Ethnicity and the Writing of Medieval Scottish History

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ABSTRACT

Historians have long tended to define medieval Scottish society in terms of interactions between ethnic groups. This approach was developed over the course of the long nineteenth century, a formative period for the study of medieval Scotland. At that time, many scholars based their analysis upon scientific principles, long since debunked, which held that medieval 'peoples' could only be understood in terms of 'full ethnic packages'. This approach was combined with a positivist historical narrative that defined Germanic Anglo-Saxons and Normans as the harbingers of advances in Civilisation. While the prejudices of that era have largely faded away, the modern discipline still relies all too often on a dualistic ethnic framework. This is particularly evident in a structure of periodisation that draws a clear line between the 'Celtic' eleventh century and the 'Norman' twelfth. Furthermore, dualistic oppositions based on ethnicity continue, particularly in discussions of law, kingship, lordship and religion.

Geoffrey Barrow's *Robert Bruce and the Community of the Realm of Scotland*, first published in 1965 and now available in the fourth edition, is probably the most widely read book ever written by a professional historian on the Middle Ages in Scotland.[2] In seeking to introduce the thirteenth century to such a broad audience, Barrow depicted Alexander III's Scotland as fundamentally 'a Celtic country', albeit with some important 'non-Celtic elements'. This passage opens up a panorama of medieval Scotland, characterised by the interplay between 'Celtic features', most notably social structure, language and customs, and 'non-Celtic developments and anti-Celtic tendencies', like the cult of St Margaret and the Frankish feudalism of the ruling dynasty of kings.[3] 'The book will stand as one of the landmarks of historical writing set up by this generation', Archie Duncan commented in a review published in this journal in 1966,

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[1] This article was delivered as a paper entitled 'Scotland in the Central Middle Ages: Ethnic Groups and Conceptual Frameworks' at the University of Glasgow on 26 April 2001 and was later presented in substantially altered form as 'Ethnicity and the History of the Middle Ages in Scotland' at the University of St Andrews on 14 November 2002. It has again undergone major revision since that point, guided largely by the kind help of Profs A.A.M. Duncan, Robert Bartlett, Colin Kidd, Dr Alaric Hall, and, above all, Dr Dauvit Broun.

[2] G.W.S. Barrow, *Robert Bruce and the Community of the Realm of Scotland*, 4th edn (Edinburgh, 2005).

[3] *Ibid.*, 5.

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and it is doubtful that even its author foresaw its enduring legacy.[4] It is for this very reason that its first chapter offers such a useful example of a general tendency in the discipline of Scottish history to define aspects of Scottish society and culture in terms of ethnicity. Yet few scholars have turned their attentions to the questions of *why* ethnicity is such a fundamental factor in Scottish history and how this disposition for ethnic explanations became so entrenched in the first place. What makes features like social structures and religious cults Celtic or non-Celtic at all?[5] Furthermore, why is the medieval history of Scotland so often boiled down to a dualistic tension between two ethnic groups?

All signs point to the nineteenth century as the crucible of this Scottish brand of ethnic dualism. That era saw the emergence of Scottish history as a popular and valued subject of inquiry, largely thanks to Sir Walter Scott and his brainchild the Bannatyne Club, and its many imitators, which paved the way for the professional and systematic publication of historical documents by organisations like the Scottish History Society, and resulted in the release of a few highly influential, positivist narratives by the likes of Patrick Fraser Tytler and Peter Hume Brown.[6] The nineteenth century was the setting for the formation of the modern discipline of history, in Scotland as across Europe, a process which Patrick Geary has described as 'conceived and developed as an instrument of modern nationalism'. Some readers may be dismayed at Geary's evoking the spectre of 'a toxic waste dump, filled with the poison of ethnic nationalism'. Few, however, would dispute the assertion that ethnicity (or race) and nationality were issues of importance to nineteenth-century writers, that they harboured very clear assumptions about these topics, and that their views were inculcated in the works of history they produced.[7] Certainly, as Susan Reynolds observed, 'medieval historians today do not always seem to realize how many of their assumptions derive from arguments put forward by lawyers, historians, and political writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries whose preoccupations were totally different from those of anyone in the middle ages'.[8]

I: Ethnic historiography in the long nineteenth century

The corpus of Scottish history produced between the last quarter of the eighteenth century to the first quarter of the twentieth is saturated with

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[4] A.A.M. Duncan, 'The community of the realm of Scotland and Robert Bruce', *SHR* 45 (1966), 184.

[5] Historians in the past have tended to characterise non-Celtic elements as 'Germanic' or 'Teutonic'. Furthermore, in order to minimise reader annoyance, I have avoided the use of inverted commas for such problematic words as 'Celtic' and 'Norman'; however, their use should be seen in the light of comments expounded throughout the paper.

[6] Marinell Ash, *The Strange Death of Scottish History* (Edinburgh, 1980).

[7] Patrick J. Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Oxford, 2002), 15.

[8] Susan Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe, 900-1300*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1997), xiii.

issues of race. The output of this antiquarian tradition can be described as whiggish, progressive, narrative history, with a strong ethnographical component. To nineteenth-century antiquarians, and many others besides, progress was inextricably linked to race. Over the course of the first half of the nineteenth century the 'great chain of being', polygenist anthropology, and the idea that shape of the skull explained social and cultural differences, resulted in the widely accepted belief that races were gradated hierarchically, and that their position could be ascertained from social traits.[9] The most civilized race was assumed to be the highest on the ladder. The combination of these influences with the prevalent stereotypes (promoted by Anglo-Saxonism) of Teutonic industry, libertarianism and moderation, as defined against Celtic indolence, sentimentality and laziness, would provide the long-lasting overriding scheme for the conception of Scottish medieval history.[10]

In the nineteenth century, the concept that races were 'full ethnic packages' was so natural, internalized, and taken for granted that modern methods of government, religion, habits of dress, language, and customs were routinely used as evidence for belonging to a particular racial group. Nancy Stepan has argued that '[s]o important was the reality of types and the permanence of the racial 'packages' upon which identification of the type depended …', it was assumed that '[i]f a trait in human beings were shown to be changeable, then it could not be a racial trait'.[11] These assumptions are seen time and again in Scottish historiography. For example, Duncan Keith wrote in 1886, 'Scots…display all that is Celtic in manners, customs, language and literature[: i]f they are of Teutonic descent they have never shown the distinguishing characteristics of that race'.[12] These characteristics were generally viewed as the outward signs of innate differences in these people as human beings. As James Grant put it in 1828, '[i]nventions of art, discoveries of science, legislative regulations, institutions moral, religious, and political, as they are the fruits of the investigation and experience of ages, they form the test of improvement; they ought regularly to grow out of the genius and spirit of a people, and then they may properly be said to determine the national character'.[13] Due to this belief that the racial history of a nation

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[9] The 'great chain of being' was the idea that all living things were gradated along a continuous ladder. Phrenology held that individual personality traits could be 'read' based on the dimensions of the head, and was popular in the first quarter of the eighteenth century, influencing craniology—the systematic, anthropological study of skull shapes and sizes. Craniology combined factors of phrenology and comparative anatomy and was at its apex in the third quarter of the eighteenth century. See Nancy Stepan, *The Idea of Race in Science: Great Britain 1800-1960* (London, 1982), 6-7, 21-8.

[10] George W. Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology* (New York, 1987), 62-9; Colin Kidd, 'Teutonist ethnology and Scottish nationalist inhibition, 1780-1880', *SHR* 74 (1995), 45-68 at 47-8.

[11] Stepan, *The Idea of Race*, 102.

[12] Duncan Keith, *A History of Scotland, Civil and Ecclesiastical, from the Earliest Times to the Death of David I, 1153*, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1886), i. 46.

[13] James Grant, *Thoughts on the Origin and Descent of the Gael: with an Account of the Picts, Caledonians and Scots; and Observations relative to the Authenticity of the Poems of Ossian* (London, 1828), 3.

was absolutely crucial to understanding the validity and value of its present, Scottish historians set themselves to one particular task with great vigour.

Was Scotland Teutonic or Celtic? This question structured the debate that would divide Scottish antiquarians into Teutonists and Celtists.[14] Because races were held to be universal, existing more or less the same for centuries, history could be used, like hair colour or folk tales, as evidence for the racial identification of peoples. Antiquarians saw the racial identification of Scotland as crucial, as exhibited in Keith's poetic opinion:

> The subject is important; it involves the question, whether Scotsmen are of the race which produced poets, historians, and philosophers worthy to rank with the illustrious dead of Greece and Rome, and whose language and literature are worldwide? Or are they of that race which for centuries has not been able to preserve an independent existence, whose scanty literature is unintelligible to anyone but a Celt, and even then useless, whose language is a sickly plant, which droops and dies away from its own soil?[15]

To Teutonists, it was vital for Scotland to be proved Teutonic, so that Scots would be seen in a positive and progressive light. Arch-Teutonist John Pinkerton (1758–1826) and his followers John Jamieson (1759–1838) and Malcolm Laing (1762–1818) vehemently criticized the romantic Celticness of the Ossian craze.[16] The dominance of the racialist paradigm is most strikingly demonstrated by the Celtists' acceptance of stereotypical Celtic traits. Rather than argue that Celts had the same strengths as Teutons, Celtist scholars conceded that Teutons were superior in areas of industry. Celtists had two main concerns. First, they had to establish that Scotland possessed a Celtic past. Second, they claimed that typical Celtic characteristics, which corresponded generally with Romanticist notions of Nature opposed to Industry, were positive attributes. Consequently, Celtists like the advocate James Grant (?1743–1835), William Forbes Skene (1809–92), Robert Macfarlan (1734–1804) and Patrick Graham (d. 1835) defended the authenticity of Macpherson's Ossian.[17] Furthermore, it must be stressed that both sides took for granted that races were 'ethnic packages' replete with physical and social traits.

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[14] Colin Kidd has used the term Teutonist in this context, specifically in view of the nationalist implications of the debate (see below, n. 22). The author prefers 'Celtist' over 'Celticist' because the latter refers in a general sense to any scholar of Celtic languages and cultures. On racialism in nineteenth-century Scotland, see Kidd, 'Race, empire, and the limits of nineteenth-century Scottish nationhood', *Historical Journal* 46 (2003) 873-92.

[15] Keith, *A History of Scotland*, i. 35-6.

