Masculine Identity in Medieval Scotland: Gender, Ethnicity, and Regionality

by

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ABSTRACT

Masculine Identity in Medieval Scotland: Gender, Ethnicity, and Regionality

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This dissertation is an investigation of elite men’s identities in later thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century Scotland, particularly as they pertain to categories of gender and ethnicity. During this timeframe, the Scottish kingdom experienced enormous political change, underwent geographic expansion, and, allegedly, a growing sense of ‘Scottishness.’ Beneath all of this, however, complex ethnic identities and attachments shaped the ways men interacted with the gendered expectations of their society. In the ways they acknowledged, refuted, or ignored these expectations, boys and men crafted identities that reflected the multiple, overlapping, and contradictory ideals and values socially inscribed on sexed bodies. In the medieval Scottish kingdom, the masculine identities of political elites, in particular, were created through negotiation between dominant and non-dominant masculinities forms, and were oriented toward and in relation to hegemonic masculinity. The subjects of this study represent the diversity present in the medieval kingdom, including members of the so-called ‘native’ Gaelic elite, more recent immigrants to the ‘feudalized’ heartland of the kingdom, and inhabitants of the western coast whose ancestry incorporated both Gaelic and Norse influences. These men engaged with gendered symbols of power and legitimacy across a variety of different cultures both within and outside the Scottish kingdom. The different ways in which they constructed, represented, and deployed their identities as masculine beings highlight the differences in how they negotiated between dominant and non-dominant forms, the shifting possession of capital and its meaning, and the contextuality of gendered experience. In bringing the relationship between gender and ethnicity to the fore, while drawing upon the work of R. W. Connell and Pierre Bourdieu, this dissertation offers a new way of considering the identities of medieval Scottish political elites.
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ABBREVIATIONS

A.E.S.  Early Sources of Scottish History, A.D. 500 to 1286, A. O. Anderson (Edinburgh, 1922)


APS  The Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland, eds. T. Thomson and C. Innes (Edinburgh, 1814-75)

CDS  Calendar of Documents relating to Scotland, ed. J. Bain (Edinburgh, 1881-88)


N.B. Chrs  Carte Monialium de Northberwic, ed. C. Innes (Edinburgh, 1847)

RPS  The Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707, eds. K.M. Brown et al. (St Andrews, 2007-2017)

R.M.S.  Registrum Magni Sigilli Regum Scotorum, eds. J. M. Thomson et al. (Edinburgh, 1882-1914)

RRS, i  Regesta Regum Scottorum, i, Acts of Malcolm IV, ed. G.W.S. Barrow (Edinburgh, 1960)


SAEC  Scottish Annals from English Chronicle, A.D. 500 to 1286, ed. A. O. Anderson (Stamford, 1908)

PoMS  People of Medieval Scotland, eds. Amanda Beam, John Bradley, Dauvit Broun, John Reuben Davies, Matthew Hammond, Michele Pasin et al. (Glasgow and London, 2012)

Pais. Reg  Registrum Monasterii de Passelet Cartas Privilegia Conventio Aliaque Munimenta Complectens (Edinburgh, 1832)
Figure 1: Pedigree of King Robert I

[speculative]

**Bolded** = King of Scots
Figure 2: Mac Sorley Genealogical Table

Bolded = Principal Figures
INTRODUCTION

Men in medieval Scotland have been the subject of historical study from any number of perspectives—political, social, cultural, economic—but more rarely have they been examined as *men*, or in other words, as gendered beings whose choices, reactions and very identities were shaped by the pressures and expectations culturally imposed upon sexed bodies. The assumption of a masculine default for all human experience has hidden much of the way men’s experiences specifically as men has influenced the course of history. In order to redress this it is necessary to reconsider familiar events and sources from new perspectives, alert to the many ways gendered identities have been shaped and expressed.

To speak of Scottish masculinity is to evoke a powerful series of ideas and images. Maureen Martin, in her discussion of nineteenth-century views of Scottish masculinity, argues the presentation of Scottish masculinity “is not the masculinity of civilization and restraint, but a more primal kind of masculinity, identified with fierce passions and dangerous force.”¹ Both Elizabeth Ewan and Lynn Abrams have highlighted the sense that Scottish history as a whole is particularly masculine in tenor, citing the prominence of popular heroes including William Wallace, Robert Bruce, and Rob Roy, and stereotypes of the Highland clansman or Lowland industrial worker.² These images, however, are increasingly being challenged both by academics and the Scottish public. While there are few published studies of Scottish masculinity so far, this lack of publication belies the current interest in the topic. Studies of Scottish masculinity are increasingly prominent in workshops, conferences, and postgraduate work. Efforts like the

University of Glasgow’s “Scottish masculinity in historical perspective” have combined historical analysis with modern concerns. One of the central aims of the Glasgow project was “to interrogate myths about Scottish manhood in the past as well as apply a long-term historical perspective to current concerns and policy initiatives.” A common theme among these calls for attention to Scottish masculinities is the need to question the gendering of Scottish identities, mythologies, and experiences, and to both interrogate the reality behind stereotypes and better to understand the purpose of these images. In applying a gendered analysis to these topics it is possible to improve understanding of how these roles and identities have been constructed and the values underpinning their construction. It also permits a more nuanced representation of the variety of masculinities (and femininities) complicit with and opposing the dominant forms, in addition to the complexities of the dominant forms themselves.

In 2011, the BBC ran a radio series entitled “Men Like Us” with a complementary set of blog posts. The articles in this series indicate an awareness of what might be defined as hegemonic masculinity, but in these instances, the authors defined their own identities in terms of variation from the hegemonic. As Scottish political commentator Gerry Hassan argues, “the public debate about Scottish men is shaped by a whole host of negative images which come close to pathologising men and aiding the ‘men behaving badly’ outlook. Another set of images emphasises rugged, robust masculinity—men who eat porridge all the time and stress their physical attributes: a version of manhood most men feel isn’t about them.” In these modern instances, it is not so much the experience of the hegemonic form of masculinity that defines individual masculine identity, but instead the sense of distance from its fulfillment. This is a

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further indication of the sway of hegemony, that one should struggle to meet its demands and those who do not are lacking, a belief not restricted to the modern period. In taking up the theory of hegemonic masculinity, historians have yet to fully engage with the range of theoretical implications proposed by R. W. Connell, who first discussed the idea. While critics have highlighted concerns that hegemony is used to denote primarily negative characteristics and that it essentializes and reifies a naturalized heteronormative dichotomy, historians are in a unique position to challenge this. Karen Harvey and Alexandra Shepard have argued that the historical record shows that hegemonic ‘codes’ themselves tend to be “highly complex, fluid, and full of contradictions.” In examining masculine identities in the medieval Scottish kingdom, medieval Scots may also be defined in relation to ideals of hegemonic masculinity and, like the participants in the BBC’s series, especially in terms of their distance from its fulfillment. However, hegemony alone lacks the complexity and specificity necessary for understanding masculine identity in the Middle Ages. Within the processes of hegemony, systems of dominance and subordination work to position the vast varieties of people not represented by hegemonic ideals. Further analysis and historicization of alternate forms, including those complicit with and those opposing the hegemonic, will bring this theory of masculinity closer into line with the reality of human experience and create a more positive relationship between the two.

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5 John Tosh, “Hegemonic Masculinity and the History of Gender,” in *Masculinities in Politics and War: Gendering Modern History*, ed. Stefan Dudink, Karen Hagemann, and John Tosh (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 47. Some scholars have questioned whether it is possible for anyone to meet “the demands” of hegemonic masculinity. Connell and Messerschmidt, for instance, suggest “hegemonic masculinities can be constructed that do not correspond closely to the lives of any actual men. Yet these models do, in various ways, express widespread ideals, fantasies, and desires” (R. W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, “Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept,” *Gender and Society* 19, no. 6 (December 1, 2005): 838). I believe it is most productive to approach hegemonic masculinities as strictly non-lived ideals.


8 Ibid.
This project examines the ways in which masculine identities were created and presented among the elite in Scotland between the second half of the thirteenth century and the beginning of the fourteenth century, particularly in the face of culturally and ethnically situated gendered expectations. This range encompasses a period of enormous political change, of geographic expansion, and, allegedly, a growing sense of ‘Scottishness.’ Both before and during this time, however, the kingdom was home to a regionally and ethnically diverse population. Expansion under kings Alexander II and Alexander III meant that by 1266, not only did the Scottish kingdom broadly resemble the geography of the modern nation (excluding the northern islands of Orkney and Shetland) it also incorporated regions where ties outside the kingdom were at least as strong as those within.

Geographically, the medieval Scottish kingdom was positioned on the edge of the European world; the authors of the Declaration of Arbroath dramatically proclaimed, “in exili degentes Scocia ultra quam habitacio non est” (poor little Scotland, beyond which there is no dwelling place at all).9 Its geographic situation, however, also contributed to its cultural position, where it lay at the intersection of several significant cultural fields of influence. For those living on cultural frontiers, cultural influences came from a variety of directions. Since the late 1980s, scholars of the medieval Scottish kingdom have increasingly recognized its ‘hybrid’ nature.10 Alan of Galloway (c. 1175-1234) is the traditional example of pluralistic and multi-ethnic

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10 Keith Stringer, for instance, argues Scotland was “directed by ‘feudal’ kings who nevertheless drew heavily on the rituals and traditions of Celtic rulership; and the hybridity of the monarchy was reflected nationally in hybrid legal, political and social structures” (Keith Stringer, “Scottish Foundations: Thirteenth Century Perspectives,” in Uniting the Kingdom? The Making of British History, ed. Alexander Grant and Keith Stringer (Abingdon: Routledge, 1995), 95–6). Alexander Grant similarly discusses “a hybrid country—with hybrid kingship, hybrid institutions, hybrid law, and an increasingly hybrid landowning class” (Alexander Grant, “Scotland’s ‘Celtic Fringe’ in the Late Middle Ages: The MacDonald Lords of the Isles and the Kingdom of Scotland,” in The British Isles, 1100-1500: Comparisons, Contrasts and Connections, ed. R. R. Davies (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1988), 119).
identity. As the son of Lachlan, lord of Galloway, Alan became the hereditary chieftain of that semi-independent province; through his mother, Helen de Moreville, Alan received lands in England and was a favoured ally of King John. He was also constable of Scotland, lord of Lauderdale, and wielded political influence through England, Scotland, the Isle of Man, and the Hebrides. His marriage to the daughter of the earl of Ulster added yet another dimension to the familial ethnic compound. Alan of Galloway’s political roles also positioned him at the centre of multiple, concentric cultural identities. This required him to be at least conversant in the gendered symbols of power and of legitimacy across a variety of different cultures.

The historiographical narrative of the two centuries following Alan of Galloway’s life suggests an increasing sense of ‘Scottish’ identity, a discussion dominated largely by the centrality and unifying power of the Wars of Independence (1296-1353).\(^{11}\) Recently, valuable work by Cynthia Neville and R. Andrew McDonald in particular, has complicated the picture of Gaelic assimilation and integration through the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, arguing that it was by no means as complete or total as previously depicted.\(^{12}\) A continuation of this reassessment is necessary for the later thirteenth century and into the fourteenth century as well, which, although traditionally depicted as a period of increased ethnic and cultural uniformity, continued to host a multiplicity of cultural and ethnic identities. Like Alan of Galloway, political

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elites during these decades were also positioned at the centre of concentric cultural identities and required to engage with culturally situated gendered symbology.

The analysis of masculine identity undertaken in this thesis revolves around questions not only of gendered identity but also of ethnic identity. The geographic focus of this work and its emphasis on the Scottish kingdom are, to some extent, secondary to broader discussions that are widely applicable to the European Middle Ages. The theoretical aspects used to construct models of gender identity, of ethnic identity, and of their overlapping characteristics are applied to a particular moment and place—later thirteenth- and fourteen-century Scotland—out of necessity, rather than any intrinsic applicability particularly to medieval Scotland. In consequence, chapters 1 and 2 address the historiographical and theoretical foundations of masculinity and ethnicity, respectively. In both chapters, material specific to medieval Scotland appears, but also material oriented to broader geographical and chronological contexts. Many Scottish historians have recognized the mistake of viewing the borders of the kingdom as fixed or static from either a political or a social perspective and have advocated for the necessity of placing Scotland within a larger British and European context. These chapters take this idea further and develop broad connections between medieval Scotland and other places and times. This is not to detract from the geographic and chronological specificity unique to Scotland in the later thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, but rather to pull from other periods and regions useful tools through which to understand masculine identity and representation.

With Chapter 3, the focus shifts to become more firmly situated within the medieval Scottish kingdom. This chapter examines sigillographic practices in medieval Scotland, arguing that seals offer valuable indications of self-determined identities as well as depictions of masculine values and authority. In some cases, the wax seals themselves are preserved in situ
attached to the parchment documents they authenticated. Often, however, the impressions have been lost, separated from their documents, damaged, or destroyed. Fortunately, medieval, early modern, and modern examiners were often careful to preserve seal descriptions from which reconstructions are possible. Through the combination of an established visual vocabulary and individualistic embellishments, seals convey considerable information regarding how individuals viewed themselves and how they wished to be perceived. In Chapter 4, a diverse body of source material is brought together in order to explore the interaction of gender and ethnicity among the elite of the Hebrides, specifically, the descendants of Somerled mac Gillebride (d. 1164), known as the Mac Sorleys. This region, located on the western coast, was jurisdictionally independent of the Scottish crown until 1266 and maintained particularly important political and cultural ties with Norway, Ireland, and England, the influences of which are noticeable long after the Treaty of Perth brought the Hebridean lords under the suzerainty of the Scottish king. The combination of sources necessary to reconstruct the lives of the Mac Sorley men includes charter and sigillographic evidence, Norse sagas, Gaelic annals and praise poems, and occasional mentions in other sources. Together, these sources illustrate the complexity of ethnic identity in the region and the diversity of responses among different men to a variety of culturally situated ideas about masculine identity.

The final chapter of this dissertation brings together evidence from medieval Scotland and theoretical elements of Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of practice and R. W. Connell’s masculinities work in order to explore individual experiences and larger social patterns regarding the intersection of masculinity and ethnic identity. This chapter develops a model proposed by sociologist Tony Coles in which masculinity is considered from the perspective of a
Bourdieu’s field in which complex systems of dominance and subordination operate.\(^{13}\) Adjusted for a vastly different place and time than what Coles originally proposed, the masculinity field model employed here uses ethnic categories as subfields in which struggles over capital and the very meaning of that capital occur. Once again, diverse types of source material provide evidence for the valuation of capital within different subfields. In addition to the sources appearing in earlier chapters, Chapter 5 also makes use of tomb effigies and chivalric literature, both of which offer insight regarding an idealized operation of capital.

The primary source material used here originated from diverse regions within and beyond the Scottish kingdom, was intended for a variety of different audiences, and allowed its subjects varied interaction with its creation. Not a single source used in this thesis was both conceived of and directly executed by the man or men it references; this creates layers of mediation between source and subject that are not always detectable by later historians. What, for example, was the interaction like between the man who commissioned a seal matrix and the silversmith who made it? What degree of individual agency—and whose agency—is represented by the final product? Similarly, to what extent did the scribe (or scribes) acting as intermediary and translator between a Gaelic-speaking lord and the Latin-language church record shape or otherwise alter the donation? Do the titles and descriptors that appear in these donations then accurately reflect the will of the donator or have they been crafted to their audience instead? These ambiguities affect historical analysis of all kinds but are potentially charged with particular significance in the examination of personal identity.

Thirteenth-century and early fourteenth-century Scotland are wholly deficient in the types of first-hand narratives that might otherwise be used to provide insight toward individual

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engagement with gender or ethnic identities. Consequently, the words and symbols conveyed through others are the best, and only, way to access these elements. Their interpretation, however, is necessarily complicated as a result. The different types of sources examined here—charters, annals, sagas, seals, and so forth—act as different genres, with different conventions, audiences, and registers. The depictions within a particular source provide only a partial perspective of their subject, which may be contradicted, challenged, or complicated by other portrayals. The differing intended audiences and registers represented by a Norse saga, a Latin charter, and Irish Gaelic annals, for example, result in different views and different emphases on a complex human experience. Variations between the subsequent portrayals provide insight toward the contextuality of identity, acting in a complementary rather than contradictory fashion. This complexity and contextuality is vital in the representation of lived experience.

One further consequence of this diversity, and the broader lack of concern with spelling consistency in the Middle Ages, is a wide variation in the spelling and forms of personal names. The significance of this in primary sources varies, indicating anything from scribal unfamiliarity, to regional variations, to the deliberate adoption of alternative versions to ease movement between cultural settings. The various implications of this are discussed throughout the following chapters. Primary source variation has also led to a wide degree of secondary source naming variation, although this most commonly reflects a deliberate choice and, often, a specific political or methodological orientation on behalf of the author. While I have standardized spelling conventions with respect to individuals, I have not imposed a consistent formulation across the different men I have examined, preferring to follow the scholarly practices specific to that localized subject. Thus, the son of Earl Fergus of Galloway (d. 1161) is referred to as Gilla Brigte throughout the thesis, whereas the father of Somerled of Argyll (d. 1164) is Gillebride.
While this offers the inadvertent benefit of clarity regarding multiple similarly named figures, the intention was to avoid the application of an external and artificial consistency.

The men who inhabited Scotland in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, like those before and those since, engaged with a variety of gendered expectations. In the ways they acknowledged, refuted, or ignored these expectations, boys and men crafted identities that reflected the multiple, overlapping, and often-contradictory ideals and values socially inscribed on sexed bodies. In this project, the interaction between gender and ethnicity is brought to the fore in order to consider the ways complex and multifaceted ethnic attachments, as were common in medieval Scotland, influenced the ways elite men were perceived and portrayed. In the medieval Scottish kingdom, the masculine identities of political elites, in particular, were created through negotiation between dominant and non-dominant masculinities forms, and were oriented toward and in relation to hegemonic masculinity. Just how these negotiations occurred, their consequences, and the identification of dominant and non-dominant masculinity forms among the elite are the subjects of this dissertation.
CHAPTER ONE: MASCULINITIES: HISTORIOGRAPHY AND THEORIZATION

For much of history, the male experience has been assumed to be natural, ahistorical, and universal. Men’s experiences have been assumed to be the default of human experience. As scholars have explored the ways women’s lives have been shaped by culturally- and historically-based expectations and assumptions regarding sexed bodies, it has become increasingly clear that men’s experiences, far from being universal, also have been similarly affected by gendered expectations in diverse and sometimes unexpected ways. The study of masculinity, both in relation to male-sexed bodies and to other bodies, has proposed new questions and offered new ways of looking at gender and human experience.

It is fortunately no longer necessary to echo Joan Wallach Scott’s famous question regarding the utility of gender as a category of analysis.¹ Scholars now widely recognize that the study of gender helps to lay bare social hierarchies and “cultural constructs of power and powerlessness.”² The purpose of gender studies consequently is a recognition and interrogation of power dynamics and imbalances that are culturally inscribed on sexed bodies. While in the mid 1970s and 80s, the concerns of gender studies arose from questions posed by women’s scholars, from the beginning the inclusion of men’s experiences has been a key component of gender analysis. Studies of masculinity play an important role in these efforts, and ideas of masculinities, like ideas of femininities, must be historicized and investigated. The gendering of

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the past allows us better to create, in the words of the editors of Gender and History, “an inclusive and many-voiced account of both our common past and our uncommon experiences.”

The usefulness of gender, as opposed to women, as a category of analysis has not gone unchallenged. Dyan Elliott has suggested that for twenty-first-century historians, a return to ‘women’ as a category of analysis may be more feminist than the use of gender. This suggestion rests on two main concerns: first, that ‘gender’ still appears as a code-word for ‘women’ in order to make certain types of scholarship more palatable and less threatening, and second, that women may disappear altogether from gendered histories if categories of femininities can be applied without the presence of women themselves. The suggestion that an examination of gender supplants or disguises considerations of women relies either on a misapplication of gender theory or a misappropriation of the term ‘gender’ as a label. In 2010, Susan Lee Johnson, a historian of the American West, proclaimed: “when western women’s historians said, ‘think about women,’ they willed the entire field of western history to be one of gendered specificity, and, more broadly, one in which power and privilege of all sorts would be rendered visible and then interrogated.” This point is further emphasized in Scott’s recent re-examination of her 1986 article. In “Gender: Still a Useful Category of Analysis?,” Scott argues that the usefulness of gender is dependent upon continuing to challenge the assumption that anything about the construction of sexual difference is fixed or ahistorical. To the suggestion that gender, as an analytical category, has weakened feminist claims, she argues, “in fact gender signalled a

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5 Ibid., 1398–1400.
deepening of the commitment to the history of both women and ‘women’ . . . ‘Gender’ was a call to disrupt the powerful pull of biology by opening every aspect of sexed identity to interrogation.”

In this way, the inclusion of women acts as shorthand for a much larger and more radical examination of the hierarchical organization of power, how it is inscribed on sexed bodies, and the significance a society ascribes to differentiation.

The potential offered by gendered analysis of masculinity helps to counter Elliott’s second concern, that the study of gender more broadly might further exclude women from historical study. While Elliott sees the study of femininities without women as cause for concern, some scholars of masculinity have embraced the opportunity to explore masculinity without the presence of men. Judith Halberstam’s *Female Masculinity* is perhaps the best known of these studies, though others have also sought to uncouple the strict association between masculinity and men. Further, gendered analysis that includes both men and women as a focus of history, allows for more complicated, non-essentialized, explorations of the relationship between sexed bodies and social meaning.

