Roper. The wit, insight, and creativity of Bateman and Purser are on frequent display, and their involvement in Gaelic literature and culture, not to mention their intimacy with the land itself, grants them the confidence to question some of Celtoscepticism's over-reactions in recent decades.

It is a great boon to all that this monumental tome is available for free as a downloadable PDF. There has been such a flowering of research related to Scottish Gaeldom in recent years, easily accessible to academic and layperson alike, that it is hard to be patient for worn and tired stereotypes about the (supposedly) primitive, ignorant, remote Highlands to be rejected. This volume

confirms that Gaeldom has its own way of seeing the world and expressing itself artistically, as valid as any other, and that it is worth understanding and appreciating.

Michael Newton
Independent Researcher

REVIEW

Martha McGill. *Ghosts in Enlightenment Scotland*. Scottish Historical Review Monograph Second Series. Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2018. Pp. 255. ISBN 978-1783273621. £50.

In this pioneering study, Martha McGill expands discussion of the Scottish supernatural beyond the witch-hunts, shifting her attention to ghosts in Enlightenment Scotland. McGill focuses on the period from 1685–1832, beginning with the publication of George Sinclair’s *Satan’s Invisible World Discovered* and ending with Walter Scott’s death. McGill stresses that her focus is not on establishing the existence (or not) of ghosts, but rather on the variety of cultural purposes that representations of ghosts served in Enlightenment Scotland. In this period, McGill argues that representations of ghosts “offer unique commentaries on religion, mortality, history and identity” (p. 16).

One of the strengths of McGill’s work is its interdisciplinarity. McGill draws on cultural theory, literary studies, Scottish history, romantic studies, gothic studies, and Enlightenment studies to construct her arguments. Incorporating this broad range of approaches allows her to apply research on ghosts generally to Scotland specifically. McGill also draws from a wide range of primary sources which include ballads, broadsides, pamphlets, and novels, as well as writing by antiquarians. By incorporating both ‘fictive’ and ‘non-fictive’ depictions of ghosts, McGill emphasizes the ambiguity of such distinctions, and questions the strict binary between belief and disbelief, arguing that such distinctions were perhaps more challenging to detangle than one might assume. Through use of this impressively diverse range of primary source material, which McGill has pulled from a mix of ‘popular’ and ‘elite’ sources, McGill argues that while representations of ghosts remained relatively consistent in popular material, representations created by educated Scots shifted significantly over the course of the long eighteenth century.

In her first two chapters, McGill provides an overview of pre-eighteenth century representations of ghosts, covering the Middle Ages through the seventeenth-century. Medieval ghosts could fill a variety of roles—from demon to spirits of the dead; however, by the Reformation, ghosts were largely interpreted as demonic. McGill notes that while ghosts played a less prominent role in Scottish society throughout the Reformation, they figure heavily in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Protestant propaganda.

In her third chapter, McGill shifts her focus to the changing perception of ghosts alongside Enlightenment philosophy, culture, and scientific discourse. McGill compellingly argues that while ghosts and other ‘superstitions’ were often associated with lack of education, a variety of opinions about the nature of ghosts proliferated and periodicals featured heated debates about the reality of ghosts. McGill places Enlightenment skepticism in dialogue with more traditional belief systems, and convincingly argues that ghosts did not simply “melt [...] away under the glare of skepticism” (p. 15).

In chapter four, McGill explores representations of ghosts in Gothic and Romantic writing. McGill argues that representations of ghosts were increasingly used to explore topics like horror, death, and insanity, but also highlights a connection between representations of ghosts and Scottish national identity. McGill explores the impact of a variety of writers, including James MacPherson, Robert Burns, Walter Scott, and James Hogg. McGill makes a compelling argument here about the relationship between ghosts as representations of Scotland’s past and the construction of a Scottish national identity. This argument could be strengthened with further exploration of the ways in which these representations and identities differed between the Highlands and the Lowlands.

In chapter five McGill shifts her focus away from elite representations of ghosts to focus on popular portrayals. Here her focus is on the way ghost stories both shape and reflect community concerns, intergenerational traditions, and social hierarchies. McGill also suggests that elite representations of ghosts were not simply imposed upon popular culture, but instead were heavily informed by

popular beliefs. McGill also highlights a connection between representations of ghosts and local landscapes—a connection which would have been particularly relevant amidst increasing urbanization and industrialization (pp. 194–195). This is another promising point which would be fascinating to see developed further.

Overall, McGill has produced an extensive and well researched exploration of ghost lore. McGill cautions against the assumption of ubiquitous scepticism about the existence of ghosts during the enlightenment, and instead emphasizes the interplay of Romantic and Enlightenment approaches to ghosts. McGill’s interdisciplinary approach makes *Ghosts in Enlightenment Scotland* a welcome contribution to scholars across a wide variety of fields.

Mariah Hudec
University of Guelph