[16] As Pinkerton complained, 'even little misses lisp about the authenticity of Ossian, or the antique purity of the Celtic language': *An Enquiry into the History of Scotland preceding the Reign of Malcolm III, or the Year 1056*, 2nd edn, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1814), i. iv. Pinkerton derides Macpherson (*ibid.*, i. lxix). See also William Ferguson, *The Identity of the Scottish Nation* (Edinburgh, 1998), esp. 250-73.

[17] Grant, *Origin and Descent*, 379-446; William Forbes Skene, *The Highlanders of Scotland*, 2 vols (London, 1837), i. 207-15; Ferguson, *Identity*, 267-8.

Medieval Scotland became the battleground upon which this issue would be decided. The Teutonist/ Celtist debate that pervaded narrative history was almost certainly the single most important theoretical problem in nineteenth-century Scottish historiography. Crucial to the struggle was the 'Pictish Question': were the Picts Teutonic or Celtic? John Pinkerton, in his *Enquiry into the History of Scotland preceding the Reign of Malcolm III* (1789, 2nd edn 1814), argued for a Gothic or Teutonic derivation. Based on Bede's assignation of Scythian origins, Pinkerton, who had argued that the Scythians and Goths were the same people in 1787, here posited that the Picts were Goths who had come from Norway.[18] He backed this view up with ethnological comparisons between Pictish society and other Gothic tribes.[19] Moreover, Pinkerton claimed that the Northern Britons, Caledonians and Picts were one and the same people, none of whom were Celtic.[20] He upheld the Dalriadic Scots as Goths who had been 'contaminated with a Celtic mixture in Ireland'.[21] Thus, Pinkerton set up a wholly Teutonic structure for Scotland with the original Gothic Picts, Britons and Gothic/ Celtic Scots being joined later by the fully Teutonic Saxons, Norse and Normans. Indeed, he managed to remove the Celtic element so far back in history that 'no account of real Celtic manners, or language, can be recovered', adding that 'the ancient Celts must have been mere savages'.[22]

Pinkerton's confident assertions about the Picts and Dalriadic Scots failed to endure. However, 'the line taken by Pinkerton [i.e., on the Picts] was widely influential within the higher ranks of British physical anthropology'.[23] Other authors devoted space to the Pictish Question, weighing the sources against each other. John Hill Burton (1809–81) and R. G. Latham (1812–88) seem to have been unable to come to conclusive answers, with Latham merely stating that 'the commonest doctrine' was a Celtic, rather than Germanic, assignation.[24] Patrick Fraser Tytler (1791–1849), perhaps wisely, avoided the whole topic by beginning his narrative history with the reign of Alexander III.[25] George Chalmers (1742–1825), like Walter Scott (1771–1832) and Joseph Ritson (1752–1803), opposed Pinkerton's view, claiming that the Picts were Celtic.[26] For James Grant, author of *Thoughts on the Origin and*

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[18]   John Pinkerton, *A Dissertation on the Origin and Progress of the Scythians or Goths* (London, 1787), 3-14; Pinkerton, *An Enquiry into the History of Scotland*, i. 15-16.

[19]   *Ibid.*, i. 231-79.

[20]   *Ibid.*, i. 105.

[21]   *Ibid.*, ii. 140.

[22]   *Ibid.*, i. 17.

[23]   Colin Kidd, 'The ideological uses of the Picts, 1707-c.1990', in Edward J. Cowan and Richard J. Finlay (eds), *Scottish History: The Power of the Past* (Edinburgh, 2002), 177.

[24]   John Hill Burton, *The History of Scotland from Agricola's Invasion to the Extinction of the Last Jacobite Insurrection*, 2nd edn, 8 vols (Edinburgh, 1897), i. 200-7; R.G. Latham, *The Ethnology of the British Islands* (London, 1852), 76-82. John Beddoe also discussed the Pictish Question in the context of comparative anatomy; see Beddoe, *Contribution to Scottish Ethnology* (London and Edinburgh, 1853), 31.

[25]   Patrick Fraser Tytler, *History of Scotland*, 9 vols (Edinburgh, 1828-43).

[26]   George Chalmers, *Caledonia: or, a Historical and Topographical Account of North Britain from the most Ancient to the Present Time*, 3 vols (London, 1810-24), i. 225. Cosmo Innes

Descent of the Gael (1828), the Caledonians or Picts of Roman times split into two groups: the Highland Scots and agricultural Picts of the medieval period.[27] W. F. Skene, in *The Highlanders of Scotland* (1837), argued that the Northern Picts were unaffected by the Dalriadic invasions: they became the modern Highlanders.[28] In 1867, Cosmo Innes (1798–1874) wrote that 'it is still disputed whether the Picts were a Teutonic race or Celts'.[29] By 1876, however, Skene was able to assert confidently that the Britons, Picts and Scots were all Celts and that Scotland prior to the twelfth century was 'a Celtic kingdom'.[30]

Presumably due to the difficulties posed by the Pictish argument for the Teutonic or 'Gothic' nature of Scotland, Teutonist historians developed a modified approach based instead upon successive waves of Germanic invaders.[31] As Colin Kidd pointed out in 1995, George Chalmers highlighted the contributions of Saxon, Norse, and Norman invaders in his important work *Caledonia* (1810–24). The idea behind this was that the Teutonic element gradually grew until it tipped the racial balance of the country. As Chalmers put it, 'many of the children of the Celtic people have been, no doubt, converted, from their maternal *Celticism* to the artificial *Gothicism* of the Saxon settlers'.[32] Sometimes this notion was combined with the inference that the Picts were Teutonic, as when Hill Burton noted that the Saxons 'found in Scotland people of their own race, and made a marked addition to the predominance of the Saxon or Teutonic element'.[33]

Scholars agreed universally that the point at which the tables turned decisively in favor of the Teuton was the period of 1050–1300. Chalmers calls this era 'Scoto-Saxon', based on the marriage of Malcolm III and St. Margaret: '[i]n this period we shall see an Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Norman, and Anglo-Belgic colonization begin in the country beyond the Forth, and a Scoto-Saxon dynasty commence'.[34] Antiquaries agreed that this period was crucial because it marked a watershed in civilisation and progress. For Chalmers, 'the influence of a Celtic government [was] gradually reduced by the establishment of an Anglo-Norman

26 (*Continued*) (*Scotch Legal Antiquities* (Edinburgh, 1872), 16-17) noted Chalmers' Celtist stance, depicting him as the 'champion of the Celts'. Some modern readers may find this strange in the context of Chalmers' non-(or anti-) nationalist views and his preference for the term 'North Britain' over 'Scotland'. See also Kidd, 'The ideological uses', 176.

27 Grant, *Thoughts on the Origin and Descent*, 282-3.

28 Skene, *The Highlanders*, i. 67-9. Dalriada was the name of the Irish colony on the west coast of Scotland, from the sixth century, which roughly corresponded to modern Argyll.

29 *Facsimiles of the National Manuscripts of Scotland*, ed. Cosmo Innes, vol.i (Southampton, 1867), viii.

30 William Forbes Skene, *Celtic Scotland: A History of Ancient Alban*, 3 vols (Edinburgh, 1876-80), i. 17.

31 Kidd, 'Teutonist ethnology', 54-5.

32 Chalmers, *Caledonia*, i. 612. Italics in original.

33 Hill Burton, *The History of Scotland*, i. 373.

34 Chalmers, *Caledonia*, i. 497. One can only presume that by 'Anglo-Belgic' he meant Flemish.

jurisprudence and by the complete reform of a Celtic church'.[35] Like-wise the Celtist Skene wrote in 1876,

> The reign of David I is beyond doubt the true commencement of feudal Scotland, and the term of Celtic Scotland becomes no longer appropriate to it as a kingdom. Under his auspices feudalism rapidly acquired predominance in the country, and its social state and institutions became formally assimilated to Norman forms and ideas, while the old Celtic element in her constitutional history gradually retired into the background.[36]

This temporal division between a Celtic era and a Teutonic, feudal, or Norman epoch reflected a radical periodization shift, cutting the Scottish middle ages into two halves, which would have lasting effects. Even the staunchest Celtists embraced this racially determined construct of periodization. Skene accepted that Scotland was 'composed of several distinct races, partly of Teutonic and partly of Celtic origin, forming a people of very mixed descent, in which the Teutonic element was gradually predominating more and more over the Celtic'.[37]

The general framework of Scottish history adopted this linking of progress and race, and Celtists and Teutonists alike accepted the proposition. Even more moderate authors upheld the notion that progress and civilisation in Scottish history were to be equated with the Normans. Hill Burton cites the feudal system, stronger monarchy, use of coinage, written records, and well-developed royal administration as Norman influences.[38] Apparently only John Mackintosh, a harsh critic of Chalmers, Hill Burton and *redacteur extraordinaire* Cosmo Innes, doubted the perception of the Normans as the 'veritable originators of Scottish civilisation'. In Mackintosh's opinion, 'Several historians have boldly asserted that Scotland owes all her civilisation to these Normans and Saxon nobles, adding, by way of evidence, that the Celts never showed any disposition to follow an industrious occupation or to congregate in towns'.[39] The debate had cooled enough by 1920, however, so that James Mackinnon was able to note a tendency among historians to 'contrast [Celtic] institutions with those introduced under Norman or Anglo-Norman influence…'.[40]

Closely related to the issue of 'Normanisation' was the way in which antiquarians treated the expansion of monarchical power in the twelfth

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[35] *Ibid.*

[36] Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, i. 459-60.

[37] *Ibid.*, iii. 15.

[38] Hill Burton, *The History of Scotland*, i. 350-71.

[39] John Mackintosh, *The History of Civilisation in Scotland*, 2nd edn, 4 vols (London, 1892-6), i. 189. See also Kidd, 'Teutonist ethnology', 60, and Kidd, '*The Strange Death of Scottish History* revisited: constructions of the past in Scotland, c.1790–1914', *SHR* 76 (1997), 93-4.