Since the earliest days of gender history, men, manliness, and masculinity have been prominent in theoretical conceptualizations; in practice, however, the study of men *qua* men is more limited. This is perhaps unsurprising, as there tends to be a greater awareness of the gendering of women because they are the ‘marked’ category. The prefatory remarks of the first issue of *Gender and History* echo this, suggesting that “for men, one of the great privileges of being in a superior position is being allowed to take that position for granted, to claim that

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8 Ibid., 12.
9 Editorial, “Why Gender and History?,” 2; Margaret Jacobs, “Western History: What’s Gender Got to Do With It?,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 42, no. 3 (2011): 303; Johnson, “Nail This To Your Door,” 606–613.
identity as the norm, and to treat that hierarchy as natural.”

Gender history, however, insists on interrogating and historicizing that hierarchy, as well as the reasons and assumptions, values and expectations, and even the very existence of such categories. The application of gender theory to the experiences of men has helped to reconceptualize and problematize ideas of gender relations, sexuality, power, and patriarchy.

There is a necessary difference between traditional scholarship about men and a gendered approach to history. As Harry Brod argues,

while seemingly about men, traditional scholarship’s treatment of generic man as the human norm in fact systematically excludes from consideration what is unique to men qua men. The overgeneralization from male experience to generic human experience not only distorts our understanding of what, if anything, is truly generic human experience but also precludes the study of masculinity as a specific male experience, rather than a universal paradigm for human experience.

It is possible to challenge Brod’s connection of masculinity with a specifically male experience, as many gender scholars have, but his efforts to uncouple men from a normative and naturalized discourse are key. This emphasis on understanding men qua men and creating a history of ‘men’ parallels similar concerns in women’s history and further illustrates the connections between the motivations of these scholars.

The tension between men’s studies and women’s studies, and the utility of gender studies broadly, has received attention from all sides of the discussion. While some have suggested that gender studies, and masculinity studies especially, erases women as subjects of history, John Tosh, in responding to these claims has countered that far from weakening the impact of women’s history, the study of masculinity is “in a strong position to demonstrate (not merely

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14 Most famously, see Halberstam, Female Masculinity.
assert) that gender is inherent in all aspects of social life.”¹⁵ A number of scholars, including Elliott, Scott, Tosh, John H. Arnold, and Sean Brady have expressed concern that an emphasis on examinations of gender has resulted in a loss of emphasis on actual human experience.¹⁶ Arnold and Brady identify individual experience as one of the key concerns in writing histories of masculinity and urge historians to consider not just “the prescriptive voice of a period’s dominant ideology, but [to] delve into its reception and interpretation.”¹⁷ This exhortation is representative of the direction historians of masculinity are currently headed, examining the richness and variety of experiences, interpretations of norms, negotiations, and deviances.

As part of the movement to understand male experience in all its variety, some have advocated exploring the connections between gender and other categories of identity. Arnold and Brady recommend introducing additional analytical lenses including, though not limited to, race, class, sexuality, status, age, religion, profession, ethnicity, and national identity, a suggestion taken up in this dissertation.¹⁸ Each of these categories must similarly be historicized and contextualized, but in combination with understandings of gender, help historians better to grasp the variety of human experiences and identities. For research areas without a history of gender scholarship, these categories can provide new access to sources and ways of thinking about constructions of gender. Scottish historians, for instance, are well acquainted with the problems and constructions of national identity.¹⁹ Applying gender theory to this area of study is a fruitful

¹⁷ Ibid., 5.
¹⁸ Ibid., 4.
approach and one that offers a framework on which to build despite a comparative dearth of
gender studies.\textsuperscript{20}

\textbf{Scottish Masculinities}

To describe the history of Scottish masculinities as a nascent specialty is perhaps to understate
the situation. Little work has been undertaken so far into the histories of men and masculinities
in Scotland, especially for the Middle Ages; however, increasingly there are calls to change this.
Recently, more scholarship addresses gender in some way, and it has become common for
studies, especially those concerning ‘male-oriented’ topics (warfare, sport, industrial work, etc.)
to include some discussion of masculinity. Those, however, that use, in the words of Lynn
Abrams, “gender as a \textit{primary} category of analysis” are fewer and further between.\textsuperscript{21} Gender
histories of Scotland have thus far focused more heavily on the experiences of women as
individuals and as a group within a patriarchal environment, and how they negotiated a gendered
landscape.\textsuperscript{22} Some have noted that histories of Scotland privilege a masculine perspective on

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\end{thebibliography}
identity, religion, and politics and have sought to integrate better the stories and lives of women within these areas, while carving out new categories of specifically feminine experience. However, it is important to reiterate that histories about men are not the same as histories of men and that gendered analysis requires more than just the stories of sexed individuals.

Historians of Scotland who have explored masculinity have almost exclusively done so in the context of the early modern and, especially, the modern period. While Michelle Smith’s doctoral dissertation explores the “multiple layers of masculinity and femininity” that interacted with the creation of Scottish identity in the Middle Ages, so far the work she has published arising from this study has focused on the feminine role. Other historians of Scottish masculinities are firmly situated in later periods. The eighteenth century is a comfortable starting place for many, including Rosalind Carr, Katie Barclay, K. Tawny Paul, David Barrie, Susan Broomhall, as well as many of the contributors to Abrams’s 2006 collection. In Scotland, the eighteenth century was witness to considerable political, social, and economic change and scholars treat it as the fulcrum in the shift from the early modern to modern periods in Scottish history. English and British historians situate a ‘crisis of masculinity’ in the mid-seventeenth century, however, this idea is largely absent from Scottish accounts, starting as they do, half a


24 Smith, “Assessing Gender in the Construction of Scottish Identity, c. 1286-c. 1586,” 29; Smith, “‘A Wedow in Distress’: Personifying Scotland.”

The picture of masculinity presented in Scotland in the eighteenth century shows similar attention to ideas of politeness, manners, and refinement, though Scots are characterized as often for their failure as for their adherence to these aspects.

Early scholarly efforts suggest that as Scotland’s relationship with England changed through the eighteenth and into the nineteenth century the narrative around a specifically Scottish masculinity changed, at least from outwith Scotland. The scarcity, however, of research makes strong claims difficult. Maureen Martin explores the interconnected relationship between gender and nineteenth-century British nationality in *The Mighty Scot*. She argues that as part of the Victorian fascination with Highland culture, whether a real or imagined version, Scotland began to be depicted as the masculine core of Britain. Martin suggests that the “mystique of primal Scottish masculinity” served to negate Scottish, and especially Jacobite, rebellion and was mobilized on behalf of the British Empire. Explorations of Scottish masculinity for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries increasingly take an approach similar to Martin’s, by examining Scottish experience within broader geographic contexts.

Discussions of twentieth-century Scottish masculinity have explored the impacts of World War I and II, increasing industrialization and urbanization, and the changing relationships

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27 Carr briefly discusses this in the context of hegemonic masculinity Carr, *Gender and Enlightenment Culture in Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, 41.

28 Martin, *The Mighty Scot*.

29 Ibid., 3.

30 Ibid., 162.
within families, especially between men and their children and between men and women. In conjunction with sociologists, historians have examined the ‘men behaving badly’ trope and the Glasgow effect, which highlights the extreme levels of poor health and early mortality among Glasgow’s male population. Appearing in discussions of twentieth-century masculinity, but noticeably absent from earlier periods, is the incorporation of questions of sexuality and sexual orientation. The variety of source material available for this later period offers the potential for greater exploration of Scottish masculinity as the field develops.

A common theme among these calls for attention to Scottish masculinities is the need to question the gendering of Scottish identities, mythologies, and experiences, both to interrogate the reality behind stereotypes and also to understand better the purpose of these images. The application of a gendered analysis to these topics improves understanding of how roles and identities have been constructed and the values that underpin them. It also permits a more nuanced representation of the variety of masculinities (and femininities) complicit with and opposing the dominant forms, in addition to the complexities of the dominant forms themselves. The current lack of attention to medieval constructions of Scottish masculinity necessitates awareness not only of broader chronological historiographical discussions of gender in Scotland, as illustrated here, but also discussions that are geographically diverse. While the later medieval Scottish kingdom has some commonalities with the Scotland of more modern periods, perhaps a


better comparison is made with other medieval regions. It is only through more research and attention that what is unique about Scottish masculinity and what is shared more broadly can be known.

**Medieval Masculinities**

The attention medievalists are now paying to masculinity is greater than ever before. Medievalists are increasingly considering how men’s experiences in the past were gendered and the shortcomings inherent in viewing men as the universal norm. Medieval masculinity has been the topic of several monographs, edited collections, and journal articles published over some fifteen years. While the scholarly conclusions vary widely, identifiable patterns emerge in how these scholars have incorporated gender theory. Medievalists widely acknowledge the application of gender as a category that is socially constructed, but disagree on the extent to which it is also inherently dependent on a sexed body. Discussing practices of masculinity in the plural is a necessity that is broadly, though not universally recognized. Proponents of masculinity as a singular construction, such as Derek Neal, have argued that the ‘multiplicity of masculinities’ idea is uncomfortably close to the idea of multiple ‘genders.’ When we begin to speak of ‘genders’ rather than ‘gender,’ we have lost sight of gender as a system of signification that people *make* and have made ‘genders’ into reified categories to which people *belong.*

Most medievalists, however, seem to prefer the flexibility ‘masculinities’ provides, especially when addressing the overlapping and often contradictory expectations faced by medieval men. They have also tended to agree that patterns based upon understandings of femininity are not

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necessarily directly applicable to masculinity. Femininity, in this light, either is possessed or is lacking, whereas one constructs masculinity through constant struggle.\textsuperscript{35}

Historians of masculinity face terminological difficulties when they seek to identify masculine values in the past. ‘Masculinity’ is not synonymous with either ‘manhood’ or ‘manliness,’ two terms frequently used by medieval and early modern historians of gender. Rather, manhood and manliness are qualities expressed through the language of masculinity; manhood primarily contrasts with boyhood or childhood, while manliness contrasts with womanliness. Both manhood and manliness were terms used in the Middle Ages, while masculinity was not;\textsuperscript{36} however, these medieval terms were not always used in the same sense. In the Middle Ages, as today, the language of masculinity contained within it “potentially flexible social reference” that allowed it to have different meanings in different contexts.\textsuperscript{37} For example, while manhood or ‘manhede’ might be used in the sense of humanness or adulthood generically, it was also used in contexts which emphasized adult-maleness more specifically.\textsuperscript{38} In other cases, ‘manly’ denotes not only an adult male, but more precisely someone with noble status.\textsuperscript{39} Both medieval and modern uses of the language of masculinity require a degree of flexibility in order to articulate and refer to complex social concepts. Historians, then, must be particularly careful in their appropriation of this language and be especially clear in their use of modern terms.

Medievalists face a number of unique challenges in their explorations of masculinity. The vast majority of texts—certainly prescriptive and normative texts, but often fictional and literary


\textsuperscript{36} Terms in use in medieval Scotland include various forms of manhede(-heid), manfulnes, and manlynes. See \textit{Dictionary of the Scots Language}, accessed January 30, 2016, http://www.dsl.ac.uk.


\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 27.

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., 39.
as well—have been filtered through the perspectives of clerics, men who frequently sought to regulate and advise on activities, including physical violence, marriage, and sexual relations, but from which they were officially excluded. It is generally only for the later years of the Middle Ages that medievalists have had access to sources that offer first-hand perspectives from secular and non-elite accounts. It is also difficult to determine the extent to which the views of the educated elite extended to other social groups. The dominance of Aristotelian or Galenic medical theory among physicians or churchmen, for instance, did not necessarily mean these same beliefs were held by others, despite the lack of evidence for opposing perspectives.

A further challenge arises as a result of the nature of the sources available to modern scholars of the Middle Ages. Historical records, including land transactions, court proceedings, financial ledgers, and so on, rarely engage directly with ideas of gender and gender identity and as a result must be carefully interpreted. While narrative sources, both fictional and non-fictional, may explore these ideas more explicitly, it is still rarely clear whether their authors accurately describe the world ‘as it was’ or as they wished it to be. Together these factors make the explorations of gender, and perhaps especially masculinity, more difficult for the medieval past than for more recent periods. It is useful to remember Jacqueline Murray’s caveat to her claim that nearly all medieval sources offer insight into sexualized and gendered ways medieval men saw themselves, namely that “the sources need to be approached from a critical perspective, and masculine gender identity and male sexuality must be denaturalized.”40

The first point of contention to address within the study of medieval masculinity is the degree to which, in the medieval world, gender relied on sex difference. In a field which tends to ascribe overwhelming meaning to the socially constructed nature of gender identity, Jacqueline

Murray and Nancy Partner have been strong proponents of reintegrating the physicality of sex into our understanding of medieval men and women’s gendered experiences. In 1993, Partner argued that “if sex is nothing, then gender, the field of social constructs and pressures, is everything, and this concept just cannot bear such forced overelaboration and yield persuasive answers about human behaviour.” Partner advocates adopting psychiatrist Robert Stoller’s argument that for most people, gender identity is established in infancy, based on the conviction that one’s sex is both anatomically and psychologically correct; as a result, social expectations are built upon sex difference. However, both Stoller and Partner note that this does not adequately account for what Partner refers to as “the developmental negotiations of mind with world,” which is attributed to a psychosexual ‘self’ and experience in this model. Murray, on the other hand, stresses the significance of the body in the creation of gender identity while reminding the modern reader of the conceptual gulf between modern and medieval understanding of the sexed body. While modern scholars may be able to use chromosomal understanding of sex difference as the ultimate determiner, as Elisabeth Badinter has in *XY, on Masculine Identity*, for much of history people have relied on other indications. In the introduction to *Conflicted Identities and Multiple Masculinities*, Murray asserts, “the male genitals, then, are inextricably linked to a man’s sense of self and his masculine identity.” However, as Murray’s other work makes clear, it is not simply the presence of penis or testicles

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42 Ibid., 441–2.

43 Ibid., 441.

44 Ibid., 442.

45 Badinter, *XY, on Masculine Identity*.

46 Murray, *Conflicted Identities and Multiple Masculinities*, xv.
that distinguished sex in the Middle Ages. Rather, sex in the Middle Ages was seen to operate on a continuum and with the potential for fluidity, justified through a variety of explanations including humoral theory or religious devotion.\textsuperscript{47} Partner and Murray, while markedly different in methodology and approach, note the importance of fundamental biological differences between male and female in constructing difference between men and women. The body and sex difference then, cannot be divorced from gendered identity in the Middle Ages, but understanding is necessarily complicated as a result of a society that did not see sexual difference as permanent or absolute.

Masculinity is associated both today and in the past with male-sexed bodies, but this association is not simple or totally restrictive. Ruth Mazo Karras defines masculinity not as referring to the male body “whose biological and anatomical features remain relatively constant among different men and over time, but rather to the meanings that society puts on a person with a male body, which do change over time.”\textsuperscript{48} This definition benefits from further development. While, arguably, biologically male bodies themselves are relatively ahistorical, as Murray reminds us, social understandings of what exactly a male body is, are not.\textsuperscript{49} Further, masculinity may be expressed by those who are not in possession of a male-sexed body, however defined. In the Middle Ages, biologically sexed females who exhibited masculine traits might be variously seen as monstrous or as saintly.\textsuperscript{50} Biologically sexed males expressing feminine traits similarly existed in a middle zone, viewed not as balanced, but as extremes. Karras’s definition of masculinity might be improved by regarding masculinity as the meanings society expects of those with male-sexed bodies and as the ideals, codes, and behaviours that men should express,

\textsuperscript{47} Murray, “One Flesh, Two Sexes, Three Genders?,” 38ff.
\textsuperscript{49} Murray, “One Flesh, Two Sexes, Three Genders?”
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 50.
but which are not necessarily restricted to males. This altered definition maintains a connection between physical sex and gendered identity but leaves open opportunities for rejection, subversion, and modification.

Karras has suggested that the male body itself remains relatively constant; other gender scholars of the Middle Ages, however, have demonstrated that exactly which physical characteristics were understood as comprising the specifically male body are far from unambiguous. Genital difference may have been the ultimate determiner, but this was not the only indication of maleness. Instead, medieval people typically relied first on other, more readily obvious physical expressions of sex. Some scholars have emphasized the role of hair, both bodily and facial, in sex differentiation, one of several areas where biological difference combines with social, or gendered, behaviours. Is it trimmed? Covered? Braided and ornamented? These aspects layer physical difference with social practice to create, or potentially obscure, meaning.

Gregory of Tours’ sixth-century History of the Franks includes an account that demonstrates the opacity of medieval understanding of gender difference. Gregory recounts an instance in which an abbess was accused of keeping a man in the nunnery. At trial, the accuser claimed that the man “dressed in woman’s clothing and looking like a woman, although in effect there was no doubt that he was a man.” When the man was brought forward, Gregory states that, indeed, though dressed as a woman, the Abbess’s alleged companion was clearly a man. Nevertheless, Gregory does not specify what made the man’s appearance clearly masculine,
whether he was bearded, showed an obvious Adam’s apple, or had a deep voice. Nor is there any indication that a physical examination was carried out. Regardless, all present knew him to be male. If this event truly occurred as recounted or if it served only as a rhetorical device is immaterial. To Gregory and to his audience, it was conceivable that someone’s sex might be readily visually distinguishable despite non-conforming gender behaviours and that this did not rely exclusively upon genitalia.

The importance of alternative physical markers of sex difference should not overshadow the psychological value of genitalia in gender identity. As the editors of a recent collection on Chaucer and masculinity argue in their introduction, “we see that penises—those floppy appendages, subject to irrepresibly awkward and sometimes invited tumescence—matter; they make men.”55 The editors clearly connect the physical presence of male genitals to the creation of masculine identity; however, in doing so they highlight the importance not just of the genitals themselves, but of the ability to achieve erections. This connection problematizes the relationship between physical sex and psychological gender for those unable to achieve erection and for those who actively sought to avoid them. While this included impotent laymen, the larger category for which this applied was that of the celibate clergy.

The idea of clerical masculinity has proven of enduring interest to scholars of gender in the Middle Ages.56 As a result of the early focus on the experiences of women, both in the


56 Clerical masculinity is probably the most frequently used terminology, however, it is not without problems. The linguistic restriction to clergy of this type of masculine identity, which embraces Christian religious values and rejects certain aspects of lay masculinity, has been challenged as overly narrow. See P. H. Cullum and Katherine J. Lewis, eds., Holiness and Masculinity in the Middle Ages, Religion & Culture in the Middle Ages (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2005); Marita von Weissenberg, “Men, Marriage, and Masculinity in Late Medieval Hagiography, 1100-1500” (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Yale University, 2013). Von Weissenberg proposes “spiritual masculinity” as an alternative term (p. 110), whereas the essays in Cullum and Lewis’ collection are oriented around holiness. In more recent work, Lewis has adopted the term ‘devotional masculinity’ (Katherine
medieval and more recent pasts, masculinity has been defined largely in light of its deviation from femininity. In particular, masculinity was defined in terms of violence and sexual, especially heterosexual, conquest. Vern Bullough, for instance, cites a triad of masculinity explained as “impregnating women, protecting dependants, and serving as provider to one’s family.” This model posed challenges for those seeking to understand an important and influential part of medieval society: clerics whose vows prohibited them from spilling blood and semen. In 1994, Jo Ann McNamara asked: “Can one be a man without deploying the most obvious biological attributes of manhood?” The answer to this question was at the heart of what McNamara dubbed the Herrenfrage, a medieval masculine identity crisis precipitated by social conflict between celibate and married men. In response, some medievalists posited the existence of a third gender, primarily defined by celibacy, to which monks, nuns, and clerics might belong. Medieval conceptualizations of gender certainly seem sufficiently flexible to have encompassed this tripartite division. Ultimately, however, scholars concluded that too many diverse forms of gender hindered the usefulness of a ‘third gender.’ Medievalists also noted that members of the so-called ‘clerical gender,’ typically identified themselves as masculine or feminine, and as men and women, rather than some additional category, even if they sometimes borrowed the language of another gender identity. Historiographically, clerical gender identity became an important subset of masculinity, connected to the values and expectations of a male-sexed body.

Scholars have explored how clerical masculinity both challenged and supported lay masculinity. Karras, for instance, emphasized the way clerical masculinity, particularly within a

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59 See Murray, “One Flesh, Two Sexes, Three Genders?” for this argument.
60 Ibid., 41–48.
university setting, sought to distinguish men from beasts and to distance themselves from base or physical desires instead of differentiating clerics and those in training from women or other men. Murray, in particular, has translated those values typically seen in lay masculinity into clerical settings. Celibacy, for instance, in this view is not a feminine or unmanly concession, but part of a righteous and inherently masculine battle for self-control. Others, including P. H. Cullum and Jennifer Thibodeaux, have emphasized the contradictions, rather than the similarities, between the values of secular and clerical masculinity, arguing that the ‘misbehaviour’ and transgressions of those sworn to celibacy and pacifism resulted from a failure to make the transition fully from secular to clerical masculinities.

The examination of clerical masculinity and the questions arising from it shed light on some larger problems with gender studies. Neal has emphasized how clerical masculinity problematizes the hierarchal structure of masculinity, asking whether clerical masculinity should be considered “hegemonic” because its members were part of a socially normative and hegemonic institution—the church—or whether clerical masculinity was perhaps an “alternative” form because of its contradiction with elite secular masculine values. Clerical masculinity, as a concept, also asks scholars to consider the connections between sexual identity and sexual activity as markers of gender identity, and to explore the extent to which difference in masculine

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representations and expectations demonstrates different forms of masculinity or variations in expression.

While this project does not explicitly address clerical masculinity, the underlying concepts that make clerical masculinity possible are important considerations. Different groups of men experienced different expectations of masculine behaviour and chose to represent and respond to these expectations in ways that supported, challenged, or transgressed social values. Further, throughout their lives, men may have been exposed to different expectations and values that they then needed to negotiate. The concept of clerical masculinity also demonstrates the historicity of masculine gender identity, given that sharp chronological changes are more visible regarding clerical masculinity than in other masculinity forms. For example, this can be seen in the imposition of clerical celibacy in the eleventh century and its reversal in some countries, including Scotland, following the Protestant Reformation. Thus the concept of clerical celibacy has made visible other forms of masculinity and, importantly, made possible a discussion of pluralist masculine constructions.

Historians of medieval masculinities have been particularly attuned to the transitional and transformational elements of masculine identity, especially as part of the movement from ‘boy’ to ‘man.’ Karras has focused on this in a study of medieval society through three socially-based masculine categories: the aristocratic world of knights and chivalry, the religiously-oriented space of the universities, and the urban experience of artisans and craftsmen. In each sphere, she determines the characteristics that permitted passage from the life stage of a boy into that of a man. While the characteristics Karras highlights, and the attention paid to social divides, shed important light on the socially-based values of manhood, these aspects offer inadequate exploration of medieval masculinity itself or of the transition to a socially recognized manhood.
Recently, Rachel Moss has explored another avenue for escaping the liminality of boyhood or adolescence, tying manhood to the physical, mental, and social processes of fatherhood. In examining fifteenth-century England, Moss connects masculine success to participation in, and contribution to, a lineage and the escape from filial subordination. In this model, marriage is “a threshold of adulthood, but it is not sufficient to make a man. Instead it provides him with the appropriate context in which to become a man [. . .] Without heirs, a man is not a man.”

Allen Frantzen’s work on Anglo-Saxon penitentials, published nearly a decade before Moss’s and examining a much earlier period of English history, offers different analysis. The attention of the penitentials to the sexual activity of boys, even those who were very young, suggests, according to Frantzen, that at least sexually, boys were already recognized as ‘men’ based upon their potential and their desire to engage in sexual activity with those of the same sex. Both Karras and Moss identify specific moments through which the passage to manhood is realized, but in doing so have neglected myriad other opportunities for both successes and failures, whereas Frantzen’s analysis essentializes sexual desire and manhood. Each of these perspectives offers a view of what distinguished a fully functioning and participatory male member of society from others, but none of these moments guaranteed the social and psychological reality of manhood.

Medieval society lacked the ritualized transformation that modern anthropologists draw on in contemporary society to mark the acquisition of full masculine adulthood, but this is not to suggest that medieval people lacked a distinction between ‘boy’ and ‘man.’ Differences in expectations and consequences, in opportunities and responsibilities, and in social significance

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66 Ibid.
are apparent in a variety of medieval sources. However, in seeking to identify singular points at which the transformation from boy to man occurred, medievalists assume that ‘to be a man’ was a task that could be completed. Manhood might be distinguishable from boyhood, as manliness might be from womanliness, but as a project of masculinity, medieval men could never rest secure.

Broadly speaking, scholars of gender have viewed gender identity as part of an acquisitional and performative process. Simone de Beauvoir famously claimed that “one is not born, but, rather, becomes woman,” highlighting how gender is created over time through repetition and performance.68 The idea of gender performativity, developed by Judith Butler, proposes that “gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid and regulatory frame.”69 Both concepts emphasize the externalized elements of gender and suggest that it is not something permanent, established once, but instead, part of a constant project or strategy.70 Both ‘man’ and ‘woman’ must constantly reinforce their masculinity or femininity through speech, behaviour, and thought, both internal and external. Scholars of masculinity have taken this idea even further, noting that for men, masculinity is under constant external and internal threat and must be continually reestablished in a way that it appears femininity does not. Elisabeth Badinter, for instance, argues that “manhood is not bestowed at the outset; it must be constructed, or let us say ‘manufactured.’ A man is therefore a sort of artifact, and as such he always runs the risk of being found defective.”71 The idea that a man must constantly prove his masculinity to himself and others or risk failure, ridicule, and

69 Judith Butler, Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity (New York: Routledge, 1999), 43.
71 Badinter, XY, on Masculine Identity, 2.
condemnation, does not appear to have a direct parallel in women. While becoming a woman may be part of an ongoing performative process, the constant challenge to this process and fear of failure are key to both being and becoming a man.

In the Middle Ages, the testing of one’s masculinity against other men was at the heart of elite tournament and chivalric culture as well as other homosocial masculine interactions. The tournament was one path that allowed noblemen the opportunity to seize or to maintain status through direct competition with other men, ideally of an equal or higher rank; warfare offered another option. According to John Peristiany, “honour and shame are the constant preoccupation of individuals in small scale, exclusive societies where face to face personal, as opposed to anonymous, relations are of paramount importance and where the social personality of the actor is as significant as the office” as was the case in medieval society. The honour/shame dichotomy relies on the belief that honour is a finite resource, which may only be acquired through someone else’s consequent loss. While tournament culture provides the most obvious medieval example, recent work by Hugh Thomas has offered more subtle illustration and shows the complications that might arise when honour and shame were defined differently by different groups. In the twelfth-century conflict between Henry II and Becket, lay and clerical ideas of honour and shame came into conflict. Thomas explains that when “laypeople confronted churchmen with violence, their actions underscored the fact that their victims, whatever their birth, were not warriors and could not properly participate in a system of reflexive honor involving violence.” This is not, of course, to suggest that churchmen lacked the concept of

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73 This concept is developed more fully in Chapter 5.
honour, but that they deployed it in a different fashion. Through conflict and competition, masculinity was performed and established between men. In part, it was a process of self-identification, but the need for external recognition was inescapable.

The questions raised by scholars of medieval gender highlight the conceptual gulf between medieval and modern understandings of gender and of sex itself. Investigation of medieval masculinities requires particular attention to their flexibility and fluidity. Constructions of clerical masculinity, of elite lay masculinity, and common lay masculinity show the diversity of social expectations and how men might experience a variety of gender pressures, which support, challenge, or contradict each other. For these reasons, a theory that encompasses multiple, hierarchal gender expectations is particularly useful.

**Theorizing Masculinities**

The order so often heard—"Be a man"—implies that it does not go without saying and that manliness may not be as natural as one would like to think. At the very least, the exhortation signifies that the possession of a Y chromosome or male sex organs is not enough to define the human male. Being a man implies a labor, an effort that does not seem to be demanded of a woman. It is rare to hear the words “Be a woman” as a call to order, whereas the exhortation to the little boy, the male adolescent, or even the male adult is common in most societies.

In the roughly twenty-five years since masculinity appeared on the scholarly agenda, the majority of theory on the topic has come from the work of sociologists and anthropologists. These disciplines provide a theoretical framework in which historians of masculinity have constructed their scholarship. The work of R. W. Connell is of particular prominence. The formulation of hegemonic masculinity that Connell articulated in the 1980s is likely the most influential and wide-reaching theory of masculinity. As of 2005, database searches show that

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75 Ibid., 1063.
76 Badinter, *XY, on Masculine Identity*, 1.
over two hundred papers used ‘hegemonic masculinity’ in titles or abstracts. This term has become so commonplace that scholars frequently use it uncritically and often without any reference to Connell.

The theory of hegemonic masculinity relies upon acknowledging, first, the existence of multiple masculinities, and second, a relational organization of masculinities which prefers certain models over others. This theory developed out of Antonio Gramsci’s Marxist construction of class relations and the cultural dynamic whereby a group is able to claim and maintain a leading position in social life. When applied to masculinities, the hegemonic form “embodied the currently most honored way of being a man, it required all other men to position themselves in relation to it, and it ideologically legitimated the global subordination of women to men.” Connell stresses that hegemonic masculinity must be historicized and that it is subject to change. As new groups challenge the status quo, they may ultimately rise up and become hegemonic. As a result, the relationship between hegemonic and subordinated masculinities is tense and frequently unstable.

Some have interpreted hegemonic masculinity as the form that is most common, or least questioned, in a given society; however, Connell makes it clear that this is not her intended interpretation. To Connell, hegemonic masculinities need not be statistically dominant, nor even expressed by ‘real’ men; they are, however, normative in that they express “widespread

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77 Connell and Messerschmidt, “Hegemonic Masculinity,” 830.
78 Tosh, “Hegemonic Masculinity and the History of Gender,” 47.
80 Connell, Masculinities, 77.
81 Connell and Messerschmidt, “Hegemonic Masculinity,” 832.
82 Connell, Masculinities, 77–78.
83 Tosh, “Hegemonic Masculinity and the History of Gender,” 43.
ideals, fantasies, and desires.” In this sense, hegemonic masculinity is the dominant category in a pattern of gender relations.

Masculinities that appear defined in relation to hegemonic masculinity are considered complicit or subordinated. Connell offers gay men as a contemporary example of a subordinated masculinity. Gayness, she argues, within patriarchal ideology, is “the repository of whatever is symbolically expelled from hegemonic masculinity . . . ranging from fastidious taste in home decoration to receptive anal pleasure.” Complicit masculinities include those that do not fully express the qualities of hegemonic masculinity, but nonetheless benefit from the legitimacy and ascendancy of the hegemonic form. These masculinities “realize the patriarchal dividend” without forming the ideal. In each of these instances, hegemonic, subordinated, and complicit masculinities do not represent fixed types or set characteristics. Instead, they are “configurations of practice” which appear in particular historical situations.

While widely adopted, Connell’s construction of hegemonic masculinity has not gone unchallenged. In 1998, Gender and Society published a symposium on Connell’s Masculinities in which several scholars reviewed the work and Connell responded to their criticism. In 2005, Connell, together with James W. Messerschmidt, undertook a reevaluation of hegemonic masculinity, summarizing and addressing criticisms of the concept. Connell and Messerschmidt organized criticisms under five headings: the underlying concept of masculinity, ambiguity and overlap, reification, masculine subject, and the pattern of gender relations. Generally, these criticisms focused on issues of essentialism and the relational qualities of hegemonic masculinity, for example, that masculinity as a concept is generally flawed because it appears to

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86 Connell, Masculinities, 78.
87 Ibid., 79.
88 Ibid., 81.
89 Connell and Messerschmidt, “Hegemonic Masculinity.”
rest on a naturalized and frequently heteronormative dichotomy. There are also concerns about universalizing the concept of hegemonic masculinity and about how “a hierarchy of masculinities constructed within gender relations [are considered] as logically continuous with the patriarchal subordination of women.”

As a result of these criticisms and given the current state of masculinity studies, Connell and Messerschmidt have argued for a reformulation of hegemonic masculinity. They suggest that the most valuable aspects of the theory remain a plural and hierarchical understanding of masculinities; that the hierarchical basis is a pattern of hegemony not simple domination; that the hegemonic form, at any given time, is not simply the commonest form but represents an exemplar of masculinity; and finally, that hegemony is open to challenges from both women and bearers of alternative masculinities. In reformulating hegemonic masculinity, Connell and Messerschmidt have highlighted four areas that require attention. First, they encourage a more complex analysis of the gender hierarchy which recognizes the agency of subordinated groups and especially, the role of women and femininities in this hierarchy. Second, they advocate for the construction of a ‘geography of masculinities’ that, “distinguishes local, regional, and global masculinities (and the same point applies to femininities) [and] allows us to recognize the importance of place.” Third, they call for a reintegration of bodies and masculinity and a consideration of how bodies may act as both objects of social practice and agents in social practice. Finally, they reassert the internal complexity of masculinities, both hegemonic and subordinated, and “explicitly recognize the layering, the potential internal contradiction, within all practices that construct masculinities.” This reformulation helps bring the theory of

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90 Ibid., 839.
91 Ibid., 849.
92 Ibid., 852.
hegemonic masculinity closer into line with the reality of human experience and creates a more positive relationship between the two.

Historians have yet to take up this reformulated theory of hegemonic masculinity; its primary influence so far has been on sociology and psychology. In 2005, however, just eight months before the publication of Connell and Messerschmidt’s article, the *Journal of British Studies* released a ‘state of the field’ series of journal articles organized by Karen Harvey and Alexandra Shepard. These articles show the continued impact of hegemonic masculinity theory on historians of masculinities. Harvey and Shepard also suggest that historians of masculinities are in a unique position to influence the theory of hegemonic masculinity, rather than simply work within it. The historical record, they argue, has shown that hegemonic codes tend to be “highly complex, fluid, and full of contradictions,” instead of homogeneous dictates of behaviour. Modifying the theory of hegemonic masculinities to reflect this complexity has the potential to increase analytical precision as Connell and Messerschmidt themselves note. While Connell and Messerschmidt have recognized the complexity of the historical record and the need to incorporate this variety into the reformulated theory of hegemonic masculinity, a greater emphasis on pre-modern masculinities, uninfluenced by industrialization and other markers of modernity, would better help to historicize the multiplicity of masculinity and masculine identities.

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93 A citation review undertaken through webofknowledge.com returned 390 articles citing Connell and Messerschmidt, of these, only two results are categorized as ‘history.’ JSTOR’s citation count is similarly dominated by sociological articles—although returning only fifteen results total.


95 Harvey and Shepard, “What Have Historians Done with Masculinity?” 278.

96 Ibid.

The current project takes up the theoretically-oriented challenges made by Connell and Messerschmidt and by Harvey and Shepard, as part of an effort to historicize and regionalize men’s experiences. The language of hegemonic, dominant and non-dominant, complicit, and alternative masculinities is useful for understanding the hierarchal relationship of elite secular masculine expectations in medieval Scotland. These expectations were constructed within and between varied groups whose relationships to each other and to social capital were unequal. Despite varying social significance, different models of masculine behaviours, values, and ways of expressing masculine identity are evident in medieval Scotland. For the men who interacted with these models, and especially for those whose lives straddled several different ones, representation of masculine identity could be complex indeed.
CHAPTER TWO: ETHNIC IDENTITY IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate the ways elite men negotiated a variety of cultural expectations of masculinity. Gender, given that it is socially constructed and culturally situated, is therefore, ethnically dependant. The ways in which ethnicity shaped identities within the Scottish kingdoms had real consequences for the portrayal and experiences of masculinity. Better understanding of how the lives of those in the medieval Scottish kingdom were shaped and influenced by ethnic identities better explains the changes and choices of masculine representation.

The consideration of medieval Scottish history in ethnic terms is a long held tradition. Whether the discussion considers Celtic versus Germanic origins or—with greater currency today—Gaelic versus Norman practices and institutions, ethnicity in Scotland has frequently been framed as a dual and relatively uncomplicated category of analysis. Since the last decades of the twentieth century, however, this view is increasingly challenged. Historians of Scotland have recognized the limitations of such divisions and the extent to which they are based on outdated, Victorian modes of thought, as well as racially informed assumptions. Twenty-first-century discussions of medieval Scottish ethnicity employ the language of adoption, cooperation, endurance, and hybridity in their examinations of ethnic influences, focusing on how different groups came together to form something identifiably Scottish in a process through which one group was not totally overwhelmed by another. This is an important, and largely uncontroversial, shift in understanding ethnic identities and the processes of acculturation.
Understanding of ethnicity within a Scottish context has been influenced by developments in other areas of study, notably Robert Bartlett’s ideas of Europeanization. Europeanization, however, one of a series of process-driven models referred to by one historian as the four “-zations,” is not without its shortcomings. Like earlier concepts, including Normanization and Anglicization, and the more recent Scotticization, Europeanization is a useful, though problematic, model of understanding. On a wider scale, each of these ‘-zations’ examines the degree to which foreign ideas were successfully imposed on a local population and the extent of the resilience of local or native ideas and structures. With this outline it is easy to fall into a discourse of progressive versus regressive practices, though many studies do manage to avoid this. While these concepts offer much in the way of accounting for large-scale change, process-driven models often neglect how ethnicity functioned as “a situational construct,” in the words of Patrick Geary. As part of their situational nature, ethnic identities—perhaps especially in the Middle Ages—changed, were formed, and reformed continually. As a result, it is, and was, possible to be a member of several communities simultaneously, each influencing the expression of gendered identities. The flexibility and malleability of ethnic identities means that while a ‘-zation’ theory may benefit understandings of institutional and social changes, it may also obscure the complexity of individual lives in the process.

For individuals and groups, historians commonly use compound adjectives as an anachronistic but descriptive assessment of ethnic identity and cultural position. For instance,

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3 Neville, Native Lordship in Medieval Scotland, 4.
4 Ibid., 5.
Anglo-Norman may be used to describe the group of people in the English kingdom after about 1100, predominantly members of the elite, whose ethnic backgrounds typically—though not always—included some combination of French and ‘native’ English (perhaps more accurately a compound adjective of its own: Anglo-Saxon). This is not, however, how contemporaries referred to themselves or to others. With reference to those called Anglo-Saxons, Susan Reynolds suggests that

if we must continue to use a name that has become well established in tradition, we might do well to remember that the early medieval English did not call themselves Anglo-Saxons. If we want to call them that, we ought to think hard about what we mean, and what others may think we mean, by the name that we have chosen to use.

In some ways, ‘Anglo-Saxon’ or ‘Anglo-Norman’ more accurately describes the ‘identity package’ of these individuals than the language they themselves used, but it also invites further questions. Ethnicity, as will be seen, like gendering, is both about self-identification and external labelling, but neither application is wholly complete. Both today and in the past, it is possible for claims to an ethnic identity to be challenged or denied, and for external categorization to counter self-identification. While the ways in which individuals view themselves has important implications for identity and representation, so, too, does the way in which someone is viewed.

There is no doubt that medieval people conceived of themselves and others as members of communities based on common languages, practices, traditions, and descent. In other words, medieval people thought in ethnic terms. Ethnicity is not one-sided, however, but is relational; as R. R. Davies argues, “it is otherness which often best serves to confirm and underline the identities for both parties.” As a result, ethnicity, like gender, is frequently portrayed as a

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7 Ibid., 414.

duality: as ‘us’ and ‘them.’ In seeing ethnic identities as a dichotomy, we miss much of the variation and heterogeneity that compose the ‘other.’ This does not, however, mean that ethnicity is a category of analysis too flawed to be useful. Instead, historians seeking to understand ethnic identities should keep in mind the ways that ethnic categories are constructed, historical, situational, strategic, and political. These qualities do not reduce the value of ethnicity as a category of analysis, as Geary argues: “ethnicity exists first and last in people’s minds. Yet ethnicity’s locus in people’s minds does not make it ephemeral; on the contrary, it is all the more real and powerful as a result. A creation of the human will, it is impervious to mere rational disproof.” Ethnic identity allows people to understand themselves, others, and the relationship between groups of people and is conceived of in such a way as to give real meaning to perceived similarities and differences.

The terms that feature most prominently in historical discussions of ethnicity in medieval Scotland, including Norman, Anglo-Norman, Gaelic, Scandinavian, and Hiberno-Norse, offer the opportunity to group together the experiences and perspectives of individuals. They must, however, be used cautiously. In so far as is possible, modern terminology should be used alongside contemporary terms—some of which are similar to modern terms, whereas others have very different meaning—and self-identification. Although scholars may recognize the presence of a wide variety of peoples in medieval Scotland speaking not only Gaelic, English, and French, but also Welsh, Norse, and Flemish, this diversity is too often lost in discussions of medieval Scottish ethnic identities.

For the study of masculinity, ethnic identity and ethnic alliances have an impact on how manliness is constructed and displayed. As a force that is socially constructed, the social

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expectations of sexed bodies influence the experience and the portrayal of gendered identities in ethnically dependant ways. A more nuanced understanding of how ethnicity shaped the lived experiences of the inhabitants of medieval Scotland has the potential to explain better the changes and choices surrounding masculine demonstrations of power and authority. For the political elites of medieval Scotland, a kingdom that was composed of at least two dominant ethnic identities and several secondary ones, the culturally- and ethnically-constructed expectations of gendered identities needed to be carefully negotiated.

A View from Other Disciplines

Historians have not always been comfortable engaging with ideas of ethnicity and ethnic identity. Particularly since the later decades of the twentieth century, scholars have been more cautious in their use of ethnic labelling. While the rationale behind this caution is admirable, ethnicity remains a useful modern category of analysis and an idea very much familiar to historical agents during the Middle Ages. Examination of how other disciplines, including archaeology and sociology, have engaged with this topic helps to provide a better framework in which historians may work with the idea of ethnic identity, especially in the more distant past. The most useful elements deriving from this analysis are the conceptualization of interactions between ethnic groups and the different ways ethnicity functions: administratively, sociologically, and psychologically. Historians, in turn, may benefit other disciplinary understanding through the demonstration of the flexibility of ideas of ethnicity and their implications.