[40] James Mackinnon, *The Social and Industrial History of Scotland from the Earliest Times to the Union* (London, 1920), 55. He claimed that it was 'superficial and misleading to assert that …[the Celt] is radically inferior to [the Anglo-Norman] in the capacity for social and political organization': *ibid.*, 57.

and thirteenth centuries. Since the marriage of Malcolm III and the
Anglo-Saxon heiress Margaret (*ca* 1070) was held to herald in the new,
Teutonic dominated era, historians agreed that their reign should con-
stitute a new dynasty, a stance which fails to reflect the royal succession at
that time. Kings of this so-called Canmore dynasty were depicted as
agents of Norman civilisation.[41] Historians sympathetic to the Celtic side
created an image of a clash of cultures, a violent struggle of Celtic resis-
tance to Norman intrusion and external change. Celtists held that the
death of Malcolm III (1093) precipitated a struggle over the ethnic
nature of the monarchy. To Robert Rait, '[t]here was a Celtic reaction,
the champion of which was Malcolm's brother, Donald (III) Bane
(1093-97)'.[42] In the first volume of his tripartite opus *Celtic Scotland*
(1876-80), Skene depicted the epoch of 1093 to 1286 as a succession of
Celtic 'insurrections', 'rebellions' and 'revolts' against the power of
'Normanizing kings'.[43] Dynastic disputes led by cadet branches of the
royal family were characterized as native efforts to return Scotland to its
Celtic past and described as 'the fitful struggles of her Celtic subjects to
resist the power which was gradually but surely working out this process
of incorporation…'.[44] Moreover, Skene described the expansion of
monarchical control in terms of repression of native Celtic populations,
citing the 'subjection' of Galloway (1160), Caithness (1196), and Argyll
(1222) as well as the 'plantation' of Moray (1160).[45] In 1887, the Duke of
Argyll (George Douglas Campbell, 1823–1900) expanded on this last
event, claiming that 'one of the kings of this period—Malcolm the
Fourth—drove out the Celts from the rich province of Moray, and reset-
tled it with the mixed races of the south'.[46]

Celtists criticized the 'prejudiced view taken of the Celtic population
by late historians', yet worked within the paradigm of racialist progress.[47]
Whereas the Teutonists focused on the industrious achievements of the
Normans, Celtists like Skene augmented their depiction of Celtic strug-
gle against change by casting light on the failure and end of the old
Celtic institutions. This tendency should be viewed in the context of
popular romantic notions of Celtic twilight. For Skene, the decline of
Celtic society was played out in the political, social, and religious arenas.
David I (1124–53) purposely 'feudalized' the 'Celtic earldoms', which to
Skene were based on kin rather than territory.[48] Skene described the
'termination of the line[s] of the Celtic earls', even though most earl-
doms continued into the late medieval period.[49] For Skene, what was

41 Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, iii. 1.
42 Robert S. Rait, *History of Scotland* (London, 1915), 15.
43 Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, i. 460, 462, 471, 475, 482, 483, 487.
44 *Ibid.*, i. 460.
45 *Ibid.*, i. 472, 479, 484.
46 George Douglas Campbell, 8th Duke of Argyll, *Scotland as it was and as it is*, 2 vols
    (Edinburgh, 1887), i. 35.
47 Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, iii. 40.
48 *Ibid.*, iii. 63.
49 *Ibid.*, iii. 288.

essentially the marriage by immigrant knights into local power struc-
tures became the break-up of traditional Celtic tribes.[50] Skene adopted
the same stance in regard to the small territorial units called thanages,
which he depicted as 'ancient Celtic tenures' that 'gave way before the
advancing feudalism'.[51] The language Skene utilized is telling: words
like extinction, suppression, termination and failure crop up repeat-
edly. This tone reflects the racialist, progressivist paradigm that encour-
aged the perception of one race superseding another.

Nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century scholars generally applied the
same assumptions to their study of religion in the Scottish kingdom. Celtists
upheld the early purity and excellence of the Celtic Church and highlighted
its reputation for learning. To Skene, 'the early Celtic Church … must
have been a powerful agent in civilising the people'.[52] By the twelfth century,
however, the native church was suffering from decay and corruption,
and 'their ruined buildings and reduced establishment fell into the hands of
laymen'.[53] To John Dowden (1840–1910), 'the Celtic Church in Scotland
had fallen into degenerate ways',[54] and the 'decadent Celtic clergy were
incapable of seriously stemming the inflowing tide' of Anglo-Norman
influence.[55] The saintly Queen Margaret (d. 1093) was seen as the archetypal
reformer, of whom Skene opined, 'there is perhaps no more beautiful
character recorded in history'.[56] In the religious sphere, Margaret served
the same function that her husband Malcolm III occupied in the political
arena, separating two distinct historical periods. For Skene, Margaret's
reforms were followed by the 'failure of the Celtic Church' in Brechin,
Dunblane and Dunkeld and the 'suppression of *Keledei*' (*céli Dé* or Culdees)
in St. Andrews and other locations. The establishment of new bishoprics
marked the final transition from a monastic to an episcopal system.
Furthermore, Skene believed that Scottish kings purposely introduced
'Roman' monastic orders to 'assimilate the native church to that of Rome'.[57]
Robert S. Rait, the first Professor of Scottish History at the University of
Glasgow (1913-30), went as far as to claim that 'in the reign of David I the
Culdees were finally crushed'.[58]

Medievalist scholars, in addition to reflecting racialist and
progressivist assumptions in their study of the Celtic church, were
affected by long-standing religious debates. Presbyterian authors had
long held the Celtic clergy, usually lumped together as Culdees, to be
primitive and pure, and to have resembled the Presbyterian church,
thus setting up an ancient historical antecedant.[59] Skene attempted an

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[50] *Ibid.*, iii. 287.
[51] *Ibid.*, iii. 246.
[52] *Ibid.*, ii. 448.
[53] *Ibid.*, ii. 365.
[54] John Dowden, *The Celtic Church in Scotland* (London, 1894), 269.
[55] John Dowden, *The Bishops of Scotland* (Glasgow, 1912), 1.
[56] Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, ii. 344.
[57] *Ibid.*, ii. 392.
[58] Robert S. Rait, *The Making of Scotland*, 2nd edn (London, 1929), 24.
[59] Colin Kidd, *Subverting Scotland's Past: Scottish Whig Historians and the Creation of an Anglo-British Identity, 1689-c.1830* (Cambridge, 1993), 185-91.

objective stance, decrying the depiction of medieval Scotland as 'the battlefield on which Catholic and Protestant, Episcopalian and Presbyterian, have contended for their respective tenets'.[60] Despite being an Episcopalian himself, Skene perpetuated Presbyterian tendencies, highlighting the importance of the 'presbyter-abbot' in the Celtic Church, while pointing out the relative unimportance of the bishop.[61] John Dowden, a medievalist scholar and bishop of Edinburgh, sought to fight these Presbyterian claims by asserting that there were bishops in early Scotland and that the 'Presbyterian myth' was based on an historical error by John of Fordun.[62]

Some scholars, particularly those who worked extensively on the primary sources and dealt with detailed and specific problems, like Cosmo Innes, and those who came from a different area or class, such as E. W. Robertson (1815–74), were not wholly convinced by this orthodoxy. As Cosmo Innes wrote in 1872, 'it is too much the fashion to draw a marked line between the Celtic and Teutonic peoples'.[63] The entire community of historians and antiquaries, however, who were a small, close-knit group pertaining to a particular (upper bourgeois) social class, shared certain basic beliefs. First, it was generally accepted that 'Celt' and 'Teuton' were valid terms for historical inquiry. The Duke of Argyll discussed the 'high but very special civilisation of the early Scoto-Irish Celts',[64] and the 'true Celtic spirit'[65] in his *Scotland as it was and as it is* (1887). In Argyll's estimation, however, the early Celtic civilization spent all its energy on the Christian conversion, and subsequently accepted the 'more civilised Feudalism of the Anglo-Normans'.[66] Even sceptics of the racial emphasis, like E. W. Robertson, voiced their criticism in a manner that reflects these universal assumptions. In his *magnum opus* of 1862, Robertson treated with caution the easy differentiation between Celts and Teutons, remarking that ancient writers found the two groups 'remarkably alike'.[67] Robertson did not challenge the current ethnic stereotypes, but instead offered alternative explanations for the Celts' (supposed) modern characteristics, such as geography and intermixture with other races.

Second, all parties accepted the idea that a significant periodization shift occurred with the reign of Malcolm III and St. Margaret, and that the subsequent period was qualitatively different from the previous (Celtic) epoch. From this system of periodization stems the tendency to draw antitheses. Dowden posited a 'transition from Celtic to Anglo-Norman methods of procedure'.[68] The strict division between

60   Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, ii. v-vi.
61   *Ibid.*, ii. 42-4.
62   Dowden, *The Celtic Church in Scotland*, 43.
63   Innes, *Scotch Legal Antiquities*, 97.
64   Argyll, *Scotland as it was*, i. 23.
65   *Ibid.*, i. 52.
66   *Ibid.*, i. 21.
67   E. William Robertson, *Scotland under her Early Kings: a History of the Kingdom to the Close of the Thirteenth Century*, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1862), ii. 197-8.
68   John Dowden, *The Medieval Church in Scotland* (Glasgow, 1910), 18.

Celtic and Teutonic or Norman institutions was encouraged by the notion of a new historical period, which gave definition and simplicity to changes occurring across the board at that time. David MacGibbon and Thomas Ross, for example, discussed a 'transition from Celtic to Norman Architecture'.[69] The periodization shift also allowed for lasts and firsts. For example, Dowden was only one of a long series to mention 'the last of the distinctively Celtic bishops of St. Andrews'.[70]

Over the course of the second half of the nineteenth century, changes took place in race science, which, if anything, intensified the racialist orientation of medieval Scottish history. A Swedish anatomist, Anders Retzius, focused scholarly attention on racial variations within Europe, introducing the 'cephalic index' in 1844. This allowed anthropologists to make racial distinctions based on head shape.[71] Edinburgh anatomist Robert Knox, author of *The Races of Man* (1850), furthered the movement's popularity in Britain.[72] By the 1880's, scholars considered craniology the most advanced method for conducting racial enquiry as opposed to the previously preferred methods of comparative philology and ethnology.[73] Around the same time, Aryan (Indo-European) philology had ascertained the relationship of Celtic, Germanic (or Teutonic) and Romance languages, which lent new confidence to the Celtist camp.[74] Both sides of the debate, however, were influenced by the 'anatomical turn' in anthropology. Skene wrote in 1876, '[The Celts] are the people of the round-headed skulls', and compared a fair-skinned brown-haired race to a large-limbed, red-haired race.[75]

In 1893, the Committee of the British Association for the Advancement of Science sent out a call for help in a field survey of Britain. The Committee's board members included John Beddoe, who had focused the comparative-anatomical approach on British peoples in 1885, and Francis Galton, the cousin of Charles Darwin who had introduced eugenics in 1883. Also on the board were members of the Society of Antiquaries for Scotland, Joseph Anderson and J. Romilly Allen, and a prominent Oxford Celticist, John Rhys. The survey sought to record '1) physical types of the inhabitants; 2) current traditions and beliefs; 3) peculiarities of dialect; 4) monuments and other remains of ancient culture; 5) historical evidence as to continuity of race'.[76] These guidelines illustrate the

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[69] David MacGibbon and Thomas Ross, *The Ecclesiastical Architecture of Scotland*, 3 vols (Edinburgh, 1896), i. xii.