10 Scholars have become more cautious in their use of ethnic categories for good reason. Ethnically or racially explained injustices and atrocities of the twentieth century have made real the implications of ethnic labelling. Postcolonial scholarship has also immeasurably complicated the understanding of relationships between ethnic groups and highlighted the dangers involved in ethnic labelling.
Through most of the twentieth century, archaeologists, like historians, saw ethnicity as a largely unproblematic category, clearly determinable from documentary and material records.\footnote{D. M. Hadley, “Ethnicity and Acculturation,” in \textit{A Social History of England, 900-1200}, ed. Julia C. Crick and Elisabeth M. C. Van Houts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 235.} Since the 1980s this perspective has changed. In the face of scholarship by non-archaeologists, including Fredrik Barth and Patrick Geary, archaeological discussions began to view ethnicity as a more complex matter.\footnote{See Fredrik Barth, \textit{Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference} (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969); Geary, “Ethnicity as a Situational Construct in the Early Middle Ages.”} As part of a debate between a ‘primordial’ and ‘instrumental’ understanding of ethnicity, archaeologists began to question the constructed nature of ethnicity. From a primordial perspective, ethnic labels act as implicit natural categories; thus, for example, in Scotland, Norse, Scottish, Gaelic, and other such terms had real, recognized, and uncontroversial meaning.\footnote{James H. Barrett, “Beyond War or Peace: The Study of Culture Contact in Viking-Age Scotland,” in \textit{Land, Sea and Home}, ed. John Hines, Alan Lane, and M. Redknap, Society for Medieval Archaeology Monograph, no. 20 (Leeds: Maney, 2004), 208.} The instrumental perspective, on the other hand, adopts Barth’s and Geary’s arguments viewing ethnicity as “self-defined, fluid and situational.”\footnote{Ibid., 209.} The latter perspective has gained popularity in the last few decades introducing further ambiguity to the ability to determine ethnic attachments from the archaeological record. One of the results of the changing view of ethnicity among archaeologists is greater attention to the intricacies of cultural contact and the interactions between incoming and indigenous groups. In medieval Scottish archaeology, the situations of the northern isles and the western isles offer interesting opportunity for comparison. While both regions saw a significant influx of Norse migrants, likely of similar initial magnitude, the experience of cultural contact was different.\footnote{James H. Barrett, “Culture Contact in Viking Age Scotland,” in \textit{Contact, Continuity, and Collapse: The Norse Colonization of the North Atlantic}, ed. James H. Barrett, Studies in the Early Middle Ages 5 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 99.} Descendants of migrants to northern Scotland retained their language and elements of material culture to
which the indigenous population largely conformed. In western Scotland, it was instead the Norse who came to emulate local material culture practices. These differences show that contact between incoming and indigenous groups did not always result in similar outcomes.

For archaeologists interested in ethnic identity, the primary questions have changed. No longer do archaeologists ask whether ethnic identity was influenced by cultural contact, instead, they consider how cultural contact may lead to the dismissal of earlier ethnic attachments, the extent to which, and the ways in which, incomers became acculturated, and how indigenous populations responded. There is now greater space for ambiguity and complexity, both in ethnic identity and in cultural interaction.

Sociologists are similarly interested in questions of ethnic identities, considering ethnicity as part of a system of social classification. While concepts of kin or clan may form the foundation of an ethnicity, they also form an “ascending generality” of relationship. In other words, kinship represents a relationship between individuals, clanship relates individuals and a group, and ethnicity relates two or more groups. According to this structure, the attribution of any ethnic identity automatically implies the existence of at least one other ethnie; for there to be an ‘us,’ there must also be a ‘them.’ One danger this parallelism creates is the assumption that the ‘other’ also views itself as one unified ethnie. Scottish historians have been particularly

16 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
guilty, until recently, of replicating this homogenization with respect to division between Highland and Lowland peoples.21

The sociological definition adds yet another layer of consideration, one frequently missing from historical studies. Sociologist J. Milton Yinger has suggested that “we need a definition that recognises the ‘thickness’ or the salience of the ethnic attachment since ‘... it is important to distinguish a sociologically and psychologically important ethnicity from one that is only administrative or classificatory.’”22 According to Yinger, a psychologically important ethnic classification includes three characteristics: first, that some portion of a larger society is seen to be different in a combination of language, religion, appearance, or origin; second, that the members of that group perceive themselves similarly; and third, that they participate in shared activities related to their common origin and culture, whether that origin is real or mythical.23

It is clear that ethnicity, as archaeologists, sociologists, and historians conceive of it, is not a simple representation of a fixed or static relationship. Instead, ethnicity represents a perceived identity based on a sense of similarity to a portion of a larger society. The acknowledgement of an ethnic identity automatically creates one or more other identities that may or may not overlap. In using ethnicity as a category of historical analysis, particularly in relation to the Middle Ages, it is important to keep all of these factors in mind, to take into account differences between administrative, sociological, and psychologically important classifications, and to consider the various ways in which ethnicity may be plural, situational, contested, historical, and strategic.

Ethnic Identities in the Middle Ages

One of the most challenging aspects in the discussion of pre-modern ethnicities is the tension between ideas of ethnicity and national identity. At the centre of this tension is the suggestion that the modern nation-state arose through the “convergence of ethnic and nation identities” and was a process inextricably tied to modernity, made possible only through the developments of the Industrial Revolution, modern print-culture, and Enlightenment philosophy. Pre-modern historians’ responses to this claim have countered with a sociological definition of a nation, in which a nation is an ethnic group claiming a right to statehood, or lacking that, at least a history of statehood. This definition allows, for instance, Susan Reynolds and Bruce Webster to argue for a medieval ethnic unity based on regnal loyalties and origin myths, and for Patrick Geary to highlight Antique ideas of ethnicity on the basis of ‘constitutional’ and ‘biological’ peoples.

In 2001, Robert Bartlett published “Medieval and Modern Concepts of Race and Ethnicity,” highlighting the importance of careful consideration of ethnicity as a category of analysis and how medievalists may best make use of it. In this work, he cautions, “neither the medieval nor the modern terminology of race and ethnicity is simple or uncomplicated.” The language used in medieval texts to describe people and difference varies widely. In The Myth of

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Nations, Patrick J. Geary emphasizes the medieval inheritance of the language of Antiquity.\textsuperscript{28}

Whether Herodotus’s use of ethne (people) and gene (tribes) or the Roman distinctions of the peoples of the world as populus, gens, natio, or tribus, by the fifth century, practices for understanding and interpreting the world in terms of differences between groups of people were firmly entrenched:

The internal observer—whether Roman, Jew, or Christian—saw the complexities and heterogeneous nature of his community. Membership in it was determined both by the community’s acceptance of the individual and the individual’s willingness to accept the community’s laws and values. Thus membership was, at least in part, subjective and contingent. In contrast to this ‘we’ group, the same individual, viewing others, saw homogeneity, simplicity, and ahistoricity.\textsuperscript{29}

As historians, it is important to be cautious interpreting this division. It may be tempting to read the description of the heterogeneous and complex community of an author as a description of a ‘real’ identity, and to view a simplistic and homogenous ‘other’ as an ethnic group. As John Moreland argues, “we have a tendency to see ethnicity not as part of our make-up, but as something particular to the ‘Others.’”\textsuperscript{30} It is a natural conclusion that this tendency is duplicated not only in our own thoughts, but in our writings as well, and historians must guard against reproducing this from primary texts.

Scholarship on medieval ethnicities has shown that individuals in the Middle Ages conceived of themselves and others as different peoples, manifest through different languages, customs, laws, and appearances, and that these differences were often expressed as the result of perceived shared origins.\textsuperscript{31} Bartlett’s work, in particular, has shown an unexpected complexity in

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{28}{Geary, Myth of Nations, 41–62.}
\footnotetext{29}{Ibid., 50. 55.}
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the medieval understanding of ethnicity. His work demonstrates that medieval people conceived of themselves as participants in multi-ethnic communities, united and divided by political allegiances. He also shows that these communities were far from static, “often forming and reforming, overflowing and cutting across political boundaries, providing identities and claims for their members.”

Thus, at any given time, we can create, at best, an incomplete depiction of ethnic attachment.

The shifting nature of medieval ideas of ethnicity offers important insight into medieval mentalities. As with other socially constructed categories, such as gender or sexuality, an individual’s claim to participation in one or another community, whether explicit or implicit, demonstrates an allegiance—if only a temporary one—with the history, rights, customs, and values of that community. Far from being a category of analysis imposed by modern scholars, ethnicity played an important role in the personal identity of medieval peoples. How it manifested, however, does not always correspond with modern understanding of ethnic categories. In large part, this is the result of the nineteenth-century origins of professionalized history and the preconceptions the discipline was founded on—preconceptions not yet fully shed.

Many of the standards and traditions of history as a discipline date from the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, were developed within the specific cultural context of the time and were closely tied to emerging ideas of ethnic nationalism. While these values no longer form the primary concern for modern historians, indeed they are now widely repudiated, their influence is nonetheless noteworthy. During the eighteenth century, racial explanations for the social, political, and economic states of society were pervasive and widely accepted. Although these ideas have been challenged, in many ways the assumptions made during the eighteenth

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32 Bartlett, “Medieval and Modern Concepts of Race and Ethnicity,” 54.
33 Hammond, “Ethnicity and the Writing of Medieval Scottish History,” 3.
century remain. The ideas of nationalist histories permeate the construction of European history though periodization, geography, and naming practices.

In his 1994 Royal Historical Society Presidential Address, R. R. Davies reminded his audience

that modern historians and medieval peoples were not talking about the same phenomenon may, possibly if very arguably, be conceded; that we should try to discover what medieval men and women meant by coralling themselves verbally into collectivities which they called ‘peoples’, rather than judging whether they were such by our own a priori and time-bound criteria, is surely proper.\(^{34}\)

As Davies indicates, we should not expect that ethnic identities in the Middle Ages conformed to political boundaries, either modern or medieval. While Davies argues that by 1400, four main groups were identifiable and were conceived of as peoples within the British Isles, and that these categories roughly parallel the modern nations of England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, it is also important to recognize differences and variations.\(^{35}\) Additionally, this rough correspondence with modern categories examines only a macro-level understanding of ethnicity belying further internal complexity, the existence of which was not supplanted by other ethnic identities and loyalties.\(^{36}\) As a historical construct, ethnicity is subject to historical pressures and alters in response to this. The ways in which ethnic identities changed in response to historical pressures provides an indication of how medieval peoples conceived of themselves, others, and their places in the world. That medieval peoples recognized a plurality of identity demonstrates a perhaps unexpected elasticity of thought.

\(^{35}\) Ibid., 20.
\(^{36}\) Ibid.
Ethnicity in the Scottish Kingdom: Historiographical Perspectives

Historians have typically viewed Scottish ethnicity as a dualist construction. While the terminology changes depending on the era, traditionally, the inhabitants of medieval Scotland are categorized as either Gaelic or Norman. This has had significant effects on the understanding of society and institutions, as well as periodization. For nineteenth-century historians, the debate was tinged with racist priorities; through much of the twentieth century, the racialized implications were dismissed while the idea of dual inheritances endured. Later twentieth- and early twenty-first-century historians have revised the accounts of Scottish ethnicity, but in doing so have firmly enmeshed the periodization that posited a ‘golden age’ of Scottish ethnic unity in the Middle Ages sandwiched between two distinct and different periods of ethnic disunity, evident in the twelfth century and beginning again in the late fifteenth century. However, not only are there important similarities between these periods of disunity, often neglected by historians, but the ethnic ‘unity’ of the thirteenth to mid-fifteenth centuries is largely illusionary. Historiographic analysis lays bare the priorities that have resulted in this misleading depiction.

In British history, the primary influence of nineteenth-century ethnic nationalism was the “racialist, progressivist paradigm” that characterized debate between Teutonists and Celtists. Although Teutonists argued for Anglo-Saxon superiority and progress through Anglo-Norman colonization and Celtists created an image of violent cultural struggle, neither side questioned the belief in inherent racial characteristics that they believed made for a foregone conclusion. The main battleground of this debate was medieval Scottish history, and particularly, the ‘ethnic’ origins of the Picts. If they were of Germanic origins as John Pinkerton, John Jamieson, and Malcolm Laing, among others, claimed, then Scotland might be linked with the progressive,

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38 Ibid., 2–4. Hammond’s article discusses in depth the Teutonist and Celtists debate.
freedom-loving, and egalitarian Teutons.\textsuperscript{39} Celtists instead attempted to preserve the idea of a Scottish ‘Celtic’ past and related this to the positive attributes of Romantic values of Nature.\textsuperscript{40}

Writing in 1981, Barrow summarizes:

At one time it used to be thought that variations in social organization and economic structure within medieval Scotland could be explained quite simply in racial terms. Lothian, as part of Northumbria, had a Germanic or Anglo-Saxon pattern of villages and lordship closely comparable with that prevailing in England. The far north and the western isles had been given a Scandinavian settlement pattern by Norse incursions. As for the country in between, and the south-west (or at least Galloway), it was Celtic in speech and race and a way of life was specifically Celtic.\textsuperscript{41}

However, this perspective is not, perhaps, as fixed in the past as Barrow suggests. There are two main consequences of this debate still apparent in the practices of modern Scottish history. The first is the presence of an ethnic dualism, setting ‘Celtic’ practices, peoples, and institutions—although commonly referred to today as Gaelic or, by some, ‘native’—against Norman ones. The difference between this and the nineteenth-century debate is primarily found in terminology and the deliberate repudiation of racialist assumptions and the idea of ‘ethnic packages.’ The second lasting impact is apparent in the periodization of medieval Scottish history, which frequently emphasizes a dramatic and permanent shift circa 1100. Work by many twentieth-century Scottish historians demonstrates these inheritances so clearly it can be difficult to even see the framework in place. It has most strongly taken root in the discussion of institutional practices and the areas of law, lordship, and religion.\textsuperscript{42} In particular, discussion of the Normanization of medieval Scotland generally revolves around a twelfth-century date and ethnic duality, setting native

\textsuperscript{40} Hammond, “Ethnicity and the Writing of Medieval Scottish History,” 4.
\textsuperscript{42} Hammond, “Ethnicity and the Writing of Medieval Scottish History,” 23.
Celtic practices and traditions against imported Norman ones. It would be easy, if inaccurate, to similarly view ethnically dependant constructions of masculinity through this simplistic duality, as Celtic versus Norman.

One of the few appearances of ethnic labels in medieval Scottish documentary sources is in the twelfth-century address clauses of royal charters. Often called the ‘racial address,’ or more rarely the ‘peoples address,’ these introductory clauses highlight the significance of ethnic identity in the Scottish kingdom, but also its flexibility and ambiguity. From the earliest Scottish royal charters until the 1170s, address clauses frequently followed Anglo-Norman custom in naming the groups of people represented within the kingdom. In Scottish charters, four specific groups are most commonly named: the French (Franci), the English (Angli or Anglici), the ‘Scots’ (Scoti or Scotti, not to be confused with the modern definition of Scots), and the Galwegians (Galweenses). While the inclusion of some combination of these groups appeared in approximately 20% of royal charters issued before the mid-1170s, the rationale behind specific combinations—and ultimately the disappearance of the peoples address altogether—is opaque.

Scholars have found that no single reason adequately accounts for the variety of forms. The peoples’ address sometimes reflects the composition of the region affected by the grant and at other times the composition of the region in which it was issued; scribal error or whim may be

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blamed at other times. In still other instances, political pressures and expediencies dictated the form of the address. This was almost certainly the case for the sudden appearance and quick disappearance of addresses concerning Galwegians in the early 1160s. Kenji Nishioka attributes the presence of the Galwegians in the peoples address during this period to a desire to reinforce royal authority in south-western Scotland following the defeat of Fergus of Galloway (d. 1161) and the subjugation of his largely autonomous principality by the Scottish king, Malcolm IV (r. 1153-1165).

If we cannot necessarily rely upon the peoples address to accurately and consistently depict the ethnic composition of the kingdom, we can, nevertheless, still learn several important lessons. For administrative purposes at least, the Scottish kingdom was seen as comprised of several different peoples and this division was largely determined in overlapping linguistic and geographic terms. Inclusion or exclusion of various groups was often deliberate and selective, indicating that the peoples address was not intended to cover all eventualities but was, instead, highly situational and tailor-made for particular instances. The ethnic labels appearing in the peoples address are contextual and relational, relying upon an understanding—not always accessible to modern historians—of the relationship between a grant and those who participated in it. Finally, regardless of historiographical treatment, the peoples address demonstrates the shortcomings of an ethnic duality with respect to the Scottish kingdom.

Studies of Gaelic regions and ‘native’ lordships, however, tend to unintentionally reinforce ethnic duality. As Matthew Hammond asserts, “ideas of what is old and what is new

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46 RRS, i. 73-4; Nishioka, “Scots and Galwegians in the ‘peoples address’ of Scottish Royal Charters,” 223; Dauvit Broun, The Charters of Gaelic Scotland and Ireland in the Early and Central Middle Ages, Quiggin Pamphlets on the Sources of Mediaeval Gaelic History 2 (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, Dept. of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic, 1995), 19.


48 Ibid., 215.
are enmeshed in a binary opposition, creating a watershed that forces historical trends to flow into either a Celtic or a Norman reservoir.\textsuperscript{49} In their rejection of a sweeping ‘Normanization,’ these scholars tend to frame their arguments in terms of the survival, the continuance, and the endurance of ‘Celtic’ practice, as if it runs contrary to the expected.\textsuperscript{50} Some of this recent work has begun to challenge the periodization in question, arguing that any shift prior to the fourteenth century occurred “only slowly and only partly.”\textsuperscript{51} It is, however, largely the chronology and nature of change, not a rejection of the Normanization paradigm itself. Instead of portraying this ‘Celtic’ and Norman collision as conflict and struggle, increasingly scholars are using the language of adoption, cooperation, adaptation, and integration.

‘Hybrid’ has become the byword for discussions of medieval Scotland, in respect to both the people and the institutions. Keith Stringer, for instance, argues Scotland was “directed by ‘feudal’ kings who nevertheless drew heavily on the rituals and traditions of Celtic rulership; and the hybridity of the monarchy was reflected nationally in hybrid legal, political and social structures.”\textsuperscript{52} Alexander Grant similarly discusses “a hybrid country—with hybrid kingship, hybrid institutions, hybrid law, and an increasingly hybrid landowning class.”\textsuperscript{53} While hybridity goes some way towards recognizing the complexity of the interactions in medieval Scotland, it also perpetuates a simplistic dichotomy in which ‘Celtic’ and ‘Norman’ are seen as discrete

\textsuperscript{49} Hammond, “Ethnicity and the Writing of Medieval Scottish History,” 21.
\textsuperscript{51} McDonald and Neville, “Knights and Knighthood in Gaelic Scotland, c. 1050-1300,” 82.
\textsuperscript{53} Grant, “Scotland’s ‘Celtic Fringe’ in the Late Middle Ages: The MacDonald Lords of the Isles and the Kingdom of Scotland,” 119.
ethnic packages, but appear, in practice, blended together. As Cynthia Neville highlights, ‘hybridity’ additionally minimizes the antagonism that often results from culture contact.\(^{54}\)

If the historiography of twelfth-century ethnicities in the Scottish kingdom is dominated by a belief in the hybridization of Gaelic and Norman identities, the central ethnic theme, beginning in the late fourteenth century, is a division between Lowland and Highland Scots. More than just regional identities, Highlanders and Lowlanders are described by contemporary sources in ethnically charged language: “mores autem secundum diversitatem linguarum variantur” (the manners and customs of the Scots vary with the diversity of their speech), wrote John of Fordun in the 1370s.\(^{55}\) This is a frequently discussed passage in which Fordun describes the cultural and ethnic divisions between Highlanders and Lowlanders. This distinction is categorized by language but is manifest, according to Fordun, in the behaviour and psychology of the people; these were qualities that were not just regionally dependent but also inherited. Those who inhabited the seacoast and Lowlands—the Scots speakers—are “culta, fida, patiens et urbana, vestitu siquidem honesta, civilis atque pacifica, circa cultum divinum devota, sed et obviandis hostium iniuriis semper prona” (of domestic and civilized habits, trusty, patient, and urbane, decent in their attire, affable, and peaceful, devout in divine worship, yet always prone to resist a wrong at the hands of their enemies).\(^{56}\) The island and mountain dwellers, the

\(^{54}\) Neville, Native Lordship in Medieval Scotland, 6.

\(^{55}\) John of Fordun, Chronica Gentis Scotorum, ed. William F. Skene (Edinburgh: Edmonston & Douglas, 1872), II.ix. for Latin text. All English translations are from John of Fordun, Chronica Gentis Scotorum, ed. William F. Skene, trans. Felix J. H. Skene (Edinburgh: Edmonston & Douglas, 1872). Until recently, Fordun was considered the author of the entire Chronica Gentis Scotorum. Based on the efforts of Dauvit Broun, it is now clear that Fordun’s own work goes no later than the death of David I in 1153 (books I-V). Those sections believed to have different authorship are now conventionally known as Gesta Annalia I (GAI) and Gesta Annalia II (GAII) and are referred to as such here. The passages cited here are from the section written by Fordun. See Broun, Scottish Independence and the Idea of Britain, 215; 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. B. E. Crawford (Edinburgh: Mercat Press, 1999), 9–30.

\(^{56}\) Fordun, Chronica Gentis Scotorum, 1872, II.ix.
Highlanders, in contrast are described in terms typical to medieval constructions of barbarism. They are “*indomita, rudis et immorigerata, raptu capax, otium diligens, ingenio docilis et callida, forma spectabilis, sed amictu deformis*” (a savage and untamed nation, rude and independent, given to rapine, ease-loving, of a docile and warm disposition, comely in person, but unsightly in dress).\(^{57}\) Beyond these descriptions, this passage contains several important Latin terms typically indicative of ethnic or racial divisions in the medieval world. *Gens* and *natio* are the most common of these, each implying the concept of mutual descent.\(^{58}\) In Fordun’s construction, the Scottish kingdom is one nation (*natio*), composed of two races or peoples (*gens*). Other chroniclers in the British Isles, for example, William of Malmesbury, have used these terms similarly to distinguish groups of people.\(^{59}\)

Modern historians have questioned Fordun’s accuracy regarding divisions between Highlanders and Lowlanders, as well as the extent to which this opinion was widespread in the fourteenth century.\(^{60}\) They have also disputed the reality of other ethnic divisions Fordun described; Katherine H. Terrell, for instance, labels his clear distinction between English and Scottish as “a potent fantasy of a clearly delineated border . . . that contrasts starkly with reality.”\(^{61}\) Similarly, it seems Fordun’s division of Highland and Lowland peoples is more ideological than descriptive. Nevertheless, through the fifteenth century, characterizations of Highlanders similar to Fordun’s became increasingly common, and, by the beginning of the sixteenth century, a clear division between Lowland and Highland society was firmly entrenched.

\(^{57}\) Ibid.  
\(^{58}\) Bartlett, “Medieval and Modern Concepts of Race and Ethnicity,” 42.  
\(^{59}\) Ibid., 42–44.  
\(^{60}\) Barrow, *Scotland and Its Neighbours in the Middle Ages*, 105–6.  
in the minds of Scots. Key to this distinction was the characterization of the Highlanders as uncivilized and barbaric, in contrast with the law-abiding, civilized Lowlanders. In the 1420s, the chronicler Andrew Wyntoun attributed the 1390 burning of Elgin cathedral to a violent crew of “wyld wykkyd Heland-men.” As it developed through the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Highland/Lowland divide, an extension of the ‘two peoples, one nation’ division articulated by Fordun, reflected new developments in the political landscape of the kingdom, including the increased desire of sixteenth-century Stewart monarchs to exert royal authority throughout the Scottish kingdom, which further increased the othering of the Highlanders.

While the stark and even deliberate depiction of those dwelling north and west of the so-called ‘Highland Line’ as barbarians is unique to the post-fifteenth-century period, the othering of its inhabitants was not. Throughout the Middle Ages, the people of the Hebrides, of the far north (Caithness, Orkney and Shetland) and of Galloway were frequently treated as culturally and ethnically distinct both from each other and from those in the core of the Scottish kingdom. To some extent, this reflected political divisions, with each of these regions possessing full or quasi-autonomous status throughout the Middle Ages. The western isles and the far north also maintained particularly important cultural and political ties outside the Scottish kingdom for the whole of the Middle Ages. While administrative political ties with the Norwegian crown and autonomy from the Scottish kingdom ended in 1266 for the Hebrides and in the 1470s in the far north, the Norse cultural legacy remained important. From at least the fourteenth century, the

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Gaelic speaking, seafaring population on the western coast of Scotland and the Hebrides also shared the language, social structure, and artistic culture of the Gaelic world stretching across the Irish Sea. The othering of these regions, therefore, not only reflected real political and geographic conditions, but also served ideological purposes well before the Highland/Lowland divide of the late fourteenth century. In both instances, however, the backwardness, ruthlessness, and overall barbarity ascribed to specific regional identities within Scotland paralleled similar qualities that those outside the Scottish kingdom applied to all inhabitants of Scotland.

*The Birth of the Kingdom: Centralizing and Resisting, c. 1100-1300*

The historiographic treatment of medieval Scottish ethnicity is typically bookended by periods of noticeably distinct ethnic identities—Gaelic and Norman in the eleventh century, and Highland and Lowland in the late fourteenth century—but the period in between, the period under study here, is often depicted as an age of ethnic unity and characterized by a growing sense of ‘Scottishness.’ Historiographically, this ‘Birth of the Kingdom’ narrative describes gradual political unification, especially as it intensified under Alexander II and Alexander III, and emphasizes how the Scottish crown came into its own under the pressures of the Scottish Wars of Independence. Historians have engaged both explicitly and implicitly with the ‘Birth of the Kingdom’ narrative. Works including A. A. M. Duncan’s *Scotland: The Making of the Kingdom*, Bruce Webster’s *Medieval Scotland: The Making of an Identity*, and Richard Oram’s *David I: The King Who Made Scotland*, employ this concept as a central organizational and methodological feature of their work. Others, such as G. W. S. Barrow, Dauvit Broun, E. J. Cowan, and Michael Brown, have participated in the same discourse, although it features less

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66 These elements are discussed in greater depth in chapters 4 and 5.
prominently in their work. This narrative perspective tends to privilege unity and cohesion through a focus on political structures and Scottish identity while minimizing the role of resistance and divergence.

Duncan and Barrow, in particular, have had an undeniable impact on more recent scholarship. Duncan’s *Scotland: The Making of the Kingdom* (1975) strongly established the ‘Birth of the Kingdom’ narrative and pushed the idea of Scottish unification earlier into the Middle Ages. In the introduction, he emphatically states: “the theme of this book is the making of the kingdom of Scotland. The words were chosen advisedly for the kingdom did not ‘emerge’ but was made by man.”68 This attitude permeates the work, which primarily considers the institutional and political history of Scotland from prehistoric times to the late thirteenth century. Duncan’s coverage is vast and detailed, but ultimately he determines that it was during the thirteenth century that the kings of Scotland created a harmonious political atmosphere, laying the foundations for the ideas of the ‘community of the realm’ developed in the last decades of the thirteenth century, and who, together with the nobles, “made a kingdom.”69 Oram’s *David I: The King Who Made Scotland* (2004), takes up the model of Duncan’s ‘made’ Scotland, although the success of Oram’s project has been challenged.70 Developed as a compelling biography within a series, rather than a full assessment of David’s reign, Oram’s placement of David as the maker of Scotland is only ever implicitly argued.71 Nevertheless, he clearly sets David at the centre of the creation of Scotland, as a man who was “a revolutionary, politically, socially and culturally, bent on the transformation of his inheritance into a modern, European-style monarchy.”72

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69 Ibid., 614–5.
71 Oram, *David I*, 9.
72 Ibid., 165.
Barrow’s treatment is wide-ranging, but his emphasis on institutional history, and particularly the structures of the Scottish kingdom, helped to shape his view of Scotland’s genesis. In *Robert the Bruce and the Community of the Realm of Scotland* (revised 1988), Barrow argues that the concept of a Scottish nation was beginning to be articulated in the later decades of the thirteenth century. In the minds of contemporaries, it could not be distinguished from the kingship and the kingdom of Scotland: Scots were neither more nor less than the men and women owing allegiance to the *rex Scottorum*, who in turn was the person to whom the secular governance of the Scots had been solemnly entrusted.

This perspective focuses the idea of Scotland on the coalescence of Scottish kingship, an action certainly begun by David I but only completed in the reign of Alexander III. Barrow forwarded what would come to be known as the ‘Barrovian’ thesis or approach; this conflict-versus-continuity debate consistently reflects on the question of the degree of change and what elements remained. Of David I, for instance, Barrow suggests that “we are in no danger of underestimating what was new in the person, the policies or the realm of David son of Saint Margaret and the protégé of Henry Beauclerk. What will always remain harder to assess are the scope and strength of what was old, the degree of continuity guaranteed by David son of Malcolm.” In maintaining an eye to continuity, Barrow privileges unity over disunity in the story of Scotland, consequently under-representing the degree of challenge to royal authority.

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74 Barrow, *Robert Bruce and the Community of the Realm of Scotland*, 1988, xi.
76 Barrow, *David I of Scotland*, 18.
Broun and Brown have forwarded similar arguments, emphasizing the centrality of the later twelfth and thirteenth centuries to the creation of Scottish identity and unity.\textsuperscript{77} Broun is careful to note, however, that while this is an important moment in the creation of what most closely resembles modern Scotland, it does not negate the importance of the “variety of other Scotlands” through which Scotland and Scottishness have been understood.\textsuperscript{78} This approach separates Broun from the more traditional discourse, by offering multiple divergent timelines with multiple ‘endpoints,’ visible in part as a result of his focus on the geographical boundaries of the Scottish kingdom. Through his recognition that the kingdom of the Scots did not always correspond with the area known as Scotia, and vice versa, Broun’s ‘Scotlands’ have room to exist in different ways at different times.\textsuperscript{79} Cowan, on the other hand, takes a more narrowly restricted view, arguing that the thirty-year period between 1290 and 1320 saw an articulation of a new sense of Scottish identity, the basis of which was expressed through textual claims to Scottish independence.\textsuperscript{80} For Cowan, this newly articulated Scottishness appears primarily in a variety of diplomatic exchanges, including the terms of the Treaty of Birgham and episcopal correspondence between Scotland and both England and the papacy—the most famous of which is the Declaration of Arbroath. The Scottish identity Cowan identifies was highly strategic and heavily rhetorical, designed to sway support to the Scottish plea, and in its rhetoric, this Scottishness purposely masks underlying diversity. This new identity, however, continued to be


\textsuperscript{78} Broun, Finlay, and Lynch, \textit{Image and Identity}, 1.

\textsuperscript{79} Broun, “Defining Scotland and the Scots Before the Wars of Independence,” 11.

\textsuperscript{80} Cowan, “Identity, Freedom and the Declaration of Arbroath,” 38.
expressed, throughout the fourteenth and into the fifteenth century, in chronicle and fictional sources.\textsuperscript{81}

Webster similarly sought to follow the development of the “sense of Scottish identity” through the Middle Ages, in \textit{Medieval Scotland: The Making of an Identity}.\textsuperscript{82} This work returns to a style of scholarship explicitly focused on pinpointing the creation of ‘Scottishness,’ a feature he argues appeared most strongly in the two hundred years following the death of Alexander II, largely as a result of decades of recurrent warfare. Webster identifies a flourishing of ‘Scottishness’ between roughly 1370 and 1420 that was importantly grounded in an ancient and mythical past, as well as the more recent histories of the Wars of Independence.\textsuperscript{83} Also crucial in this, according to Webster, was the lessening of the importance of ethnic and linguistic identities through the later Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{84} Ultimately, Webster argues, Scottishness developed in the face of imperialistic outside powers resulting in the minimization of internal heterogeneity.\textsuperscript{85}

All of these works have in common an attention to unity and cohesion and a downplaying of divergence. Through their focus on the growth of centralized power with an increasingly strong Scottish king, they diminish the significance of the resistance to that authority. This top-down approach considers the processes of pacification and integration without accounting for its purpose in the first place or critically reflecting on the meaning of resistance. This is partly the result of the subject: political and institutional histories typically privilege stability. However, it may also be attributed to the nature of the source material, predominantly royal charters and acts, private charters, and Latin chronicles. Another result of this narrative is a framing of ethnic identity in one of two ways: either as part of a conflict-versus-continuity consideration, in which

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Cowan, “Identity, Freedom and the Declaration of Arbroath.”
\item Webster, \textit{Medieval Scotland}, 85.
\item Ibid., 98–9.
\item Ibid., 8.
\item Ibid., 136.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
‘native’ faces ‘newcomer’ or, with increasing prominence in the post-Treaty of Falaise period (after 1174), as English versus Scottish.

Some have challenged the narrative presented through a focus on growth and pacification during this period. R. Andrew McDonald, for instance, argues that conflict and violent suppression of resistance were central to this period, a period he describes as “less peaceful, stable and prosperous, and the dynasty that defended from Malcolm III and Margaret rather less secure, than conventional wisdom has dictated for the last half-century or so.”

Similarly, Wilson McLeod, approaching the subject from literary and linguistic perspectives, has argued that this narrative has resulted in incomplete understanding of the processes of language and cultural shift, disguising what was “more gradual and diffuse” than previously believed.

While McDonald and McLeod highlight processes that result in the same ultimate characteristics as the ‘Birth of the Kingdom’ narrative, their emphasis on the processes of, and the resistance to, centralization and ethnic conformity has important implications for understanding the varieties of ethnic identities during the twelfth to fifteenth centuries. It is only in the face of real opposition that medieval Scottish monarchs were able to display the qualities that historians have since read as effective kingship. Narratives that centre on the successes of the Scottish crown rather than the very real resistance to their policies of centralization, by their very nature obscure the varieties of experience in preference of the seeming uniformity of domination.

Studies that have examined the significance of rebellion and conflict in the face of unifying central authority, what could be termed a ‘resistance narrative,’ have so far unequally represented the Scottish kingdom with scholars more heavily focused on particular regions. For

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86 McDonald, Outlaws of Medieval Scotland, ix.
the twelfth century, the political strength of regionality is clearer and this is apparent in the scholarship. Galloway was a separate kingdom until the abdication of Fergus in 1160, and throughout much of the twelfth century Scotia remained distinct from Moray, Cumbria, and Lothian.88 The western isles remained outside Scottish political control until 1266, with the Lordship of the Isles operating largely outside Scottish control until the end of the fifteenth century. The strength of the Gallovidian and Hebridean dynasties, in particular, has resulted in a greater scholarly focus on these regions, largely a consequence of their ‘international’ prominence and more extensive source material. The Gallovidian rebellions against King William “the Lion” through the 1170s and the animosity between its leaders, the sons of Fergus of Galloway, Uhtred and Gilla Brigte, for instance, attracted the attention of English chroniclers including Roger of Howden and William of Newburgh, who appear to revel in the horrific violence.89 This has offered historians like McDonald better access to the stories of those who opposed unifying central authority.

Some ‘resistance’ perspective studies have made use of the idea of an “anti-feudal faction,” a concept first developed by Cowan.90 Cowan identified the anti-feudal faction as Angus of Moray (d. 1130), Somerled of Argyll (d. 1164), Harald Madaddsson (d. 1206), and the MacWilliams, whose line of descent dramatically ended in 1230 with the public execution of an infant girl.91 McDonald has further added Fergus of Galloway to this list.92 These men opposed the growing strength of the Scottish crown as part of “the forces of reaction,” a response depicted

89 McDonald, *Outlaws of Medieval Scotland*, 33–35.
91 Ibid.
by Cowan as inherently conservative.\textsuperscript{93} It may, however, be more accurate to view these men less as reactionary or conservative and instead as defenders of hitherto autonomous authorities. Each of these men ruthlessly defended his claims against all sources of competing authority, feudally motivated or otherwise. Harald Madaddsson, for instance, maintained a delicate balance in Orkney despite challenges from competitors based in Orkney, as well as both the Scottish mainland and Norway. According to \textit{Orkneyinga Saga}, this was achieved through a variety of strategies including assassination, military campaigns, marriages, and other alliances.\textsuperscript{94} The geographically marginal position of the earldom of Orkney, removed from the political centres of both the Scottish and Norwegian kingdoms, put it at the heart of two competing, expansionist crowns. While the idea of an anti-feudal faction accurately represents the actions of ‘native’ leaders, it perhaps does not fully convey their motivations.

Through the focus on both the triumphant and the resistance to them—as this project does—the story of both change. Such a perspective is necessary for understanding the ethnic identities present in the medieval Scottish kingdom. The ascendancy of ‘Scottishness’—if indeed there was one—was by no means preordained or uncomplicated, nor were its standard bearers necessarily unconflicted. Nevertheless, this changing narrative unequally influences centre and periphery. The histories of the regions and populations further afield from the political centre of the Scottish kingdom have the most to gain from a rebalanced discourse.

\textbf{Ethnic Identities during the Wars of Independence: A False Homogeneity}

From the perspective of ethnic identities, histories of the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries have tended to neglect the ethnic diversity present in favour of other narratives that privilege ideas of

\textsuperscript{93} Cowan, “The Historical MacBeth,” 131.
political growth and frame conflict in terms of civil war regarding overlordship. In particular, histories of what might be called the ‘long’ fourteenth century—the period encompassing the Wars of Independence, from 1296 to 1353—traditionally emphasize politics and warfare. This privileges unity, or at least bi-polarity, in terms of cultural values in this period. This historiographical lens obfuscates the variety of identities and experiences of later medieval Scotland by prioritizing institutional, political, and military histories that focus on the creation and independence of the Scottish kingdom. This has resulted in the portrayal of a false ethnic and cultural homogeneity in the Scottish kingdom and over-exaggerated a change from the ethnic division characteristic of the periods before and after the Wars of Independence. Claims to ethnic identities during this period, especially by political elites, were highly strategic and designed to elicit sympathy and favourable behaviours. That ethnicity was employed strategically, is not, however, an indication that it lacked personal meaning or significance. In the recognition of a developing sense of a unified Scottish identity and the decay of other ethnicities specifically as political realities, it is often assumed that alternative ethnic identities disappeared altogether. It is likely, however, that ideas of ethnicity are more tenacious. Even if they are subsumed beneath a primary allegiance to a Scottish identity, this does not presuppose the annihilation of alternative ethnicities. These alternative identities remained both in plain sight and in more subtle interactions throughout the Scottish kingdom and continued to affect socially situated constructs like gender.

In addition to biological descent, historians have traditionally turned to other practices in order to determine ethnic allegiances. Naming practices, patronage beneficiaries, and the composition of one’s immediate social circle have all been used as indicative of ethnic
allegiances and status within ethnic groups. In Scottish history, two elements in particular are often seen to demonstrate Anglo-Norman ethnic allegiances among the elite: first, the participation in chivalric culture, including but not limited to becoming a knight, endorsing the values of chivalry, participation in tournaments, literary styles, and naming practices connected with French romance, and second, ecclesiastical patronage, particularly of orders with Continental mother houses and ties. These aspects are often taken as indications of psychologically meaningful cultural associations. Other aspects, however, are typically viewed as political expediencies rather than significant indications of ethnic affiliation. The ethnic implication of marital ties, for instance, is—at best—uncertain for modern historians and the patrilineal inheritance of ethnic identity assumed. The implications of this can be seen in the case of one of the most prominent men of the fourteenth century, the man who became Robert I.

Around 1272, Robert Bruce V, sixth lord of Annandale, married the widow of Adam Kilconquhar, Marjory (or Marjorie), the powerful heiress of Carrick; their son, Robert Bruce VI, seventh lord of Annandale, would be crowned Robert I of Scotland in 1306. Of the ethnic implications of this marriage, Barrow writes,

this was indeed a marriage of Celtic with Anglo-Norman Scotland, though hardly in the protagonists themselves, since Marjorie was descended from Henry I, her husband from Malcolm Canmore. But Annandale was settled by people of English or Anglo-Scandinavian speech, and thoroughly feudalized. Carrick was historically an integral part of Galloway, and though the earls had achieved some feudalization, the society of Carrick remained emphatically Celtic.


96 Barrow, Robert Bruce and the Community of the Realm of Scotland, 1988, 25.
This short passage, and the marriage it describes, offers a wealth of ethnic information and
djudgement. Barrow argues that neither Carrick nor Bruce is, himself or herself, representative of
a Celtic or Anglo-Norman ethnic background as a consequence of biological lineage (see Figure
1 for Robert I’s pedigree chart). In Bruce’s case, this is the result of his four-times-great-
grandfather Malcolm III (d. 1093). Marjory’s disqualification is somewhat closer and is based on
the supposition that her three-times great-grandfather, Fergus of Galloway, married an
illegitimate daughter of the English king, Henry I. This, in Barrow’s eyes, at least partly
counteracts the cultural contexts in which Carrick and Bruce, in addition to several generations
of their ancestors, were raised. This ‘one drop’ approach to ethnic identity, whereby a single
distant ancestor might completely alter ethnicity, almost totally ignores how ethnic identity was
constructed and represented by intervening generations.

Onomastic evidence allows for further, though cautious, consideration of ethnic
identities.97 While naming practices are not particularly accurate indications of ethnic origin, in
the premodern world they do offer a perspective on ethnic allegiances. In other words, the use of
a traditionally Gaelic Hebridean name does not guarantee Hebridean origin but it does suggest
something about how the family wished to be viewed. In Bruce’s case, following a matrilineal
path introduces Welsh, Flemish, Danish, and Anglo-Norse influences, in addition to the strong
Norman element. David, Henry, and William appear in multiple generations along both the
maternal and paternal lines of Bruce’s mother, as do Maud and Margaret. Nearly all of the Brus
lords of Annandale gave northern French names to their children; in addition to Robert, names
like William, Bernard, and Richard were frequent among sons. The historical record is less clear

97 Matthew Hammond’s recent work has been at the forefront of this type of study. He advocates that “the
use of personal names as an accurate guide to ethnic, ‘national’, of linguistic identity has to be treated with kid
gloves” (Hammond, “Domination and Conquest? The Scottish Experience in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries,”
31.)
on the names of Brus daughters, though Robert Brus (d. c. 1194), second lord of Annandale, had one daughter named Agatha.\footnote{\textit{Brus, Robert (II) de, lord of Annandale (d. 1194?)},” A. A. M. Duncan in Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, eee ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2008, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3749 (accessed February 19, 2015). Agatha is not a common name in medieval Scotland, PoMS records only two women of that name (PoMS, no. 9875 (http://db.poms.ac.uk/record/person/9875/; accessed 03 February 2016) and PoMS, no. 1010 (http://db.poms.ac.uk/record/person/1010/; accessed 03 February 2016). The highest profile Agatha connected to medieval Scotland is likely the possibly Hungarian mother of Saint Margaret of Scotland (d. 1093), Malcolm III’s wife. Agatha Brus was likely born after Margaret’s death and it is unclear whether there is any connection between her name and that of Margaret’s mother or other Continental implications.} Robert Bruce V’s marriage to Marjory produced a second son, Neil, possibly named for Marjory’s Gaelic father, Niall of Carrick.\footnote{For Marjory’s father, ‘Niall’ is typically preferred by modern historians though charters mostly use Nigellus (\textit{RRS}, iv no. 97; \textit{RMS}, i no. 509; \textit{RMS}, ii no. 3170). For Marjory and Robert’s son, Robert I’s brother, modern historians typically use Neil, though occasionally Nigellus or Nial (cf. PoMS, no. 20420 (http://db.poms.ac.uk/record/person/20420/; accessed 20 February 2015). The younger Bruce brother does not appear in many documentary records, but is recorded by Bain as Nigell (\textit{CDS}, v, no. 475) and Neil (\textit{CD5}, v, no. 492a). In Barbour’s \textit{The Bruce}, he is referred to exclusively as Neil, though with various spelling (Nele: II.516, III.337; Neile: IV.61; Neill: \textit{Bruce}, IV.185).} Along the matrilineal line, following Isabel of Huntingdon, Bruce’s ancestors, more closely tied to the royal houses of both Scotland and England than Marjory’s, show the naming traditions of both royal courts as well as the northern French elite. The naming practices used by Bruce’s ancestors, back to David I, indicate strong participation in northern French and Anglo-Norman cultural spheres.