[70] Dowden, *The Medieval Church*, 7.

[71] Stepan, *Idea of Race*, 97.

[72] Kidd, 'Teutonist ethnology', 59.

[73] Collignon, a French scientist, measured over 7000 skulls in order to distinguish three races from head types in France. See Stepan, *Idea of Race*, 97-8. In 1885, John Beddoe studied 'Norman' skulls and attempted to define Pictish race based on hair colour. Beddoe, *The Races of Britain* (London, 1885), 196-7, 243.

[74] Kidd, 'Teutonist ethnology', 65.

[75] Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, i. 226-7. Beddoe held that lower classes, the Welsh and the Irish, tended to be round-headed and dark-haired, and that the Celtic racial type was similar to Cro-Magnon man. See Stepan, *Idea of Race*, 100-2.

[76] Members were urged to use the 'Traveller's Anthropometer' to record the subject's height standing and sitting, the length, height and breadth of cranium, face length

extent to which anthropologists still assumed races were 'complete ethnic packages' whose characteristics in the present, ranging from skull shape to superstitions, could inform scholars about historical peoples, based on the assumption that races were believed to be unchanging. Nevertheless, the more data anthropologists collected, the more they realised that 'pure races' no longer existed in Europe due to 'intermixing'.[77] Instead, they believed they could sort out the results of this 'hybridisation' through careful scientific research. The ethnographic survey was meant to detect the sort of minutiae that would allow the racial 'types' of Britain to be discovered.

The scholars who were involved on both sides of the Teutonist/Celtist debate were the founding fathers of the modern discipline of medieval Scottish history. The great histories of the Victorian Age, in particular the works of John Hill Burton, Patrick Tytler Fraser and Eben William Robertson, were born in this climate and provided the inspiration for all students of Scottish history for the following century. Their influence has been recognised by Scottish historians as recently as 2002.[78] In addition to their own narrative works, antiquaries like Pinkerton, Innes, Skene and John Stuart (1813–77), president of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, edited and published the charters, chronicles, saints' lives, poetry and other written remnants of Scotland's medieval past. Remarkably, Innes edited the cartularies or charter collections of thirteen religious houses in addition to producing the monumental *Origines Parochiales Scotiae* (1851–5).[79] These primary sources as well as the occasional magnum opus, like Anderson and Allen's *Early Christian Monuments of Scotland* (1903), are still in use today;[80] indeed, they form the indispensable foundation upon which the modern discipline has been founded.

No giant of the nineteenth century, however, has cast a shadow as long and as deep as William Forbes Skene's. This erstwhile

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[76] (*Continued*) face length and breadth, inter-ocular breadth, bigonial (jaw) breadth, and nose length and breadth. At the time, this equipment was manufactured by Aston & Mander, 25 Old Compton Street, London, price £3 3s. complete: *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society* 18 (1893-4), 1-3.

[77] Stepan, *Idea of Race*, 105. This tendency was evident from the mid century. 'The extent, then, to which the two stocks that occupy the British Isles are pure or mixed; the characteristics of each stock in its purest form; and the effects of intermixture where it has taken place, are some of our problems; and if they could each and all be satisfactorily answered, we should have a Natural History of our Civilization'. R. G. Latham, *Ethnology*, 5.

[78] R. Andrew McDonald, 'Introduction: medieval Scotland and the new millennium', in McDonald (ed.), *Medieval Scotland: History, Literature, and Music in Scotland, 700–1560* (Toronto, 2002), 4; cf. Benjamin T. Hudson, *Kings of Celtic Scotland* (Westport, Conn., 1994), xi-xiii.

[79] Innes began his career as an assistant of Thomas Thomson (who in turn had been a secretary of Lord Hailes) and ended it as professor of history and constitutional law at Edinburgh. See Ash, *Strange Death*, 50-2; C. Innes, J. Brichan and others, *Origines Parochiales Scotiae: the Antiquities, Ecclesiastical and Territorial, of the Parishes of Scotland*, 2 vols in 3 (Edinburgh, 1851-5).

[80] J. Romilly Allen and Joseph Anderson, *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, 3 vols (Edinburgh, 1903).

Historiographer Royal of Scotland was the son of James Skene (1775–1864), a friend of Sir Walter Scott.[81] Skene edited manuscripts in Latin (John of Fordun's *Chronica Gentis Scotorum*, 1871), in Gaelic, such as origin-legends, king-lists and genealogies in *Chronicles of the Picts and Scots* (1867), and in Welsh (*The Four Ancient Books of Wales*, 1868), but it was his three-volume *Celtic Scotland* that transformed the discipline.[82] This work sought to place 'Celtic Scotland' on the same rigid academic footing as had been achieved with the country's non-Celtic past, by examining contemporary texts and analysing philological and ethnographic material in an attempt to achieve a cogent narrative of the primarily Gaelic side of Scotland's medieval history. *Celtic Scotland*, it could be said, finally undid the damage of the Ossian scandal and the Pictish debate, and made Celtic studies reputable again. In Alexander Macbain's opinion, '[t]he Celts of Scotland … owe Dr. Skene a debt of gratitude, for he was the first to draw their early history out of the slough into which it had got, and to make it respectable…'; 'he made writers of Scottish history devote fuller attention to the Celtic side of Scottish affairs'.[83] His work was still controversial in the 1960s, provoking one particularly harsh comparison to Chalmers' *Caledonia*; however, even that critical review referred to *Celtic Scotland* as 'his still unsuperseded *magnum opus*'.[84] The field of Scottish medieval history saw the release of important primary sources in the period between 1870 and 1950, primarily by Alan Orr Anderson, David Easson, William Croft Dickinson, and A. C. Lawrie. There were no major ideological shifts in the historiography during this period, however, and it was Skene's *Celtic Scotland*, above all, that continued lighting the way for new scholars.[85] In the words of Geoffrey Barrow, '[s]ince Skene it has been impossible for serious historians to ignore the importance of the Celtic element in medieval Scottish society'.[86]

Barrow's response to Skene was ambivalent, however. Bemoaning the 'sharply drawn simplicities' of an earlier time, Barrow criticised the easily-drawn 'sharp division' between 'Saxon' and 'Celtic'. For Skene it was

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[81] A. J. G. Mackay, 'William Forbes Skene', rev. W. D. H. Sellar, in *The Concise Dictionary of National Biography*, 3 vols (Oxford, 1992), iii. 2759-60; W.D.H. Sellar, 'William Forbes Skene (1809-92): historian of Celtic Scotland', *PSAS* 131 (2001) 3-21.

[82] *Johannis de Fordun Chronica Gentis Scotorum*, ed. William F. Skene (Edinburgh, 1871); *Chronicles of the Picts, Chronicles of the Scots, and other Early Memorials of Scottish History*, ed. William F. Skene (Edinburgh, 1867); *The Four Ancient Books of Wales*, ed. William F. Skene, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1868).

[83] William Forbes Skene, *The Highlanders of Scotland*, 2nd edn, ed. Alexander Macbain (Stirling, 1902), xiv (ellipsis mine).

[84] James Anderson, 'William Forbes Skene: Celtic Scotland v. Caledonia', *SHR* 46 (1967), 146.

[85] Ash, *Strange Death*, 152; Richard Oram, 'Gold into lead? The state of early medieval Scottish History', in Terry Brotherstone and David Ditchburn (eds.), *Freedom and Authority: Historical and Historiographical Essays presented to Grant G. Simpson* (East Linton, 2000), 33.

[86] Barrow, *Robert Bruce*, 2. On Skene's importance, see also E. J. Cowan, 'The invention of Celtic Scotland', in E. J. Cowan and R. A. McDonald (eds.), *Alba: Celtic Scotland in the Medieval Era* (East Linton, 2000), 1-4.

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'never the twain shall meet'; conversely, for Barrow, the evidence was 'more complex than he [Skene] allowed it to be'.[87] Barrow's more nuanced approach was evident from the outset of his career, particularly in his early work on 'The cathedral chapter of St Andrews and the culdees in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries' (1952), which pointed out that the *céli Dé*, far from being systematically destroyed by the reforming foreign bishops, instead underwent a very gradual transformation which culminated in their reconstitution as a collegiate church.[88] At the same time, however, Barrow sought to lift Scottish medieval history out of the parochial kailyard and deposit it firmly on the familiar ground of feudalism and Anglo-Norman studies. In 1956, Barrow released a book with the title *Feudal Britain*, a title presumably inspired by J. H. Round's *Feudal England* (1895). In it, Barrow re-affirmed Scotland's role within a broader Anglo-Norman world, making it relevant again. The spectrum of Scottish history was changed dramatically. Alongside *Celtic Scotland*, there now was *Feudal Britain* and *The Anglo-Norman Era in Scottish History* (1980).[89]

The most significant break from the past that was evident in the work of Barrow, Duncan and their followers, was a shift to a more sophisticated approach on 'full ethnic packages'—the unquestioned assumption that with race came an automatic range of traits centred on language, law and customs. This sea change should not be taken for granted or underestimated. R. L. Graeme Ritchie, professor of French at the University of Birmingham from 1919–46, penned the first-ever study solely devoted to the role of the Normans in Scotland, which was published in 1954.[90] His study marked an important advance in scholarship; nevertheless, Ritchie wrote about the Normans as though their stereotypes were natural attributes. For example, he referred to 'historic Norman qualities', 'qualities like military ardour … skill in horsecraft … zeal for religious and social reform, strict regard for legality, a genius for organization, a feeling for ceremony and symbol'.[91] In contrast, the works of Barrow and Duncan, bolstered by accompanying advances in charter scholarship, abandoned much of this old baggage. In large part, Barrow shifted the focus from supposed inherent cultural characteristics of *peoples* (e.g., Norman efficiency), preferring instead to concentrate on institutions and *structures*, like feudalism. Furthermore, Barrow's analysis was detailed and heterogeneous; in 1965 he claimed that '[n]ot only do all continental incomers get lumped together as Norman—many of them were not—the impression is also given that all

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[87] Barrow, 'Rural settlement in central and eastern Scotland', in Barrow, *The Kingdom of the Scots*, 1st edn (London, 1973), 257. The article first appeared in *Scottish Studies* 6 (1962).