Marjory’s ancestry is more poorly documented than her husband’s and contains several instances of conjecture. The only relationship that can be determined with any real degree of accuracy is that of her father, Niall, earl of Carrick. A 1508 inspection of James IV confirms a charter made sometime in the 1250s by Niall and his countess, whose name is given as Isobelle, but it is uncertain if she was Marjory’s mother.\footnote{\textit{RMS}, ii, no. 3170.} Even Niall’s parentage is in question. In the first three editions of \textit{Robert the Bruce and the Community of the Realm}, Barrow made a direct connection between Niall, as second earl of Carrick, and Duncan, as first earl of Carrick.\footnote{Barrow, \textit{Robert Bruce and the Community of the Realm of Scotland}, 1988, 25–6.} However, only one record exists claiming Duncan, earl of Carrick, as Niall’s father. The North
Berwick Cartulary records the establishment of the church of St Cuthbert in Carrick by

“Nicholaus filius Dunecani de Carric.”

This is the only instance where Nicholas is used instead of Nigellus in charters purported to be issued by Niall. This has led some to hypothesize the existence of an intervening generation between Niall and Duncan, and suggest that Niall was actually the son of Nicholas and therefore the grandson of Duncan. Nicholas is believed to have married the daughter of the Irish Niall Ruadh Ó Néill (d. c. 1230), briefly king of Cenél Eoghain, an addition adopted by Barrow for the fourth edition of Robert the Bruce and the Community of the Realm. The introduction of a missing generation between Duncan and Niall, and a son that predeceased Duncan named Nicholas, or its Gaelic form Cailean, helps to account for the introduction of the name Niall, unusual at this date in any Scottish context.

The connection from Duncan to his father, Gilla Brigte, leader of the twelfth-century rebellions against King William, to Fergus of Galloway, his grandfather, is clearly attested to along the patrilineal line; the matrilineal connections, however, are virtually unknown. Roger of Howden recounts that in the year 1200, Duncan married Evelina (or Avelina), the daughter of Alan fitz Walter, lord of Renfrew and, from 1177, High Steward of Scotland, without royal permission, raising King William’s ire. Gilla Brigte’s wife is unknown, though suppositions connect her with Duncan, earl of Fife. Fergus’s wife—possibly wives—is also unknown except for the speculated connection with Henry I of England. It has been proposed, and is generally accepted, that Fergus’s sons, Uhtred and Gilla Brigte, did not have the same mothers

102 N.B. Chrs. no. 15.
104 Barrow, Robert Bruce and the Community of the Realm of Scotland, 2005, 34. Figure 1, above, reflects the incorporation of this speculative generation.
105 For patrilineal see Melr. Lib. nos. 29, 30, 31, 32, 34; RRS i no. 230; RRS iii nos. 46, 47.
and that birth sequence and legitimacy were at the root of their conflict with one another; it remains uncertain, however, which brother might claim Henry I as a relative.\textsuperscript{108} While Barrow obviously favours Gilla Brigte, thus connecting Marjory to Norman England, Oram argues that the level of support accorded to Gilla Brigte in the lands to which his brother succeeded, is best explained by local “inheritance and kin connections.”\textsuperscript{109} It is possible that Barrow was overly charmed by the parallel offered through Gilla Brigte’s descendant, Marjory, married to the Bruce competitor in the Great Cause, and Uhtred’s descendant, Dervorguilla, wife of John Balliol.\textsuperscript{110}

The names preferred by Marjory’s ancestors demonstrate their Gaelic roots and their lack of interest in acknowledging Europeanization. The naming practices along Gilla Brigte’s line reflect their prioritization of local custom and the strength of their allegiances in Ireland and with Scotland’s native mormaer dynasties.\textsuperscript{111} In each generation there is evidence of non-feudal, though not necessarily anti-feudal, practices. Examples include Fergus’s possible irregular marriage, the division of his patrimony among his sons, and Niall’s 1276 division of his patrimony, to be inherited by his daughter should he die without sons, and his personal leadership (\textit{cenn cenail}) of the kin of Kennedy, settled on Roland, presumed to be his nephew.\textsuperscript{112} The distinction of non-feudal rather than anti-feudal is necessary here. While the elite of Galloway and Carrick certainly engaged in anti-feudal behaviours as well—continually seeking to expand or at least maintain their own authority at the cost of their supposed feudal superiors—

\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., 57–61.
\textsuperscript{110} Barrow, \textit{Robert Bruce and the Community of the Realm of Scotland}, 1988, 26.
\textsuperscript{111} Scotland’s traditional mormaerdoms date to before the twelfth century and are often translated in modern sources as earldoms since the mormaer was second only to the king. Mormaerdoms included Angus, Atholl, Buchan, Caithness, Carrick, Dunbar, Fife, Lennox, Mar, Menteith, Moray, Ross and Strathearn. Dauvit Broun, “Mormaers,” \textit{Oxford Companion to British History} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), www.oxfordreference.com/10.1093/acref/9780199567638.001.0001/acref-9780199567638-e-2942.
\textsuperscript{112} \textit{RRS}, iv, no. 97; \textit{RMS}, i, no. 509.
the characteristics discussed above did not put them into direct conflict with ‘feudal’ Scotland, represented by the heavily Anglo-Norman-populated regions.

When Barrow wrote that the union of Robert Bruce and Marjory of Carrick represented “a marriage of Celtic with Anglo-Norman Scotland, though hardly in the protagonists themselves,” he was only partially correct. The ethnic heritage of both parties was complex and to refer to either as solely ‘Celtic’ or ‘Anglo-Norman’ is misleading. So, too, is the dismissal of the ethnic backgrounds and identity of the protagonists, and of the significance of these elements based on a ‘dilution’ introduced by an ancestor. Bruce and Carrick both inherited multi-ethnic identities that shaped their orientations to the world, and their son, the future Robert I, drew on all these elements. This is not the place for a full account of Robert I’s rise to power, but a brief examination of his actions, with an eye toward ethnic identities, both in the years leading up to his enthronement and the years following it, demonstrates the complexity of his own ethnic attachments. To regard these as only political strategies is to neglect the importance of Bruce’s dynastic connections to multiple ethnic identities.

While tradition ascribes Robert I’s birth to the Carrick castle of Turnberry, a later English source claims that he was, in fact, born in Essex;¹¹³ a suggestion Michael Penman argues “should not really surprise us.”¹¹⁴ The Bruce family held lands in both England and in Scotland for most of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, which contributed to their cultural familiarity with English and Scottish contexts. From the late 1230s, the Bruce family further held lands in Writtle, Hadfield, and Midlands as a result of Robert IV’s marriage to Isabel of Huntingdon (c. 1219),

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and their cross-border outlook and holdings continued throughout the thirteenth century. Ultimately, whether or not Robert I was born in Carrick or Essex is inconsequential. The significance of the Bruces’ English holdings, in addition to their Scottish lands, necessitated a familiarity and comfort with the Anglo-Norman world, in terms of language, literature, politics, and culture.

There is some evidence to suggest that the Bruces, after their acquisition of Carrick, began to participate in Gaelic fosterage networks both within the Scottish kingdom and across the North Channel, an opportunity that exposed the young Bruces to the culture and practices of the Irish Sea world. The earls of Carrick had both political and kinship ties throughout western Scotland and Ireland and any number of elite families, of both ‘native’ and ‘incomer’ status, may have been appropriate for fosterage. Unfortunately, the fictive nature of these kinships means that there is little documentary evidence from which to determine with whom the boys may have fostered. According to Barbour, Robert was accompanied by his foster brother as one of his companions during his flight from John of Argyll; however, he remains nameless to history. Penman has recently speculated that Bruce’s foster brother travelled with Bruce from his exile to return to Carrick. At least one of Bruce’s brothers is believed to have fostered in Ireland with Domhnall mac Brian Ó Néill (d. 1325), king of Tír Eoghain and grandson of Niall Ruadh Ó

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115 Ibid., 14. The Bruce family’s claim to the Scottish throne was also acquired through this marriage, as Isabel was the great granddaughter of David I.

116 Ibid. The English connection was such that King Robert’s ancestors, though close companions and counsellors of Scotland’s David I, in fact, repeatedly chose to side with the English crown when conflict arose between their feudal lords, as it did in 1138, for example. William de Brus (d. c. 1212), whose son would marry Isabel of Huntingdon, was the first Brus lord to support the Scottish crown in conflict with the English. See Ruth Margaret Blakely, The Brus Family in England and Scotland, 1100-1295 (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2005), 21ff.

117 The Bruce, VI.779-82, 651, VII.226-229, 294-5.

118 Penman, Robert the Bruce, 19.
Néill, second cousin once removed to the Bruce brothers.119 These important connections with the Gaelic world, established by previous generations and maintained by the Bruce brothers, demonstrate that their later involvement in Irish affairs was more than simply political.

In 1306-7, Robert addressed a letter to the kings of Ireland, asking for their support in his efforts to free Scotland from English interference.120 He did so on the grounds that both the Irish and the Scottish “ab uno processimus germine nacionis.”121 The literal translation, that they “come from the seed of one nation,” does not fully convey the sense of mutual descent that medieval authors typically intended.122 More than a connection to a political realm or shared cultural attributes, Bruce’s claim articulates an idea of shared ethnic descent. Seán Duffy has proposed that the envoys sent to Ireland were none other than Robert’s brothers, Thomas and Alexander, who, if not fluent Gaelic speakers—and they may have been—would at least have been required to convey convincingly the sense of Gaelic brotherhood indicated in Robert’s letter.123 Sometime between May and December of 1316, Edward Bruce made similar overtures to the Welsh, led by Gruffydd Llwyd.124 Like Robert’s appeal to the Irish, Edward made reference to the injustices suffered at the hands of English overlords, but he too framed his rationale in light of ethnic unity: the Scots and the Welsh came from one original kinship and nation.125 As with the Declaration of Arbroath, written later, in highlighting one ethnic

120 RRS, v, no. 654. Traditionally this is dated c. 1313 x 1315 but see Duffy, “The Bruce Brothers and the Irish Sea World,” 52.
121 RRS, v, no. 654.
125 The Latin transcription is available at Ibid., 478.
attachment, the author suppresses others, without necessarily refuting them. The authors of the Declaration of Arbroath emphasized the Scythian origins of the Scottish people, setting them apart from the Britons and the Picts, the Norwegians, Danes, and English, and subsumed under a single ethnic category with Mediterranean roots.\textsuperscript{126} Robert’s Irish appeal, on the other hand, cites shared language and customs between the Scottish and Irish kingdoms, and Edward’s Welsh overtures emphasize common origins. While all three claims functioned as political rhetoric, they also reflected real contemporary perceptions of the past and histories of the inhabitants of the Scottish kingdom.

Robert I’s actions were motivated by political concerns and strategies; however, these choices were also supported by the plural ethnicity he inherited and chose—deliberately—to embrace. In his portrayal of himself and the Scottish kingdom, Robert I manipulated ethnic identity in a way that underlines its situational and strategic nature. That he did so successfully is a result of the multiple ethnic inheritances still present in the fourteenth-century kingdom. The new sense of ‘Scottishness’ identified by scholars is no more and no less a rhetorical device than other claims to ethnic identity and its presence is not indicative of a lessening of other ethnic identities.

**Conclusions**

Ethnicity is a multifaceted concept. As a process of self-identification, ethnic identity comes from within an individual as part of a larger application to the historical and political context claimed by a specific group. For many people, in both the past and the present, an ethnic identity is not an exclusive concept, but one with the flexibility and breadth to encompass a sometimes-

surprising variety. Ethnicity is not, however, solely self-determined. It is also a process applied by others, with or without the knowledge or consent of the individual or group in question. It is certainly possible for self-identification and external labelling to contradict each other. In its relational capacity, the taking up of one ethnic identity automatically results in the acknowledgment of at least one other, to which in that specific context, the individual does not belong. As a result, ethnicity frequently results in a perceived duality, not necessarily reflective of real conditions: as ‘us’ and ‘them.’

Ethnic identities, both today and in the past, are constructed, historical, political, situational, and strategic. Each of these elements must be kept in mind when seeking to understand the power of ethnic attachment. Rather than implicit natural categories, ethnic identities, like gender identities, are culturally and socially built based on perceived similarities and differences. In some cases, those qualities considered to be distinctive and constitutive have little contemporary substance, but are, instead, based on historical or even mythological pasts. Identification with an ethnic group, whether internally or externally determined, may not be fully separated from the political context, past, or rights of the group. Lastly, ethnicity is both situational and strategic. As a result of the power of ethnicity, claims to ethnic identities are never neutral, but are charged with real meaning. This meaning is not fixed or static, rather, it is contextual and relational, and based on differences in power or status. Consequently, ethnic claims have strategic value on both individual and social levels.

Medieval sources provide insight into a variety of ways ethnicity existed in the past. Claims to shared history and ancestry, like those made by the authors of the Declaration of Arbroath or Robert Bruce, in his plea for Irish and Welsh assistance, sought to play upon the emotions of their intended audience in order to elicit desirable responses. The strategic
application of ethnicity demonstrated in those instances, however, does not lessen its importance. In fact, the ability to draw on ethnic identities as motivation for practical support, even if only as part of a larger campaign, shows the power of the concept. Some sources contain explicit self-determined statements of ethnic attachment and, while this is important and valuable, it offers only part of the picture, excluding external labels that may support or contradict the claim. In most of our sources, ethnicity is expressed implicitly through a variety of actions and historians may only carefully tease out its meaning. A further layer of ambiguity is added with the application of modern ethnic categories, some but not all of which had medieval equivalents; consider for instance, English, Scot, and Norman, all of which were used in the Middle Ages, although not in exactly the same sense as today, versus Anglo-Norman, Normanized Scot, and so on.

The spectre of ethnic identity has long had a presence in Scottish history. From nineteenth-century racialist paradigms to the questions of cultural accommodation, and the change or continuity discourses prevalent in the first decades of the twenty-first century, ethnicity has been a way of understanding Scotland’s past. However, there has been a tendency to view ethnic attachment as something fixed within individuals that changes only on a social level and is complex only in key individuals, as in, for example, David I. For ethnicity to be a truly useful category of analysis for Scotland in the Middle Ages, historians must be better attuned to the multiplicity of ethnic identities present in the medieval kingdom and the fluidity of these categories. The language used thus far by historians only partly represents this and too often categorizes Scottish experiences as dualities: Gaelic and Norman; native and newcomer; indigenous and migrant, and so on. Gaelic, native, and indigenous are not synonymous and each of these terms is loaded with significance. Even more neutral terms like the recently proposed
‘domestic,’ are not altogether satisfactory, lacking specificity and the opportunity for variety within the category.\textsuperscript{127} Susan Reynolds’ words of caution about the term Anglo-Saxon are a useful reminder in this regard: “we ought to think hard about what we mean, and what others may think we mean, by the name that we have chosen to use.”\textsuperscript{128} To consider carefully the terms we use and to employ them deliberately and consistently is perhaps the best historians can do.

For historians of gender, many aspects of ethnic identity are comfortingly familiar. Like gender identity, ethnicity is socially constructed and culturally situated. It involves elements of both self-identification and external application, and carries with it social and political implications. To lay claim to an ethnic identity, or a gendered identity, is not a neutral act. It is often strategic and situational; claims made in a given context may vary from the claims made in a different one. While it may be tempting to try to identify a single crucial identity claim and to dismiss others as inconsequential, calculated, or propagandistic, and therefore not ‘real,’ this is a dangerous oversimplification.

Situational, overlapping, and concentric identities occurred in both ethnic and gendered contexts in medieval Scotland with consequences for the interactions between men and how they represented themselves. While this project is primarily an exploration of masculine identities, the implications of ethnic identities in this must not be overlooked. Masculinity, its meaning, and its portrayal, were constructed within social contexts dependant, at least partly, upon ethnic categories. In the medieval Scottish kingdom, these categories were rarely clear and never uncomplicated.

\textsuperscript{127} Hammond, “Domination and Conquest? The Scottish Experience in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries,” 80.
\textsuperscript{128} Reynolds, “What Do We Mean by ‘Anglo-Saxon’ and ‘Anglo-Saxons’?,” 414.
CHAPTER THREE: VISUAL VOCABULARIES: SEAL ICONOGRAPHY IN MEDIEVAL SCOTLAND

It is only recently that seals have become legitimate sources for the study of the Middle Ages. The long popular and antiquarian interest in these sources, dating as far back as the sixteenth century, may be one reason scholarly works have tended to neglect seals as important sources and relegated them to the realms of ephemera and curiosities.¹ Popular interest has similarly affected other areas of Scottish history. The wider interest in Scottish clans and other aspects of ‘tartanry,’ for example, resulted in the late development of academic treatments of family history in Scotland.

The antiquarian interest in seals, however, means that while many seals have been lost, destroyed, or separated from their original documents, extensive catalogues devoted to recording their appearance survive, most dating from the second half of the nineteenth century. These catalogues are of enormous benefit to historians, although they are not without limitations. The most extensive collection of British seals appears in Walter de Gray Birch’s six-volume *Catalogue of Seals in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum*, published between 1897 and 1900.² Containing some 23,000 entries, 2,500 of which are Scottish, Birch’s catalogue excludes all non-armorial personal seals. This exclusion is a shortcoming also found in works examining seals in Scotland, including Birch’s *History of Scottish Seals*. While not overly impinging on studies that focus on the nobility, the exclusion of non-armorial seals from catalogues limits scholarly access to the middling- and lower-class practices of sealing. Despite these limitations, the examination of seals through catalogues, casts, matrices, and original

² Ibid., 25.
impressions offers a largely unexplored body of evidence. In the words of one medievalist, seals present “a virtually untapped source of historical information.”3 As yet, scholars have not fully exploited medieval seals as sources containing important information about medieval art, law, and even identity. It is this last category that is the subject of study here.

Methodologically, seal analysis is a complicated matter. Seal survival is limited and privileges those who sealed frequently and those who donated to institutions like the church, in whose best interest it was to maintain careful records. Seals often survive detached from their original documents, divorcing them from the context in which they were issued and making confident identification between seal owner and seal impression difficult. Even those instances in which seals survive in good condition and attached to original documents may provide ambiguous evidence. Seal matrices might be lost, stolen, their use compelled, or coerced and rarely does the historical record offer opportunity to reflect this.4 Recent calls for scholars to take up analysis of seals from a semiotic approach, as signs and symbols, and to consider their modes and areas of signification aim to restore seals “to their historicity, as agents within the culture that produced and used them.”5 Seal catalogues, such as J. H. Stevenson and Marguerite Wood’s *Scottish Heraldic Seals*, are not the ideal foundation from which to undertake such analysis. Although a common approach, the use of seal casts and catalogues—as is the case here—further removes seal impressions from their original purpose and undermines their fundamental reiterative operation.6 The constraints of this project, however, necessitated such a concession.7

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4 See, below, 106-8.
7 Through the most of this thesis I have relied on the catalogue produced by J. H. Stevenson and Marguerite Wood’s for records of Scottish seals, considering them corpus: potentially incomplete, but representative of the wide variety of seals used in the Scottish kingdom. This has allowed me to consider a much larger and more complete
This chapter explores the use of seals for the study of masculine identity in medieval Scotland. Through the visual vocabulary they employ, in combination with textual legends, seals contain valuable indications of self-determined identities as well as portrayals of masculine values and authority. More simply, seals indicate how their holders conceived of themselves and how they wished others to perceive them. Depictions of mounted knights and the use of other images on seals must be understood as part of a constructed identity, specifically chosen for meaning and representation. Consideration of a wider collection of Scottish seals shows some of the limitations of generalizations and challenges previously established claims regarding sealing practices. The study of these seals provides insight into the mentality of medieval Scottish elites and showcases larger cultural trends. For this to be meaningful, however, these seals must be seen as domestic developments, rather than simply the adoption of foreign practices.