[88] Barrow, *The Kingdom of the Scots*, 1st edn 187-202.

[89] G. W. S. Barrow, *The Anglo-Norman Era in Scottish History*. Ford Lectures 1977 (Oxford 1980).

[90] R. L. Graeme Ritchie, *The Normans in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1954).

[91] *Ibid.*, v. Ellipsis mine. Barrow called Ritchie the Normans' 'latest and best apologist'. 'Scotland's "Norman" families', in Barrow, *The Kingdom of the Scots*, 1st edn, 279.

these 'Normans' poured into Scotland at the same time … almost over-night'.[92] Duncan, on the other hand, largely ignored the ethnic argu-ments in his magisterial survey entitled *Scotland: The Making of the Kingdom* (1975), deciding instead to concentrate on individuals rather than groups, and with a level of detail hitherto unseen in Scottish narra-tive histories. For example, despite the title of chapter 6, 'Celt, Saxon and Norman, 1058–1124', Duncan grappled with this decisive era by avoiding ethnic terminology and disagreeing with many of the accepted interpretations of milestone events in the supposed Celtic/ Saxon + Norman conflict. Duncan held that St Margaret 'supported and encour-aged native devotion to native saints, and was little concerned with inno-vation in monastic life in Scotland'.[93] Similarly, he maintained that Margaret, Edgar and Alexander 'sought to influence, perhaps even to modify, but not to revolutionise'.[94]

II: Social science, ethnicity and the medievalists' response

Another major change in ways of thinking was going on in the sixties and seventies in other areas of academia which would affect greatly the way medievalists conceived of their period of study. In the 1960s and 70s, a debate raged over the question of race, with primordialists claiming that races were unchanging human categories, and modernists asserting that racial groups were malleable. As support in the 'hard sciences' for the biological model of race fell away, a consensus was formed, based on the modernist position.[95] Most sociologists would now agree to a definition in which races (or ethnic groups; the terms are very similar) are (a) 'so-cially constructed', i.e. actively defined by people, and (b) 'historically contingent', i.e., that they could change in response to social and cul-tural factors. In other words, people can define themselves or be defined by others as a racial or ethnic group. Such groups tend to define them-selves based on a common belief in shared biological descent (though these beliefs can be changeable), as well as appearance, language, law, customs, and national identity. These concepts spread rapidly to the humanities. The most striking thesis to emerge from this interaction was that relating to the modernity of ethnic nationalism. According to this view, modern nation-states necessitated the co-identification and con-vergence of ethnic and national identities; this had only become

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[92] *Ibid.*, 280.
[93] A. A. M. Duncan, *Scotland: The Making of the Kingdom* (Edinburgh, 1975), 123.
[94] *Ibid.*, 132.
[95] For a variety of views, see *Theories of Race and Ethnic Relations*, ed. John Rex and David Mason (Cambridge, 1986); M. Elaine Burgess, 'The resurgence of ethnicity: myth or reality?', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 1 (1978) 265-85; A. H. Halsey, 'Ethnicity: a primor-dial social bond?', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 1 (1978) 124-8; Anthony D. Smith, 'War and ethnicity: the role of warfare in the formation, self-images and cohesion of ethnic communities', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 4 (1981) 375-97; Robin Cohen, 'The making of ethnicity: a modest defence of primordialism', in Edward Mortimer and Robert Fine (eds), *People, Nation and State: The Meaning of Ethnicity and Nationalism* (London, 1999), 3-11. On developments in race science, see Stepan, *The Idea of Race*, 83-190.

possible in the wake of such seismic cultural shifts as the advent of mass print-culture, the Industrial revolution and Enlightenment philosophy.[96] The implication that nations as such did not exist has drawn criticism from premodernist scholars.[97]

For medievalists, discussions about ethnicity are irrevocably entangled with the attempt to understand the origins of nationalism.[98] Susan Reynolds advanced her own critique of the modernist position, asserting that ethnicity and polity could converge in the Middle Ages, but in the form of medieval *regna* rather than modern nations.[99] Moreover, sociologists have drawn a distinction between ethnic and civic nations.[100] Similarly, Patrick Geary has argued that the existence of constitutional peoples in antiquity, as defined by law and allegiance, as opposed to biological peoples, based on descent, custom, and geography, underwrote a civilisation/ barbarity dualism.[101] Robert Bartlett has demonstrated that medieval attitudes were characterised by a great deal of diversity, and that thinkers were able to support either multiethnic polities or single-ethnicity states.[102] Furthermore, academics agree that individuals living in the Middle Ages saw themselves as peoples or races, with myths of common descent, and that affinities in language, social custom and physical appearance were the natural consequence.[103] The story, however, does not end there; as Bartlett has shown, 'medieval terminology may have allowed a biological or genetic construal of race, but it also allowed a picture of races as changing cultural communities'.[104]

Unsurprisingly, the critique of medieval ethnicity has led to a re-examination of many of the ethnic terms that academics use. Most relevant to Scotland has been the raging debate over 'Celticity'.[105] A deeper

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[96] For two sides of the argument over whether nations existed before modernity, see Ernest Gellner, 'Adam's navel: "primordialists" versus "modernists"', and Anthony D. Smith, 'The nation: real or imagined?', both in Mortimer and Fine (eds), *People, Nation and State*, 31-42. The chief proponents of the modernist argument (although each with their own very distinctive approaches) were Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford, 1983), Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 1983), and Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalisms since 1780* (Cambridge, 1990).

[97] A critical description of the historiographical debate is offered in Anthony D. Smith, *The Nation in History: Historiographical Debates about Ethnicity and Nationalism* (Cambridge, 2000), esp. chap. 2.

[98] On differences between modern and medieval views of national and ethnic identity, see Susan Reynolds, 'What do we mean by "Anglo-Saxon" and "Anglo-Saxons"?', *Journal of British Studies* 24 (1985), 399, and Anthony D. Smith, 'National identities: modern and medieval', in Simon Forde, Lesley Johnson and Alan V. Murray (eds), *Concepts of National Identity in the Middle Ages* (Leeds, 1995), 21-46.

[99] Susan Reynolds, 'Medieval *origines gentium* and the community of the realm', *History* 68 (1984), 382-7.

[100] Smith, *The Nation in History*, 15-16.

[101] Geary, *The Myth of Nations*, 42.

[102] Robert Bartlett, 'Medieval and modern concepts of race and ethnicity', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 31 (Winter, 2001), 50-1.

[103] *Ibid.*, 42-3; Reynolds, 'Medieval *origines gentium*', 383-4.

[104] Bartlett, 'Medieval and modern concepts', 54.

[105] For an excellent analysis of the Celticity debate, see Patrick Sims-Williams, 'Celtomania and Celtoscepticism', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 36 (1998) 1-35; cf.

understanding of the way that 'Celt', a word rescued from Antiquity by Renaissance luminaries like George Buchanan (1506–82), has emerged from this scholarly attention.[106] While it is possible to talk about a shared Gaelic culture reaching from Buchan to Bantry Bay, it is also now clear that Gaelic and Britonnic (i.e. Welsh) societies saw themselves as distinct, and sometimes antagonistically so.[107] Furthermore, any pan-Gaelicism itself must be balanced against the understanding that peoples like the Galwegians, men of Moray and men of Argyll seem to have seen themselves as distinct *gentes*, despite being all Gaels.[108] In any event, the idea that the Irish and Scottish Gaels, along with the Welsh and Cornish, should be thought of as 'Celtic' evolved over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, based largely on linguistic grounds.[109] Patrick Sims-Williams, claiming that 'self-conscious Celtic solidarity cannot be traced back beyond the modern period', dismisses the usual counter-arguments with ease; alliances of Scots, Irish and Welsh leaders were based primarily on 'common grievance against the English'.[110]

Yet the ideas evoked by Celticism are powerful and resilient; indeed, some might say, the romantic spirit of Ossian is alive and well. 'For good or ill the Celtic label is now well established and no amount of futile flytings between archaeologists, linguists and historians will change that fact': so wrote Ted Cowan in a recent volume.[111] Indeed, the stature of 'things Celtic', real or imagined, in popular culture today is mind-boggling: a search of amazon.com for books on the topic of 'Celts' reveals over 12,000 results![112] The word still has the power to fire the popular imagination, and points to the central dilemma of the Scottish

[105] (*Continued*) Simon James, *The Atlantic Celts: Ancient People or Modern Invention?* (London, 1999) and Malcolm Chapman, *The Celts: the Construction of a Myth* (London, 1992). On Celtic identity in a Scottish context, see Cowan, 'The invention'; Stuart Piggott, 'Celts, Saxons and the early antiquaries', in Piggott, *Ruins in a Landscape* (Edinburgh, 1976), 55-76; Murray G. H. Pittock, *Celtic Identity and the British Image* (Manchester, 1999); Colin Kidd, *British Identities before Nationalism: Ethnicity and Nationhood in the Atlantic World, 1600-1800* (Cambridge, 1999); Kidd, 'Teutonist ethnology'.

[106] Cowan, 'The invention', 7-8.

[107] Sims-Williams, 'Celtomania', 14, where he claims that 'the Welsh generally disliked the Irish' and 'no umbrella term like Celtic was in use'.

[108] See Dauvit Broun, 'Defining Scotland and the Scots before the wars of independence', in Dauvit Broun, R.J. Finlay and Michael Lynch (eds), *Image and Identity: The Making and Re-making of Scotland Through the Ages* (Edinburgh, 1998), esp. 10-11. Also, William of Malmesbury saw the peoples of England in the same way; see Bartlett, 'Medieval and modern concepts', 43-4.

[109] Sims-Williams, 'Celtomania', 7-16; Cowan, 'The invention', 11-17.

[110] Sims-Williams, 'Celtomania', 11. Compare Robert I's letter to the Irish (1306/7), *Regesta Regum Scotorum v: The Acts of Robert I*, ed. A. A. M. Duncan (Edinburgh, 1988), no. 564, in which he uses the word *natio*, with Edward Bruce's letter, no. 571, to the Welsh (late 1316), which bases its plea on Christianity and origin myths. Cf. also A.A.M. Duncan, 'The Scots' invasion of Ireland, 1315', in R. R. Davies (ed.), *The British Isles 1100–1500: Comparisons, Contrasts and Connections* (Edinburgh, 1988), 100-17, esp. 110 and 114, as well as Sims-Williams' comments: 'Celtomania', 12, n.40.

[111] Cowan, 'The invention', 5.

[112] http://www.amazon.com

historian: how to reconcile the legacy of Scott and the romantic move-
ment with the methods, practices and concerns of history in today's
world. Indeed, the words 'Celt' and 'Celtic' seem to crop up more often
in the titles of books and articles nowadays rather than playing a substan-
tive role in the text.[113] One suspects that many authors of popular history
and historical fiction lose much less sleep over this problem than aca-
demics; nevertheless, it is tempting to see works like Barrow's embrace
of Celticity in the introduction to *Robert Bruce* as a deft attempt to meet
curious young minds half-way.

The situation today with the terms 'Teutonic' or 'Germanic' could
not be more different: outside of philology, this terminology became
much less fashionable after the Second World War. Yet much of the
baggage of Teutonism surely survives in its representative peoples, most
significantly the Normans. *Normanni* as a medieval *gens* or *populus* is not,
of course, anachronistic, and its ethnic identity has long been studied.[114]
Medieval *Normanitas*, however, was a narrower concept than that used by
many modern Scottish writers, who had a tendency in the past to cast as
Norman virtually anything from south of the English Channel. Recent
authors have favoured a modern term which refers to the culture spe-
cific to French-speaking knights in Britain.[115] Yet there is no evidence
that 'Anglo-Norman' would have meant anything much to contempo-
raries, and John Gillingham has argued cogently that English identity
was a more meaningful concept by the mid-twelfth century than the
anachronistic 'Anglo-Norman'.[116] It is difficult, however, to know how to

[113] Several examples from the last fifteen years include Cowan and McDonald (eds), *Alba: Celtic Scotland*; Benjamin T. Hudson and Vickie Ziegler (eds), *Crossed Paths: Methodological Approaches to the Celtic Aspect of the European Middle Ages* (Lanham, 1991); Alexander Grant, 'Scotland's "Celtic Fringe" in the late Middle Ages: the MacDonald Lords of the Isles and the kingdom of Scotland', in Davies (ed.), *The British Isles: 1100–1500*; Benjamin T. Hudson, *Kings of Celtic Scotland* (London, 1994); Cynthia J. Neville, 'A Celtic enclave in Norman Scotland: Earl Gilbert and the earldom of Strathearn, 1171-1223', in Ditchburn and Brotherstone (eds), *Freedom and Authority*; Neville, 'Charter-writing and the exercise of lordship in thirteenth-century Celtic Scotland', in A. Musson (ed.), *Expectations of Law in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 2001); W. D. H. Sellar, 'Celtic law and Scots law: survival and integration', *Scottish Studies* 29 (1989); Keith J. Stringer, 'Reform monasticism and Celtic Scotland: Galloway, c.1140–c.1240', in Cowan and McDonald (eds), *Alba: Celtic Scotland*.

[114] On the 'mythical' nature of *Normanitas*, see R. H. C. Davis, *The Normans and their Myth* (London, 1976); for a response to this argument, see G. A. Loud, 'The '*Gens Normannorum*'—myth or reality?', *Proceedings of the Battle Conference* 4 (1981). See also C. Warren Hollister, 'Anglo-Norman political culture and the twelfth-century renais-sance', in C. W. Hollister (ed.), *Anglo-Norman Political Culture and the Twelfth Century Renaissance* (Suffolk, 1997).

[115] Some works to employ the term include Marjorie Chibnall, *Anglo-Norman England: 1066-1166* (Oxford, 1986); David Rollason, Margaret Harvey and Michael Prestwich (eds), *Anglo-Norman Durham, 1093-1193* (Woodbridge, 1994); Barrow, *The Anglo-Norman Era*. The term is least problematic when restricted to the description of the 'Anglo-Norman' dialect of French.

[116] John Gillingham, 'Henry of Huntingdon and the English nation', in Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century* (Woodbridge, 2000), 124. Gillingham has also argued convincingly, based on contemporary evidence, that references to 'Normans' and 'Anglo-Normans' should be dropped in the context of the 1170 invasion of Ireland: see 'The English invasion of Ireland', in Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century*.

replace the phrase. As early as 1965, Barrow commented on the varie-gated nature of Scottish immigration, pointing especially to the Flemish influx, and characterised Malcolm IV and William I as members of a 'Frankish aristocracy'.[117] More recently, Dauvit Broun has referred to 'Anglo-French' acculturation, which is more accurate, yet still a modern construct.[118] Whatever the solution to this dilemma, it is clear that *Franci* is the term favoured in surviving Scottish royal charters,[119] as well as in chronicles of English and Irish provenance when referring to Scot-land.[120]

The last decade has seen a revival of interest in studying ethnicity for its own sake. A spotlight was thrown on the topic in 1993 when Rees Davies began a series of presidential addresses to the Royal Historical Society on the peoples of medieval Britain.[121] In Scotland, a growing awareness of what has been called the 'strategic and situational' ele-ments in ethnic identity has led to new studies on how individuals sought to shape views for political or personal gain.[122] Bartlett has pointed out the divergence in depictions of Scotland's 'ethnicity' between Robert and Edward Bruce on the one hand and John of Fordun on the other.[123] Dauvit Broun has analysed king-lists and origin-legends from the elev-enth to fourteenth centuries, noting how the royally sanctioned version of history played up the kingship's Irishness.[124] Ted Cowan has exam-ined the ways in which political documents like Baldred Bisset's *Processus* (1301) and the *Declaration of Arbroath* (1320) emphasized Scottish

[117] Barrow, 'Scotland's "Norman" families', 285-90; Barrow, *Robert Bruce*, 7.

[118] Broun, 'Anglo-French acculturation and the Irish element in Scottish identity', in Brendan Smith (ed.), *Britain and Ireland, 900-1300: Insular Responses to Medieval Euro-pean Change* (Cambridge, 1999).

[119] For an example of the use of *Franci* in royal charters, see no. 161 in G. W. S. Barrow (ed.), *The Charters of David I. The Written Acts of David I King of Scots, 1124-53, and of his son Henry, Earl of Northumberland, 1139-52* (Woodbridge, 1999), 130-1. English royal charters also used the formula '*Franci et Angli*'. See Ian Short, '*Tam Angli quam Franci*: self-definition in Anglo-Norman England', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 18 (1995), 163.

[120] For example, note the use of the term 'Frankish' or 'French' to refer to William the Conqueror's forces in AU 1072.8: Seán Mac Airt and Gearóid Mac Niocaill (ed.), *Annals of Ulster to A.D. 1131, Part I: Text and Translation* (Dublin, 1983), 508. Ian Short discusses the preference of *Franci* over *Normanni* in '*Tam Angli quam Franci*', 163-4. According to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,* MS E, Duncan II 'went to Scotland with what aid he could get of the English and the French'. See *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Col-laborative Edition*, vol.vii, *MS E*, ed. Susan Irvine (Cambridge, 2004), 104, *s.a.* 1093; translation from Alan Orr Anderson, *Scottish Annals from English Chroniclers* (London, 1908), 118. Furthermore, in an oft-cited quotation from the Barnwell Chronicle ('the more recent kings of Scots profess themselves to be rather Frenchmen') no mention is made of 'Normans': *Memoriale Fratris Walteri de Coventria: the Historical Collection of Walter of Coventry*, ed. William Stubbs, Rolls Series, 2 vols (London, 1872-3) ii. 206; Anderson, *Scottish Annals from English Chroniclers*, 330. (Walter of Coventry copied this passage from the Barnwell Chronicle.)

[121] R.R. Davies, 'The peoples of Britain and Ireland 1100-1400: 1. Identities', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6th ser., 4 (1994) 1-20.

[122] Bartlett, 'Medieval and modern concepts', 42.

[123] *Ibid.*, 53.

[124] Dauvit Broun, *The Irish Identity of the Kingdom of the Scots in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Cen-turies* (Woodbridge, 1999).

identity.[125] Surviving documents of an overtly ethnographic nature tend to highlight the kings, and much of the work so far has been done in the context of the 'origins' of a Scottish national identity.[126] Despite the difficulties of source material, one hopes that future academics may be able to tease out aristocratic and religious perspectives on the process of ethnic identification from contemporary chronicles, charters and saints' lives and other texts. Alex Woolf's recent (unpublished) paper on 'The Scottish Identity of the Kingdom of Alba', which examines the ninth- and tenth-century transformation of Pictish and Scottish ethnic identity by analysing works like the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, the *Chronicle of the Kings of Alba* and the *Life of St Cathroe*, may point to future possibilities.[127] The importance of these studies cannot be underestimated, for they bring us closer to understanding how contemporary attitudes to ethnic identity worked on the ground.

III: The surviving structures of ethnic dualism

Thanks to the Barrow/ Duncan revolution in Scottish history, coupled with the social scientists' critique on race, no historian writing today would seriously profess the belief that Celtic and Teutonic peoples developed distinct societies based upon the physical and mental characteristics inherent to their 'races'. Occasionally a writer may employ language like 'native stock' or 'intermarriage'; indeed, one even characterised the latter as 'accommodation and cooperation between races'.[128] Furthermore, while the use of anachronistic terminology is problematic, simply substituting one word with another does nothing to advance our understanding. It must be encouraging that academics have begun to investigate seriously the strategies and situations behind ethnic identification. Yet the history of medieval Scotland was founded on the misleading theories and uncritical assumptions of the nineteenth century: despite the

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[125] Edward J. Cowan, 'Identity, freedom and the Declaration of Arbroath', in Broun *et al.* (eds), *Image and Identity*.

[126] On what could reasonably be called Medieval Scottish ethnography, see Edward J. Cowan, 'Myth and identity in early medieval Scotland', *SHR* 63 (1984) 111-135; Dauvit Broun, 'The birth of Scottish History', *SHR* 76 (1997) 4-22; John Bannerman, 'The king's poet and the inauguration of Alexander III', *SHR* 68 (1989) 120-49. Medieval writers drew attention to both the Irish and English lines of descent of the kings of Scots. Ethnic language was used for purposes of political expediency; Scottish kings could be Irish, they could be part-Pictish, they could be English, they could seem French, or they could be descended from Egyptian pharaohs or ancient Scythians. Cf. Broun, *Irish Identity*, 196-9; Ailred of Rievaulx, *Genealogia Regum Anglorum*, in J.-P. Migne (ed.), *Patrologia Latina*, cxcv. cols 735-6; Adam of Dryburgh, *De tripartito tabernaculo*, Migne (ed.), *Patrologia Latina*, cxcviii. cols 722-3; Anderson, *Scottish Annals from English Chroniclers*, 330; *Jordan Fantosme's Chronicle*, ed. R. C. Johnston (Oxford, 1981), 49.