A Brief Historiography

The practice of impressing symbols into wax or other mouldable materials far pre-dates the Middle Ages, with the earliest examples dating to 3000 BCE. Sealing throughout this period has served broadly similar purposes, marking ownership and authenticity, and representing authority and identity, but this is not to suggest that seals have held the same degree of cultural significance. From a traditional scholarly perspective, the primary purpose of seals was as a marker of documentary authenticity. From this perspective, seals served to indicate the originator of a document, when used to close a document they offered an indication—though

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8 Stevenson and Wood, Scottish Heraldic Seals: Royal, Official, Ecclesiastical, Collegiate, Burghal, Personal (Glasgow: R. Maclehose, 1940).
8 Bedos-Rezak, When Ego Was Imago, 27.
hardly a foolproof one—that it had not been read previously, and they functioned as a sign of authenticity. Historians have long viewed seals as having a secular, legal standing that served to guarantee the authenticity of the document on which the seal appeared. For M. T. Clanchy, this is part of the process that helped to “bridge the gap between the literate and non-literate.” From this perspective, the seal itself is part of an evidentiary, rather than depository process, in which a charter was complementary to a ceremony that was at least partly physical.

Recently, scholars have begun to explore the cultural and modal significance of seals in a manner that transcends their role as authenticating additions to documents. Particularly influential in this regard is Brigitte Bedos-Rezak, who has encouraged medievalists to examine seals in light of their role as media for a variety of cultural features, including political, corporate or familial, individual, and gender discourses, while at the same time assessing how seals create and encourage the very processes they reflect. Rather than simply acting as validation of the written record, sealing should be seen by historians as much more. Bedos-Rezak has argued “seals were catalytic agents in the construction of social identity, enabling the coherence of texts, images, emblems, and gestures. As symbolic objects, seals were supports of ideological formulations and thus served as fields upon which battles for political order were emblematically fought.” To this end, seals serve as useful sources for investigating the representation and construction of identity in the Middle Ages.

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14 Bedos-Rezak, When Ego Was Image: Signs of Identity in the Middle Ages, 29.
Bedos-Rezak’s work, which is—thus far—the most definitive academic work of sigillography, has primarily focused on practices in the French kingdom between the end of the first millennium and the mid-fourteenth century; others, however, have begun to look at diverse regions of Europe, with examinations of British seals seeing particular growth. In British contexts, the more numerous English seals have traditionally received greater attention, with Welsh and Scottish seals evaluated for the extent to which they conform to or transgress English models. David Crouch’s *The Image of Aristocracy in Britain*, for instance, states: “the subject of Scottish seals needs little exploration here . . . the social distribution and style of Scottish seals more or less respected that of the Anglo-Norman world,” before he more expansively discusses Welsh sealing, ultimately arguing that it too largely conformed to Anglo-Norman practices.

This tendency to privilege Anglo-Norman cultural influence through the British Isles, and to restrict the sigillographic view to British seals has the potential to create faulty parallels between English and Scottish sealing practices, when closer connections exist elsewhere. This is exacerbated when historians focus on a strict and narrow chronological organization.

One of the challenges of sigillographic study is the chronological narrative that historians using seals have tended to follow. This narrative typically draws a line from royal seals, to aristocratic equestrian seals, to heraldic seals as a largely chronologically sequential process, narrowing down each category to a handful of representative types. This structure is useful because it allows for the understanding of society-wide processes and change and it highlights large-scale trends in seal styles and in the diffusion of seals to different social strata, but one

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18 This is the basic organizational structure of most works of sigillography, both today and in the past two centuries.
potential area of damage, especially from a British perspective, is the construction of a post hoc ergo propter hoc fallacy, that suggests Scottish seals simply mirror English developments and preferences. Instead, an examination of even earlier French patterns and practices helps to contextualize Scottish choices.

A degree of uniformity was crucial to the purpose of a seal, which relied on the acknowledgement of a pre-existing visual vocabulary. At any given point in the Middle Ages, the seals of elites bear striking similarities to one another, a feature that Bedos-Rezak has used to help nuance understanding of the higher elite’s acceptance of knighthood. Over reliance on this typography, however, belies the importance of variation and choice in seal appearances. Thus, for instance, the use of an equestrian seal in 1300 is sometimes read as showing the slow diffusion of Anglo-Norman practices to outlying regions of the British Isles, as opposed to a purposely chosen sigillographic identity. The exceptions are as important as the rules when determining the interplay between seal and identity. While trends no doubt influenced the iconography and legends deployed in seals, and corporate identity predisposed individuals to certain combinations, it would be a mistake to remove personal agency from these decisions.

An extension of the question of agency in seal design is whether the formulaic aspects of these designs detract from their representative quality. The key here, in part, is the combination of text and image, taken holistically. The relationship between image and text, according to Bedos-Rezak, is “neither complete complementarity, nor redundancy, nor a tension of opposites; rather it created a space in which the particular (written legend) and the collective (image) combined to generate an identity that was operative in itself, and that constituted a mode by

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20 Brigitte Bedos-Rezak, “Medieval Seals and the Structure of Chivalric Society,” in The Study of Chivalry: Resources and Approaches, ed. Howell D. Chickering and Thomas H. Seiler (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 1988), 313–72, see especially 330-39. This subject is also taken up below.
which medieval society could distinguish its essential elements.” As a source then, both legend and image together contribute to the seal’s representative qualities in an almost alchemical transformation that makes the sum greater than the parts.

**Sealing in the Scottish Kingdom, 1093-1400**

The first appearances of wax seals in Scotland date to approximately the same period as seals in England and Wales, the eleventh century, and the larger diffusion of their use—that is, beyond royalty and the upper nobility—occurred less than a century later than in France, where seal usage was common by the early twelfth century. The earliest Scottish seals, as is the case elsewhere, were royal seals. The oldest Scottish seal is a single impression of a one-sided equestrian seal, determined to have belonged to Duncan II (1093-4). Duncan’s successor, Edgar (1097-1107), left impressions of another single-sided seal, this one showing the king enthroned, holding a sword and sceptre. Alexander I (1107-24) was the first Scottish king to make use of a double-sided seal, modelled after that of the English king William II. The front shows Alexander enthroned with sword and orb, while the obverse shows him mounted. From this point on, the great seal of almost every English or Scottish sovereign—as well as the monarchs of Great Britain and the United Kingdom—made use of this double imagery. It is likely that sealing was not commonplace at any non-royal level of Scottish society before the 1160s, but

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21 Ibid., 29.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid.
26 In 2001, the great seal of Elizabeth II was replaced, removing the equestrian image from the obverse and replacing it with the royal arms. See Adrian Ailes, “The Knight’s Alter Ego: From Equestrian to Armorial Seal,” in *Good Impressions: Image and Authority in Medieval Seals*, ed. Noël Adams, John Cherry, and James Robinson (British Museum, 2008), 11.
this also parallels minimal charter use in mid-twelfth-century Scotland.\textsuperscript{27} It certainly follows that widespread charter use would have to have preceded the widespread use of seals.

By 1200, the seals of Scottish earls resembled those of their peers south of the border and across the Channel, with some variations. Equestrian seals appear among both native and non-native elites, as do seals using non-equestrian imagery. By the mid-fourteenth century, sealing in Scotland was common to a wide range of society. In addition to the equestrian and armorial seals of the elite, middling men and women held seals of non-armorial forms. Sometimes, these took the form of clever plays on their names, for instance, Alan de Candela whose small, one-inch seal shows a candle in a candlestick or Alice and Margaret Ferrier, possibly sisters, whose seals each show horseshoes: Margaret’s with a horseshoe nail and Alice’s alongside a hammer.\textsuperscript{28} Another instance, in an early Scottish seal dating to c. 1170 belonging to a woman, Petronella Harang, shows three herrings on a herring line.\textsuperscript{29} Other, more complicated, seals represented their owners by way of \textit{rebus}, combining several images that together sounded out their owner’s name; a 1220 armorial seal of Robert de Muscamp, for example, shows five flies (\textit{muscae}) on the field (\textit{campus}).\textsuperscript{30}

In the course of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, seal use in Scotland grew, extending to virtually all levels of society. Cynthia Neville’s work, “Women, Charters, and Land Ownership in Scotland,” has shown that women increasingly made use of seals and possessed their own from roughly 1230.\textsuperscript{31} Neville has demonstrated the desire of women in medieval Scotland, particularly in towns, to exercise their legal capacities in as unambiguous terms as

\textsuperscript{27} Harvey and McGuinness, \textit{A Guide to British Medieval Seals}, 43.
\textsuperscript{28} Stevenson and Wood, \textit{Scottish Heraldic Seals}, 275, 354.
\textsuperscript{29} Cf. Neville for her discussion of these and other women’s seals: Neville, “Women, Charters and Land Ownership in Scotland, 1150–1350,” 48.
\textsuperscript{30} Stevenson and Wood, \textit{Scottish Heraldic Seals}, 526.
\textsuperscript{31} Neville, “Women, Charters and Land Ownership in Scotland, 1150–1350,” 44–49.
possible.\textsuperscript{32} While their use of charters, and especially their presence in witness lists, assisted in this regard, it was the possession of a seal that “made it possible for them to assume a legal identity that accorded weight to their status as free land holders rather than to their gender.”\textsuperscript{33}

Through the thirteenth century, both women and men began to prefer seals the main feature of which was a shield of arms, a trend that gradually replaced the other seal iconography. While some continued to use non-armorial and non-heraldic seals—for example, the equestrian seals of Malise, seventh earl of Strathearn (d. c. 1328) and Patrick, ninth earl of Dunbar and second earl of March (d. 1368)—this appears to be a deliberate association of the highest elite with the dignity and prestige of earlier days.\textsuperscript{34} Armorial seal design became more intricate and detailed during this period, with the single shield replaced by more regulated designs. A typical fourteenth-century design displayed the shield hanging from a branch, with elaborate tracery and background detailing.\textsuperscript{35} In the middle of the fourteenth century, a seal might show multiple coats of arms, indicating various familial connections.\textsuperscript{36} By 1400, all Scottish tenants-in-chief were required to possess a seal for authenticating documents.\textsuperscript{37}

\textit{Mounted Men: Equestrian Seals and the Scottish Elite}

One of the most recognizable articulations of medieval masculine power on seals is the mounted knight. In their 2007 article, “Knights and Knighthood in Gaelic Scotland, c. 1050-1300,” Andrew McDonald and Cynthia Neville note the later influence of the equestrian seal on Gaelic Scotland, which lacked prominence before the second half of the thirteenth century. The surprise

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\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., 45.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{34} Stevenson and Wood, \textit{Scottish Heraldic Seals}, 335, 626.
\textsuperscript{35} Harvey and McGuinness, \textit{A Guide to British Medieval Seals}, 57.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 58.
\textsuperscript{37} \textit{RPS}, 1401/2/4.
\end{flushleft}
expressed by McDonald and Neville, is not that it took so long for the ‘native’ Gaelic elite to adopt equestrian imagery, but rather that they did so at all, “especially in view of the fact that they regarded the use of the honorific title of miles as beneath their rank.” 38 Part of the seeming discord is the result of the understandable, though somewhat mistaken, correlation between knighthood, equestrian imagery on seals, and the use of sealing altogether. The assumption that a mounted knight is representative of membership in a miles class is natural. After all, the mounted knight is the single most identifiable aspect and visual cue of medieval knighthood. For modern scholars, the connection between equestrian seals and the knightly class is appealingly clear, but in this case, I argue that the conflation anachronistically reads the iconographical “symbology of power.” 39 In looking outside the Scottish context, it is clear that the symbolic meaning of the equestrian figure was both more narrow and more broad than knighthood.

Scholars have explored—mostly in Continental contexts, although to some degree, in Britain as well— the way that the vocabulary of knighthood evolved and changed over time. For Georges Duby, the particular concern was whether miles, a term that appeared first in the late tenth century, represented a new non-noble or perhaps quasi-noble class of society or whether it was simply a new title for an established aristocratic group. His analysis of the Mâcon region of France allowed him to conclude that “everywhere, the words ‘noble’ and ‘knight’ appear to be interchangeable,” and that with respect to the quality of nobility, aristocratic society was homogeneous. 40 His focus, however, was on nobility as a sort of inherited corporate identity, largely dependent on lineage, and distinct from society at large, and not on the more pragmatic

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38 McDonald and Neville, “Knights and Knighthood in Gaelic Scotland, c. 1050-1300,” 96.
39 Bedos-Rezak, When Ego Was Imago: Signs of Identity in the Middle Ages, 29.
differentiations based upon wealth or power that can occur within a small ruling class;\textsuperscript{41} it is, nevertheless, these differentiations that are visible in sealing practices and are crucial in the interpretation of equestrian seals.

When McDonald and Neville write that the title of miles was seen as beneath the dignity of the native Scottish elite, they are, in fact, seeing a wider trend that existed among the non-native Scottish elite and on Continental Europe as well. Although miles was not entirely eschewed, appearing in the text of charters for instance, French potentates only began adding miles to their more prestigious titles on seals after the mid-thirteenth century.\textsuperscript{42} Scottish sealers, it appears, acted similarly. In Stevenson and Wood’s seal corpus, only three of seventy-five Scottish equestrian seals include miles as part of their seal legend. These include Adam Kilconquhar’s 1266 seal, an unusual seal in nearly every respect; Alexander Fraser’s 1320 seal, once appended to the Declaration of Arbroath; and Ingram de Umfraville’s 1320 seal, also from the Declaration of Arbroath.\textsuperscript{43} Of the remaining seventy-two seals, fifteen have legends that are no longer legible.\textsuperscript{44} Most of these belonged to Scottish earls—like the earls of Buchan and the earls of Fife—and other magnates, who elsewhere used comes or other titles like constabularius or senescallus on their seals, and it is highly likely these damaged seals once read similarly. The remainder of intact seal legends are evenly divided between those with no title and those using comes.

Given that the corpus is composed of seals largely detached from their original documents, it would be impossible to fully cross-reference between the extant equestrian seals

\textsuperscript{41} Duby notes descriptions of several men, using either a superlative form of nobilis or dominus, which he describes as a “careful attempt to denote social rank” (Ibid., 77). The element of social rank is not his focus, however, and the significance of this distinction is taken no further.


\textsuperscript{43} Stevenson and Wood, Scottish Heraldic Seals, 364, 441, 635. For the significance of equestrian seals in the Declaration of Arbroath, see below 106-8; Kilconquhar’s seal is discussed in further depth at 103-8.

\textsuperscript{44} Stevenson and Wood, Scottish Heraldic Seals, 262-63, 333, 354, 479, 494, 526, 550-51, 570, 600-1.
and the documents from which they originated in order to determine whether seal legends and charter text use the same title form. However, in examining all available documents issued by a particular seal holder, often ignorant of whether a specific seal was attached, a pattern appears showing a clear preference for specific titles, like comes, or the generic, but still prestigious, dominus, rather than miles. Alan Durward (f. 1233-73) offers one such example of this pattern, which is consistent across the corpus of Scottish equestrian seals. There is record of only one seal for Durward, an equestrian seal with the legend SIGILLVM[AL][AIN] OSTIARII, connected to his 1246 donation to Coupar Angus Abbey, although he is associated, in a variety of roles, with thirty-five additional transactions. Within these thirty-six documents, he is given a title 122 times: ninety-three times he is identified as doorward (typically hostiarius, but ostiarius on his seal), seventeen times as dominus, five times as earl of Atholl, five times as justiciar of Scotia, once as counsellor (consiliarius), and once, possibly, as miles. The ambiguity around his attribution as miles is the result of a common thirteenth-century convention whereby scribes often used the plural form of dominus preceding a list of attestors and the plural form of miles at the end of the list, thus making it unclear as to whether everyone named between the two titles is one, the other, or both. First in the list of domini, Durward is clearly named dominus, but not conclusively miles.

Clearly, miles was used very rarely by either the holders of equestrian seals themselves or by the scribes writing on their behalf. Those entitled to use more specific descriptors, like earl or

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45 Among the twenty-eight seals belonging to twenty-three different men, Gilbert Hay (f. 1294x1314) is the only exception to the trend. He is named miles in nearly half of the sixty-seven times he is titled. PoMS, no. 12057 (http://db.poms.ac.uk/record/person/12057/; accessed March 16, 2017).
49 Coupar Angus Charters, i, no. 61.
justiciar, might include such a term on their seal or they might not, instead relying on the written record to specify their rank and role. For those without such a specific role, the word scribes preferred to use was *dominus*, a term associated with, but not equivalent to knighthood. While there were many knights who appear named as *dominus*, there are also many *domini*—in the church for example, but elsewhere as well—who were conclusively not knights.\(^{50}\) Seal interpretation relies on the combination of text and image, which typically offer neither redundancy nor opposition.\(^{51}\) The text on equestrian seals and the corresponding written charters emphasize an elite lordly identity that cannot be directly correlated with knighthood or chivalric values. Perhaps surprisingly, the image of a mounted warrior creates a similar tension, an identity from which knights are not excluded, but that surpasses a strictly knightly status.

Bedos-Rezak has shown that early aristocratic French equestrian seals, dating from the eleventh century, emphasized the role of the lord not as a professional warrior, but as a leader of men. This, she argues, is alluded to in seal imagery through the inclusion of a gonfanon, or flag lance.\(^{52}\) The gonfanon, she argues, “thus implied, indeed illustrated, military leadership, a prerogative attached to the ban which was the basis for lordly superiority.”\(^{53}\) Prior to the mid-twelfth century, the presence of a gonfanon rather than a sword thus helped to distinguish aristocratic lords from their knightly retinues.\(^{54}\)

Another example of the usage of equestrian seals by an unlikely group helps to further demonstrate the gulf between these seals and direct connections to knighthood or a knightly class. John McEwan’s 2005 study, “Horses, Horsemen, and Hunting: Leading Londoners and

\(^{50}\) Fleming, “Milites as Attestors to Charters in England, 193.


\(^{53}\) Ibid., 15.

\(^{54}\) Ibid.
Equestrian Seals in the Late Twelfth and Early Thirteenth Century,” examines the seals of men who were very clearly not knights. This project, an early exploration of the topic, assessed the seals of a group of men connected to Henry FitzAilwin, mayor of London, between the early 1190s and 1212. Out of the forty-five seals McEwan examined, belonging to thirty-eight different men, seven were equestrian seals.55 Those using equestrian seals in London at the turn of the thirteenth century included FitzAilwin himself, Reiner FitzBerenger, sheriff of London 1157 to 1159 and 1162 to 1169, three members of the Buccointe family, Ralph de Cornhill, and John FitzGeoffrey.56 Their choice of equestrian seals is a clear indication of how they wished to be seen, and likely of familial connections or other social affinity, but it does not tie them in any direct way to knighthood. McEwan also notes that by the end of his period of investigation, very few prominent Londoners continued to use equestrian seals, instead choosing alternative imagery to convey their place in society.57

A sigillographic divorce of equestrian seals and knighthood, as both a title and set of values, is necessary for several reasons. First, the assumed conflation of these components prioritizes aspects that seal holders deliberately suppressed, or it at least deemphasizes those elements they sought to elevate. Textual legends of Scottish equestrian seals only very rarely include titles below comes. As a result, the reading of an equestrian seal as ‘knightly’ ignores the constructed textual identity provided by the seal’s legend. Image and text must be taken together for the representative value of seals. Second, in many cases, there is no evidence to suggest that holders of equestrian seals were, in fact, knights. While some equestrian seal holders may be

55 McEwan, “Horses, Horsemen, and Hunting: Leading Londoners and Equestrian Seals in the Late Twelfth and Early Thirteenth Centuries,” Essays in Medieval Studies 22, no. 1 (2005): 92. For this project, McEwan selected twenty-seven men who had, at some point in their career, held civic office, and an additional eleven men who were sons or brothers to civic office holders, or were influential mercantile figures (80).
56 Ibid., 84.
57 Ibid., 86.
cross-referenced with charters and other documents explicitly naming them *miles*, in other cases, there is no indication that these men were knights, and considerable suggestion that they were not.\(^{58}\) Finally, this conflation is dependant on equestrian seals as they appear midway through their period of use and ignores the iconographical changes that occurred between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries.

Counterintuitively, it is perhaps the disappearance of equestrian seals in Scotland, rather than their appearance, that should be taken as sigillographic evidence of the penetration of specifically knightly values. Consequently, the first Scots to take up armorial seals, either supplementing or replacing their equestrian imagery, may be seen as part of the vanguard of chivalric culture in the Scottish kingdom. Bedos-Rezak’s study shows that while knights were in most respects quick to associate themselves with the old aristocracy, after c. 1200, when common knights began sealing, they did not take up equestrian imagery on their seals. Instead, knights made use of armorial and heraldic symbols that emphasized their lineages and their personal power.\(^{59}\) In Scotland, the supplementation of equestrian seals with armorial ones began in the mid-thirteenth century and within one hundred years became the default for the middling and lesser nobility. After 1350, few Scots of any social strata used equestrian imagery on their seals. These developments correspond with the findings of researchers, such as Michael Penman and Katie Stevenson, who have examined the presence of chivalric culture more broadly in medieval Scotland and have dated its height to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.\(^{60}\)

Between the beginning and the middle of the thirteenth century, non-royal sealers in France and in England began to move away from traditional equestrian imagery on their seals.

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These images had emphasized the holders’ positions as members of the social elite through their leadership and lordly qualities. While taking the form of knights on horseback, equestrian seals allude to wealth and masculine authority through martial prowess and the command of men. Broader generalizations about Scottish equestrian seals prior to the thirteenth century are difficult to make, however, since most sigillographic evidence in Scotland appears at this point, with relatively few non-royal examples pre-dating the thirteenth century. While much is made of the fact that Gaelic potentates did not use equestrian seals prior to c. 1200, the evidence of non-Gaelic equestrian seals during this period is not especially overwhelming either.