[127] Alex Woolf, 'The Scottish Identity of the Kingdom of Alba in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries' at *Rannsachadh na Gàidhlig 3*, University of Edinburgh, 21-23 July 2004.

[128] R. A. McDonald, 'Matrimonial politics and core-periphery interactions in twelfth-century and early thirteenth-century Scotland', *Journal of Medieval History* 21 (1995), 229.

significant advances of Barrow and his contemporaries, the conceptual framework underpinning the structure of Scottish medieval history remains unsound. The nineteenth-century debate between Teutonists and Celtists has allowed a kind of ethnic dualism to emerge and crystalise, along with its many attendant prejudices.

Perhaps the most immediately obvious carry-over from the nineteenth century has been a scheme of periodisation, in which the marriage of Malcolm III and St Margaret (ca. 1070) augured the main trend of the next two centuries: the wedding of Gaelic Scotland with English and Norman civilisation. The concept of a new royal house beginning with Malcolm III has become a deep-rooted convention in Scottish history. For example, Michael Lynch's *Scotland: A New History* includes a chapter entitled 'The MacMalcolm Dynasty'.[129] The concept, however, has no bearing on the contemporary experience of the late eleventh century. The supposed accession of the 'Canmores', whose very name is now under question, was arguably the result of political spin based on the infusion of Wessex royal blood brought by Margaret combined with the later changes to kingship initiated by David I and his grandsons.[130] Nevertheless, the notion of a Canmore dynasty continues to structure new books on the Scottish monarchy.[131] The division of the royal line that ruled Scotland from *ca* 840 to 1286 at this point in the late eleventh century is a result of nineteenth-century desires to separate the backward, conservative 'Celtic' kingship of the 'House of Alpin' from the more civilised, enlightened, european monarchy of the 'House of Canmore', and it is a concept which deserves proper examination.

The tendency to draw a line somewhere around 1100 has encouraged writers to make simple distinctions between the earlier, Celtic, period and the later, Norman, era.[132] Ideas about what is old and what is new are enmeshed in a binary opposition, creating a watershed that forces historical trends to flow into either a Celtic or a Norman reservoir. 'Celticness' in this context is associated with the (often ancient) past, with tradition, and is generally described in terms of survival, tenacity, stubbornness, and related concepts. For example, to return to *Robert Bruce*, Barrow writes that 'many … pieces of Celtic conservatism survived north of Forth and in the south-west'.[133] Much of Barrow's work exhibits

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[129] Michael Lynch, *Scotland: A New History* (London, 1991).

[130] Archie Duncan has argued that the soubriquet *ceann mór* was originally meant for Malcolm IV (d. 1165), not Malcolm III (d. 1093): A. A. M. Duncan, *The Kingship of the Scots, 842-1292: Succession and Independence* (Edinburgh, 2002), 51-2, 75.

[131] Richard Oram (ed.), *The Kings and Queens of Scotland* (Stroud, 2001); Richard Oram, *The Canmores* (Stroud, 2002). See also A. D. M. Barrell, *Medieval Scotland* (Cambridge, 2000), 13, where he writes, 'it is tempting to see the accession of Malcolm III as heralding a new era'.

[132] For example, Gordon Donaldson referred to the era before Queen Margaret as the 'Celtic Period', and noted that 'from Duncan's reign (1094) onwards, Scotland was no longer a purely Celtic country': Donaldson, *Scotland: Church and Nation through Sixteen Centuries* (Edinburgh, 1960), 7-16.

[133] Barrow, *Robert Bruce*, 1st edn (1965), 3; 4th edn (2005), 6.

a laudable inclination to aim for a sense of balance between Celtic and Anglo-Norman themes.[134] Barrow continued these themes in his work of two decades later, in which he explored the evidence for a 'Lost Gàidhealtachd' in lowland Scotia, which he evocatively termed 'the fossil record'.[135] One wonders whether the Anglo-Norman Scotland of knights, tournaments and castles is any less 'lost' today. In many ways, Duncan's views augmented and supported those presented by Barrow, occasionally turning phrases such as 'zones of true Celtic survival'.[136] The real danger of these assumptions is that anything Gaelic or native is liable to be interpreted as ancient, backward and unresponsive to social change. For example, the inauguration of Alexander III has long been viewed as 'custom already very ancient in 1249'.[137] Recent research, however, has argued the existence of innovations in the ceremony which had evolved in response to specific political concerns.[138] The periodisation that is maintained through this opposition of old and new still underlies a tendency to separate 'early medieval Scotland' from 'feudal Scotland' in current textbooks.[139]

The supposedly Celtic and Norman influences in medieval Scottish society are generally seen as mutually exclusive. The most evocative image of their interaction is the coin. Geoffrey Barrow, exhibiting a characteristic striving for balance, depicted Gaelic society as 'the other side of the coin' to the new Anglo-Norman world.[140] A coin is a two-dimensional symbol, one which sums up satisfactorily the ethnic dualism which still holds sway today. As in any binary opposition, what is Celtic (or Gaelic or native) is defined against what is Norman (or Anglo-French or European) and vice versa. Just as the periodisation scheme inherited from the nineteenth century encourages assumptions about Celtic conservatism and backwardness, so this ethnic dualism propogates progressivist-racialist views on the Normans as the harbingers of civilisation and modernity. At times, the definition of 'Normanness' could be based more on an outward-looking, reform-minded attitude rather than geography or ethnic identity. For example, Marinell Ash's study of the diocese of St Andrews, although a major landmark in the discipline, nevertheless exemplified this common tendency. Ash defined 'Norman' bishops as those who 'were foreign-born or trained and who brought to their diocese a concern to

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[134] Barrow, *David I: the Balance of New and Old*, Stenton Lecture 1984 (Reading, 1985), reprinted in Barrow, *Scotland and its Neighbours in the Middle Ages* (London, 1992), and 'The Other Side of the Coin', the final chapter in Barrow, *The Anglo-Norman Era*.

[135] Barrow, 'The lost Gàidhealtachd', in *Scotland and its Neighbours*, 105-26, originally published in *Gaelic and Scotland: Alba agus a' Ghàidhlig*, ed. William Gillies (Edinburgh, 1989), 67-88.

[136] Duncan, *Scotland: the Making of the Kingdom*, 450.

[137] Barrow, *Robert Bruce*, 5.

[138] Broun, 'The origin of the Stone of Scone as a national icon', in Richard Welander, David J. Breeze and Thomas Owen Clancy (eds), *The Stone of Destiny: Artefact and Icon* (Edinburgh, 2003), 189-93.

[139] Barrell, *Medieval Scotland*.

[140] Barrow, *The Anglo-Norman Era*, 145.

bring it into conformity with the practices of the western church'.[141] It is a half century since Ritchie claimed that '[t]he lines on which Scotland has developed as a civilized country were laid down once and for all before the death of King David in 1153, and these lines were Norman'.[142] While few would put it so bluntly today, it remains for Scottish historians to confront the implications of this legacy.

On the reverse side of the coin there exists the Skenian notion of a fierce Celtic resistance to Norman modernisation, albeit one inevitably doomed to failure.[143] Current scholars follow Skene in their portrayal of a centralising Scots monarchy as anti-Celtic, and their depiction of dynastic opposition as cultural warfare; and, as in Skene's work, 1094 and 1160 are banner years. Donald III Bán, that 'incorrigible old Celt', has been held up as the leader of a '"Celtic" or native reaction' after the deaths of Malcolm III and St Margaret.[144] Likewise, the 1160 'rebellion of the earls' at Perth has been touted as another instance of anti-monarchical Celtic resistance, which R. A. McDonald depicted as 'reticence toward newfangled ways'.[145] Not all scholars have viewed antimonarchical struggles as Celtic conservatism: Duncan wrote, 'they may not be accounted simply as a "Celtic reaction" for the armies which the king sent against them were equally Celtic'.[146] Indeed, McDonald has elevated the topic to a *leitmotif*, and in several works has constructed a framework, heavily influenced by Skene's views, which sets up individuals like Fergus of Galloway, Somerled of Argyll and the MacWilliams as part of a sustained native opposition to the Normanising Canmore monarchs.[147]

Historians have tended to fall into the trap of ethnic dualism in particular in four specific areas: law, kingship, lordship and religion. On these topics, the tendency to define Celtic and Anglo-Norman trends against each other has allowed frameworks set up on pairs of opposites to propagate. For example, Scottish legal historians have drawn a clear distinction between 'Celtic law', with elements such as *cáin* and *coinnmed/* conveth, 'Scottish' or common army service, and the *breitheamh* (Latin *judex*), and 'Anglo-Norman law', with traits such as brieves, sheriffs and

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[141] Marinell Ash, 'The diocese of St. Andrews under its "Norman" bishops', *SHR* 55 (1976), 105.

[142] Ritchie, *The Normans*, vi.

[143] One is tempted to view this tendency in the context of the nineteenth-century romanticist idealisation of the past in the face of industrialist modernisation, with its destruction of nature and its frantic pace of life.

[144] Donaldson, *Scotland: Church and Nation*, 18. Ritchie quoted in Donaldson, *Scottish Kings* (London, 1967), 13.

[145] McDonald, 'Matrimonial politics', 236.

[146] Duncan, *Scotland: the Making of the Kingdom*, 198.

[147] R. Andrew McDonald, *Outlaws of Medieval Scotland: Challenges to the Canmore Kings, 1058-1266* (East Linton, 2003); McDonald, *The Kingdom of the Isles: Scotland's Western Seaboard, c.1100–c.1336* (East Linton, 1997); McDonald, 'Rebels without a cause? The relations of Fergus of Galloway and Somerled of Argyll with the Scottish kings, 1153–1164', in Cowan and McDonald (eds), *Alba: Celtic Scotland*. A similar 'Celtic reactionist' view is seen in the popular writer John L. Roberts, *Lost Kingdoms: Celtic Scotland and the Middle Ages* (Edinburgh, 1997).

military tenure. *The Scottish Legal Tradition* (1991) states that 'the feudal law and institutions which found their way into Scotland were unmistakeably Anglo-Norman'.[148] Richard Oram has claimed that the 'Barrovian thesis' forms the current orthodoxy and maintains that a 'highly evolved system' of military feudalism was a 'wholesale import' into Scotland.[149] Susan Reynolds, in her recent examination of feudalism in Scotland, warned against 'presupposing that any general and coherent pattern of feudo-vassalic relations and property rights existed outside of Scotland ready to be imported'.[150] Hector MacQueen, moreover, has argued that 'the evidence does not suggest that the old native system was being destroyed or displaced as a matter of deliberate policy; rather it was being assimilated', maintaining that 'there was no conflict between the old "Celtic" law on the one hand and new "feudal" law on the other'.[151] Likewise, Reynolds proposes 'abandoning a simple contrast between feudal culture … and native or Celtic culture'.[152]

Similarly, our understanding of kingship in medieval Scotland is imbued with a sense of ethnic dualism. The question of succession, for example, is one area where a dichotomy has been established, comparing the arcane Celtic system of tanistry to the more standardised European system of primogeniture. As Ritchie put it, 'the old Celtic principle of collateral succession had been challenged and now superseded by the Norman principle of primogeniture'.[153] In a recent article, however, Alex Woolf has cast serious doubt on the use of a traditional 'system' of tanistry in Alba in the eleventh century, and it is clear in any event that an abrupt switch from a neat Celtic system to a neat Norman one only serves to obfuscate more complicated processes at work.[154]

Scottish kings are subject to an awkward and paradoxical treatment. On the one hand, they are seen as the principle proponents of 'Normanisation'; on the other, the nature of their kingship has been seen as Celtic.[155] Scottish kingship has been described as more rustic than the established European form, mainly because it did not include

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[148] Michael C. Meston, W. David H. Sellar and Lord Cooper (eds), *The Scottish Legal Tradition* (Edinburgh, 1991), 34-6. *Cin* and conveth were perennial renders owed to a king or other lord based on land tenure. See also Barrow, 'The *judex*', in Barrow, *The Kingdom of the Scots*, 1st edn, 57, where he writes: '[i]t has long been recognised that *judex* represented a survival from pre-twelfth-century Scotland, that formed part of the older, Celtic order of society'.

[149] Oram, 'Gold into lead?', 39.

[150] Susan Reynolds, 'Fiefs and vassals in Scotland: a view from outside', *SHR* 82 (2003), 180.

[151] Hector L. MacQueen, 'Scots Law under Alexander III', in Norman H. Reid (ed.), *Scotland in the Age of Alexander III, 1249-86* (Edinburgh, 1990), 82, 95.

[152] Reynolds, 'Fiefs and vassals in Scotland', 192. Ellipsis mine.

[153] Ritchie, *The Normans*, 63.

[154] Alex Woolf, 'The "Moray Question" and the kingship of Alba in the tenth and eleventh centuries', *SHR* 79 (2000), 152. 'Tanistry' is the Gaelic system of royal succession characterized by an heir apparent known as the *tánaise* or tanist who was often the brother or nephew, rather than son, of the reigning king.

[155] Barrow mentions the 'Celtic character of the Scottish monarchy': Barrow, *Robert Bruce*, 5.

archiepiscopal anointment. Historians have focused on Alexander III (1249–86) as Celtic, based upon the participation of a Gaelic-speaking bard or *ollamh ríg* in a 1249 inauguration ceremony that has been portrayed as traditional, archaic, anachronistic and ritualized.[156] Barrow, however, wrote about the 'consciously "European" monarchy of Alexander III'.[157] Thus, Alexander III has been portrayed as the embodiment of both 'Celtic tradition of immemorial antiquity' as well as European culture.[158] Ethnic terminology is arguably confusing rather than illuminating the conversation on kingship.

Even more than kingship, territorial lordship is frequently described in ethnic language. In Scotia, the kingdom's heartland, the mormaers or earls are often seen as Celtic, native and conservative. Barrow, for example, characterised the earls as 'a remarkable example of Celtic survival' and referred to their 'tenacious conservatism'.[159] Furthermore, this trend belies a strong Skenian influence, allowing for phrases like 'the Celtic earl of Buchan' and the 'Celtic enclave' of Strathearn.[160] Unfortunately, studies of the earldoms are centred on the interplay between native and feudal influences, which draws attention away from where it is needed: addressing the question of what role mormaers or earls played in the contemporary society of that time, and interpreting any changes that occurred in terms of the exercise of power. At the same time, regions on the 'periphery', like Galloway and the Western Isles, are sometimes described as Celtic.[161] What these studies lack is an explanation why these western regions, which were irrevocably transformed by centuries of Norse influence, should be considered more Celtic than the east. Perhaps more than in any other area, eschewing the ethnic baggage holds the potential for fruitful new interpretations of lordship in medieval Scotland.[162]

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[156] MacQueen, 'Scots law', 82. See also M. D. Legge, 'The inauguration of Alexander III', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 80 (1945-7) 73-82; A.A.M. Duncan, *The Nation of Scots and the Declaration of Arbroath* (London, 1970), 8; Bannerman, 'The king's poet'; G.W.S. Barrow, 'Kingship in medieval England and Scotland', in *Scotland and its Neighbours in the Middle Ages* (London, 1992), 37; cf. Broun, 'The origin of the Stone'.

[157] This was mentioned in contradistinction to the 'Celtic monarchy of Malcolm III "Canmore"'. Barrow, 'Kingship in Medieval England and Scotland', 39. Barrow also claimed that 'Alexander III's kingdom was indeed a Celtic country': Barrow, *Robert Bruce*, 2.

[158] Legge, 'The inauguration', 79.

[159] Barrow, *Robert Bruce*, 8. Barrow, *The Anglo-Norman Era*, 160.

[160] On Buchan, see W. Croft Dickinson, *Scotland from the Earliest Times to 1603*, 3rd edn, rev. and ed. A. A. M. Duncan (Oxford, 1977), 84. On Strathearn, see Cynthia Neville, 'A Celtic enclave in Norman Scotland'.

[161] On Galloway, see Keith Stringer, 'Periphery and core in thirteenth-century Scotland: Alan, son of Roland, Lord of Galloway and Constable of Scotland', in Alexander Grant and Keith J. Stringer (eds) *Medieval Scotland: Crown, Lordship and Community: Essays presented to G. W. S. Barrow* (Edinburgh, 1993), 82. R. Andrew McDonald described Somerled of Argyll as a 'representative of Celtic conservatism': McDonald, 'Rebels without a cause?', in Cowan and McDonald (eds), *Alba: Celtic Scotland*, 184.

[162] See chapters by Boardman, MacQueen and Ross in Steve Boardman and Alasdair Ross (eds), *The Exercise of Power in Medieval Scotland* (Dublin, 2003).

Religion is another topic which has suffered from an overly dualistic viewpoint. The aforementioned problems with periodisation have allowed a structure to continue in which the church before the twelfth century is described as Celtic in opposition to the hierarchical Catholic church based in Rome. This contradistinction draws on the 'Presbyterian myth', popular in the nineteenth century, that the ancient and native church of Scotland did not have bishops and was thus not truly catholic.[163] Furthermore, twelfth-century diocesan reorganisation and the introduction of reform monasticism tends to be viewed as an element of the process of Normanisation.[164] That era has even been regarded in perhaps a wistful, nostalgic manner as the endgame of a fully elaborated (and anachronistic) 'Celtic Church', again showing the influence of Skene. What one writer has described as its 'death knell' may be viewed as the result of Anglo-Norman expansion; it may also be attributed to the growth of new religious orders and the extension and bureaucratization of papal power, trends which were occurring across Europe.[165] Furthermore, mainstream Scottish historians have continued to posit native, traditional, Celtic churchmen like the *céli Dé* in opposition to the introduction of new monastic orders and the reorganization of dioceses and parishes, which have been associated with the "Normans."[166] Recently, Thomas Owen Clancy has argued against the exceptionalism of the Celtic church, and for the catholic orthodoxy of its beliefs and practices.[167] In any case, it is clear that what was happening on a Europe-wide scale was a shift from localised churches to a centralising force with the pope at the centre. Moreover, the periodisation of Christianity in Scotland is in need of a serious overhaul. Arguably the most important date for Christianity in central-medieval Scotland was not the coming of St Margaret or even the Cistercians, but rather the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, which precipitated in Scotland, as across western Europe, a draft of reforms that affected the way ordinary people experienced their religion.

It has become almost commonplace to mention Scotland's medieval ethnic diversity. Scottish novelist William McIlvanny famously declared, 'Never forget that we are the bastard people of a mongrel nation', thus

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[163] 'Historiographically, as has long been recognised, the Celtic Church is a product of the Protestant Reformation': Thomas Owen Clancy, '"Celtic" or "Catholic"? Writing the history of Scottish Christianity, AD 664-1093', *Records of the Scottish Church History Society* 32 (2002), 6.

[164] In Gordon Donaldson's words, 'the church, as well as the state, was transformed by the sons of Margaret as one aspect of the "Norman Conquest"': Donaldson, *Scotland: Church and Nation*, 20.

[165] Roberts, *Lost Kingdoms*, 28.

[166] The best study on the *céli Dé* in Scotland is still William Reeves, *The Culdees of the British Islands* (Dublin, 1864). Regarding parishes, John M. Rogers has criticized '[t]he traditional view of the establishment of parishes in Scotland', which 'has stressed the role of Anglo-Norman influence'; to Rogers, 'their role in parochial establishment has been assumed rather than proven by historians': John M. Rogers, 'The formation of parishes in twelfth-century Perthshire', *Records of the Scottish Church History Society* 27 (1997), 69-70.

[167] Clancy, ' "Celtic" or "Catholic"?', 25.

heralding one of the great themes of the 1990s—one which served to underpin the optimism of devolution.[168] Likewise, academic historians began to acknowledge more than ever before (although in a more pedestrian tone) the multiethnicity of the Scottish kingdom. At one point in the twelfth century, it would seem, the kingdom encompassed speakers of Gaelic, English, Welsh, Norse, French, Flemish and Latin. In the light of this new vantage-point, it seems strange that a peculiar dualistic model still seems to hold sway in so many ways. The kingdom of the Scots in the central medieval period existed as a mixture of diverse influences, but it was also a distinct and functioning entity in its own right. The contemporary evidence shows that Scottish society was no two-sided coin. Perhaps we can now decide to let the penny drop.

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[168] Quoted in Andrew Marr, 'Perils of Ethnic Purity', *The Observer*, 4 July 1999, and in Charles Jenks, 'Was it worth it?', *Sunday Herald*, 9 August 2004.