**Sealing among the Scottish Elite Before 1250**

*Scottish Heraldic Seals* includes 200 seals dateable to before 1250. While equestrian iconography accounts for the largest single group of images, it appears on just over one quarter (25.5%) of the total number of seals. The second most popular image is a fleur-de-lis—appearing either on its own or in combination with other symbols—at 16.5%. While there are trends apparent in the usage of images, the wide variation makes generalizations difficult. The earliest non-royal seal in this collection is not an equestrian seal, but instead the image of a man seated and holding a sword, assumed to be a depiction of the seal’s owner, Thor Longus of Ednam, in Roxburghshire.\(^6\) Thor’s seal is one of only two dateable to before 1150; the other, belonging to Earl Gospatrick, brother of Dolfin, a progenitor of the earls of Dunbar, showcases equestrian imagery.\(^2\)

Both of these seals make use of images conveying masculine authority and prestige. The presence of a sword on Thor’s seal alludes to the holder as an arbiter and dispenser of justice,

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\(^2\) Ibid., 333.
and his seated position directly models the position of majesty used by kings, though without orb or sceptre. Gospatrick’s seal dates to a period of flux during which it was not unusual to see a sword, spear, or gonfanon as part of an equestrian image. It is difficult, in this case, to determine which is represented on Gospatrick’s seal as a result of degradation of the seal and it has been identified as both a sword and a spear in previous studies. The seal belonging to his son, another Gospatrick, just over a decade later shows an identifiable sword. If the elder Gospatrick’s seal does, in fact, include a spear it would make it one of only a handful of Scottish examples. Both sword and spear connect the holder to a martial role, but one beyond the role of a common warrior, and emphasize leadership.

Welsh examples may challenge this interpretation, however. As part of a recent project examining seals in medieval Wales, John McEwan has highlighted two seals the primary image on which is a single weapon. The first, belonging to Hugh of Hereford is a double-sided seal dating to c. 1183. On one side of the seal is an antique gem, showing a man’s head, and on the other, a sword, pointing downward. The second example has a dating range of 1203x1208 and shows a hand holding a spear with a pennon attached, with a legend attributing the seal to Espus, son of Caradoc Du, all in a pointed oval. McEwan attributes the imagery used on both seals to a recognition of a hierarchal status within the nobility, arguing that “men who can perhaps be described as lesser nobles often had seals displaying motifs that included weapons” and that the

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63 Ibid., 332; Elsa Hamilton, Mighty Subjects: The Dunbar Earls in Scotland, c. 1072-1289 (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2010); POMS seal-matrix, no. 6262 (http://db.poms.ac.uk/record/matrix/6262/; accessed October 28, 2014)
64 Stevenson and Wood, Scottish Heraldic Seals, 332; Hamilton, Mighty Subjects, 51. In Hamilton (2010), see also plates 2 and 3 for seal images for both Gospatrick and his son.
66 Ibid., 41.
images had “specific social meaning.”\textsuperscript{67} For the Welsh context, it may also be premature to attribute the weapon iconography to a distinction between lower and upper nobility, or at least to question the significance of this distinction on more than a psychological level. While Hugh of Hereford may have been a vassal of the earl of Gloucester, and thus saw himself as socially inferior, the size and double-sided nature of his seal indicate that he was by no means modest.\textsuperscript{68}

The seal belonging to Espus, on the other hand, has no such further characteristics, perhaps indicating a difference in social standing; however, at this early date his overall social status would still have been quite high. Furthermore, there are no direct parallels to these Welsh seals in the Scottish corpus. The seals belonging to both Thor and Gospatrick better fit in an established iconography of the upper elite, despite their individual variances. Certainly, the sword of state held by Scottish kings on their seal might mean many things, but it never suggested a lesser status; Cynthia Neville has recently compared the seals used by Alexander I (r. 1107-24), David I (r. 1124-53), and Malcolm VI (1153-65), alongside other Scottish kings, arguing that the sword’s size and position conveys information regarding virility and masculine honour.\textsuperscript{69}

The early Scottish seals belonging to Thor and Gospatrick have another element in common as well. The holders of both seals were recent immigrants to the Scottish kingdom, but were not of Anglo-Norman ancestry. There is far more known about Gospatrick’s family history than of Thor’s, but both appear to have belonged to the aristocracy displaced in England by William the Conqueror. That the earliest examples of Scottish seals belong to non-Norman

\textsuperscript{67} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{68} Ibid., 37.
\textsuperscript{69} Neville, “Making a Manly Impression: The Image of Kingship on Scottish Royal Seals of the High Middle Ages,” 107–10.
immigrants to Scotland complicates the view of sealing as part of an imported Anglo-Norman
cultural practice.

During the 1160s and 1170s, the number of equestrian seals in Scotland dramatically
increased. While Harvey and McGuinness have argued that the mounted knight was “the almost
universal design of upper-class men’s seals” until the late twelfth century, the Scottish evidence
does not entirely bear out this pattern. Sixty-eight seals are dateable to the period before 1200,
only twenty-nine of which are equestrian. Over 55% of the Scottish seals accounted for during
this period are not of an equestrian type. While equestrian seals form the largest identifiable
group of seal images, they are outnumbered by the other image types combined. These other
seals include depictions of both real and fantastic animals, such as falcons, boars, eagles, griffins,
and wyverns, flowers, trees, stars, and crescents. Twelve seals use antique gems as either the
principal image or in complement. The seal belonging to William de Vesci (d. 1253), for
instance, shows three antique gems around a shield with a cross. The three gems respectively
show a dolphin, a galley, and Romulus and Remus with the she-wolf. Of the twenty-five men
who held equestrian seals, a great deal is known about some, and virtually nothing about others,
though nearly all were men of means.

The earls of Dunbar—Gospatric brother of Dolfin, and his son, Gospatrick father of
Waldeve—are the only earls in Scotland with equestrian seals prior to 1200. Saer de Quincy, a
powerful noble in both England and Scotland, was using an equestrian seal before the 1190s but
only became an earl in 1207 through marriage to an English heiress. Several other holders of

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71 Two different seals belong to Alan, son of Walter, second High Steward; four to William of Hownam,
son of John; and two are attributed to Saer de Quincy, earl of Winchester, who held lands in Perthshire, Fife, and
Lothian. Some have countered Wood and Stevenson’s identification of one of these seals with Saer, earl of
Winchester, arguing it instead belonged to his uncle, also named Saer, or that Saer’s son. See Stevenson and Wood,
*Scottish Heraldic Seals*, 550-51 and PoMS seal-matrix, no. 6558 (http://db.poms.ac.uk/record/matrix/6558/;
accessed October 29, 2014). Here, I have counted the two seals as belonging to different men.
equestrian seals were among the most powerful and prominent men in Scotland, though through other titles. Richard de Morville, for instance, was Constable of Scotland from 1162 until his death, and held the great provincial territories of Lauderdale and Cunningham.\textsuperscript{72} Alan, son of Walter, was second High Steward of Scotland, and held two equestrian seals before his death in 1204. The vast majority of equestrian seal holders, however, were of significantly lesser stature. Based upon these numbers, those looking for a stark division regarding the use of equestrian seals by native or newcomer magnates, or Gaelic and non-Gaelic earls, must look later than 1200 for their evidence as there simply is not enough from which to form an argument.

William of Hownam (d. 1227), son of John, is the only person for whom we have records of three different equestrian seals during this period, two of which show the typical armed horseman and another that depicts a hunting scene, one of only two Scottish seals before 1250 to show a horseman with a hawk or falcon.\textsuperscript{73} Hunting scenes are far more common on French seals and were rare even in England at this point.\textsuperscript{74} England’s de Montfort family, as earls of Leicester in the first half of the thirteenth century, used hunting-themed equestrian seals that have been explained through the family’s close connections with Continental Europe.\textsuperscript{75} William’s use of a hunting seal may have been similarly motivated by familial connections but his adoption of this imagery deliberately aligns him with a wealthy and connected international elite.

William is identified on his seals only as WILLELMI FILII JOHANNIS, with various spellings and abbreviations, and never by title.\textsuperscript{76} Even in charter evidence, it is clear that “William, son of John” was his preferred form of address; rarely is he named dominus, and the

\textsuperscript{73} The second hunting-themed equestrian seal belonged to Robert, son of Fulbertus, of East Lothian, dating to about 1170 Harvey and McGuinness, \textit{A Guide to British Medieval Seals}, 46.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{76} PoMS seal-matrix, no. 6317 (http://db.poms.ac.uk/record/matrix/6317/; accessed November 19, 2014).
only time he is referred to as miles was when he was being chastised in a papal letter by Innocent III for interfering with the local monastery.\textsuperscript{77} It is clear that by naming William miles, Innocent sought to remind William of his responsibilities as a man of honour and to encourage him to act in a way befitting his station. Whether this remonstration was effective or not is uncertain. William did come to terms with the monks at Melrose, but only after mediation through a papal delegation.\textsuperscript{78} Overall, there is little to suggest William had any personal attachment to a knightly status. His seals emphasize his role as a horseman and his engagement in pursuits that were both noble and masculine, but not his role as miles.

Thus far, the examples examined have mostly originated from the more heavily feudal areas of the southern and eastern parts of the Scottish kingdom but by the first quarter of the thirteenth century sealing was undertaken in the far north and west as well. Until 1266, however, these areas were under the suzerainty of the Norwegian crown and the classification of these seals as ‘Scottish’ is problematic. Despite this, these seals require some discussion here, in part given their role as exemplars for later examples.

One of the fullest treatments of Hebridean seals is Andrew McDonald’s “Images of Hebridean Lordship in the Late Twelfth and Early Thirteenth Centuries.”\textsuperscript{79} The work evaluates an unusual early thirteenth-century double-sided seal belonging to Ranald (Raonall, Reginald), son of Somerled, and situates it within the sealing practices of the Anglo-Norman world and the Norse-Gaelic cultural milieu in which Ranald lived. No longer extant, the seal’s iconography is preserved in a fifteenth-century notarial instrument where it is described as having, on one side, a

\textsuperscript{77} For dominus see Melr. Lib., nos. 113, 162, 164, 232, 233; for miles see Melr. Lib., no. 133.
\textsuperscript{78} Melr. Lib., no. 133.
ship filled with men at arms, and on the reverse, a mounted knight.\textsuperscript{80} McDonald was able to find parallels with Manx seals that also used double-sided ship seals from the late eleventh century. He suggests that while the combination of galley and knight “may seem paradoxical,” the images represent both the power of the Hebridean kingdom and the desire to appear a thoroughly modern ruler in Anglo-Norman fashion.\textsuperscript{81} Nothing is known of the legend on Ranald seal, which might have offered a better understanding of what he sought to represent through these images.

Rather than viewing Ranald’s seal as containing two different, though complementary, ideas, I propose that the two sets of images instead be seen as displaying the same concept through culturally varying visual vocabularies. As discussed above, the mounted knight represents not only an individual warrior, but the host he leads and his role as the leader of that body of men. His authority and his strength derive tacitly from his position as commander and the mounted knight represents this. So too does Ranald’s galley. The fifteenth-century description states that the image showed “\textit{una navis plena hominibus armorum}.”\textsuperscript{82} The image is not of a nondescript ship, but one filled with armed men. In much the same way double-sided royal seals depict two sets of images—the seated figure in majesty and the mounted knight—to represent elements of rulership, one as seen through a spiritual lens and the other the temporal, Ranald’s seal represents his lordship through a Anglo-Norman and a Hebridean cultural lens. The images show a differing visual vocabulary, but ultimately the prioritization of the same values.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{80} Ibid., 129–30.
\item \textsuperscript{81} Ibid., 137.
\item \textsuperscript{82} Pais. Reg., 149.
\end{itemize}
Sealing among the Scottish Elite, 1250-1400

Aside from the increasing appearance of armorial seals, seal usage after 1250 continued much the same as it had in the first half of the century. During the first half of the thirteenth century the number of smaller seals, three to four centimetres in diameter, had increased and this remained the trend for the rest of the century. Whether as a result of the demand for more affordable seals or the stimulus for greater seal diffusion, these smaller seals assisted in the adoption of armorial bearings by a large group of Scottish society. In the last decade of the thirteenth century there is exponential growth in the number of Scottish seals recorded. This is almost exclusively due to the fealty process instigated by Edward I of England. While most landowners would have possessed their own seals through much of the thirteenth century, the opportunities for seal impressions to enter the historical record were largely restricted to the middling and upper elite. With few exceptions, the vast majority of thirteenth-century extant Scottish seals for which we have records belonged to those who were wealthy enough to make donations of land to churches and monasteries—who were especially careful to preserve their records—or to those whose land transactions were frequent enough that the many seal impressions increased the odds of survival.

In the 1290s, the political situation between the Scottish and English crowns shifted, favouring English overlordship, and in consequence, the Ragman Rolls were created.

In 1296, Edward I compelled over 1,600 Scots into the king’s peace solemnified by acts of fealty and, for those who held land in chief, acts of homage, the records of which are contained with the manuscripts known as the Ragman Rolls. Sometimes considered Scotland’s Ur-Armorial, the heraldic information contained within the Ragman Rolls is unsurpassed as a

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84 The total number of entries actually far exceeds this, however, as a result of one person swearing fealty for multiple lands, see Bruce A. McAndrew, *Scotland’s Historic Heraldry* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2006), 86.
source for three hundred years. Bruce McAndrew’s research, focussing primarily on the heraldic elements of the Ragman Rolls, has made use of computer database techniques to correlate seals—many of which have become detached over the years—with the homagers they represent. Approximately nine hundred of the Ragman Roll seals survive, roughly 30% of which McAndrew classifies as either heraldic or proto-heraldic, in that they display images that become part of a later heraldic design. McAndrew has assessed this number as relatively low, a result of what he suggests is the late development of heraldry in Scotland; however, there are few similarly wide-ranging seal collections. In Scotland, the scale of the Ragman Rolls’ seal collection was unequalled until the late sixteenth century.

These seals showcase the enormous variety of iconography in use during the last decade of the thirteenth century and very few consistent patterns emerge. Mostly before the dominance of the armorial seal in the later fourteenth century, some sealers sought to convey their authority through iconographical forms other than equestrian images. Galleys and lymphads sought to convey the same message of lordly power through regionally different iconography. Alexander of Argyll was one of four sealers using ship imagery in the Ragman Rolls. His Ragman Rolls seal shows a lymphad with a dragon head prow on a shield and a legend reading S’ALEXANDRI DE ERGADIA. Two of the other lymphad seals are suspected to belong not to Ragman homagers but to have been erroneously included at a later date. The final seal appears on the seventeenth string alongside other unidentifiable sealers and is tentatively identified with

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86 Ibid., 672; McAndrew, Scotland’s Historic Heraldry, 87.
87 Ibid., 87.
89 Ibid., 705.
90 Stevenson and Wood, Scottish Heraldic Seals, 230.
91 McAndrew (1999) has identified these as belonging to the earl of Caithness (702) and Angus Macdonald of Islay (750), neither of who appear in the list of homagers.
Hugh de Spot of Berwick (RR 701). The only records for Hugh relate to his submission to Edward I, and aside from his name, his father’s name, Moses, and his presence in Berwick, nothing more is known. It would be highly unusual for an inhabitant of Berwickshire to use iconography more common to the Norse-influenced west and far north; while it may be that Hugh had connections to these regions or was simply drawn to this particular design, this is may also represent a misidentification especially given the poor condition of the seal legend.

The Ragman Rolls also offer access to some of the non-heraldic personal seals that are frequently overlooked. Two men, John de Arrat of Angus and Henry de Fresseleye of Perthshire, used carnavalesque, or possibly queer-indicating, seals that depicted a hare blowing a hunting horn while riding a dog. Thirty-two sealers used antique gems of varying design. Fergus MacDowell of Wigtown, Galloway, for instance, used a gem showing a defaced human head, and interestingly, an unusual non-Latin seal legend that reads LE SEEL FERGUS. The Ragman Rolls seals show the great variety of seal types present during the late thirteenth century in Scotland. These seals show the flexibility of seal design used by non-elites while underscoring the increasing importance, at least in terms of English interactions, of armorial and heraldic seals among the elite.

Only three Ragman Rolls sealers used a mounted knight: Robert Bruce, John Comyn, and Florent V, Count of Holland, and all three were competitors for the Scottish throne in 1292. Except these three examples, even those known to possess equestrian seals used alternates for the Ragman Rolls. Malise of Strathearn (d.c. 1317), for example, had an equestrian seal with the mounted knight riding to sinister, holding sword and shield, on which are displayed two

93 PoMS, no. 22680 (http://db.poms.ac.uk/record/person/22680/; accessed November 23, 2014).
94 McAndrew, “The Sigillography of the Ragman Roll,” 748.
95 Ibid., 716.
96 Ibid., 701, 704, 709.
The seal used for the Ragman Rolls, however, was a simple armorial seal showing two chevronelles on a shield. Similarly, Alexander Balliol (d.c. 1311) used a voided escutcheon on a shield, rather than the mounted knight he might have chosen. The pattern is too clear to be coincidental. One possible interpretation is that Scottish nobles were engaging in a subtle act of defiance by sealing with a less prestigious seal, whether to create plausible deniability if, or when, the English forces were expelled or simply to deny King Edward the dignity of their equestrian seals. Another possibility is that these men were hesitant to send their equestrian seals to Berwick or to the other centralized locations from which fealties were collected. There is a third possible interpretation: that the sealers had been given instruction of some sort as to the kind of seal that might be acceptable. In this case, only the most powerful were permitted an equestrian seal in a document the purpose of which was to solidify English overlordship in Scotland. Regardless, if an equestrian seal was no more than a ticket to an international fellowship or a symbol of knightliness, its underrepresentation in the Ragman Rolls is puzzling.

The 1320 Declaration of Arbroath brought the seals of a number of these prominent men together again. Written as a rhetorically charged plea to the pope for support against English depredations and in support of Robert Bruce as king, today the Declaration of Arbroath has nineteen seals attached to it. The conditions under which the Declaration was produced, however, are not entirely clear. During the first decades of his rule, Bruce faced both external

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99 Ibid., 722; Stevenson and Wood, *Scottish Heraldic Seals*, 238.
100 While some portion of the Scots recorded by the Ragman Rolls were, no doubt, in attendance at Berwick on August 28, 1296, a far greater number swore fealty through July and August as Edward travelled throughout Scotland, organized in the Ragman Rolls by sheriffdom. See Barrow, *Robert Bruce and the Community of the Realm*, 101-3.
101 NRS, SP13/7
and internal threats: in addition to the danger posed by England, many Scottish nobles were ambivalent or outright hostile to Robert I’s kingship.\textsuperscript{102} Critical examination of several of the documents issued by Bruce’s parliament during this period has demonstrated a consistent pattern of falsification or, at best, coercion regarding the named signatories.\textsuperscript{103} It seems Bruce was “willing to repeatedly and blatantly falsify names in his attempt to make his support look respectable.”\textsuperscript{104} One of the documents apparently subject to this misrepresentation was the Declaration of Arbroath; A. A. M. Duncan has shown it was produced by Bruce’s chancery rather than the magnates in whose name it was issued, that the names of some of the signatories were pure invention, and that others had their seals appropriated for its creation.\textsuperscript{105} The Declaration includes seals tags with names not appearing in the text of the document, some having used new slits and some taking the spaces assigned to others.\textsuperscript{106} The presence of men on this list who opposed Bruce both before and after 1320 is one indication of its at least partially fraudulent nature. In fact, only months after the creation of the Declaration, five of the forty-four total sealers were accused in a plot to kill the king, possibly provoked by Bruce’s behaviour around its creation.\textsuperscript{107}

Of the nineteen seals still attached, Ingram de Umfraville (d.c. 1321), Alexander Fraser (d.c. 1332), and Malise of Strathearn (d.c. 1329), all of whom used armorial seals for their

\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., 72.
\textsuperscript{107} Penman, “The Soules conspiracy of 1318-1320,” 27.
Ragman Rolls’ deeds, have equestrian seals associated with their names on the Declaration. Alexander Fraser and Malise of Strathearn were Bruce supporters. While Malise’s mother was convicted in the Soules conspiracy, it appears that her son did not share her politics. Ingram de Umfraville abandoned Bruce after only after the Soules conspiracy, allegedly offended by the extreme treatment of David de Brechin following exposure of the plot. Accepting that some, perhaps even many, of the signatories to the Declaration were coerced (or even unaware of their participation), these three are likely contenders for genuine participants. Their use of equestrian seals, rather than the alternatives that might have been used, may be attributed to the prestige attached to equestrian seals and the desire of these particular men to add weight through all of the dignity accessible to them. Even if these seals were among those fraudulently acquired, the use of equestrian iconography further bolsters the aims of the Declaration by making the support of the signatories as strong and as convincing as possible. The use of equestrian seals further emphasizes the standing of the signatories as powerful magnates in their own rights rather than as liegemen, especially in a document as rhetorically charged as the Declaration.

After 1300, seal survivals return to near thirteenth-century levels though it is unlikely that lesser known men, like John of Arrat or Fergus MacDowell, ceased sealing altogether. Through the fourteenth century, most seal records belong to men of prominence, again, those whose frequency of sealing or church donations increased the likelihood of preservation. By the end of the fourteenth century, armorial and heraldic seal designs had entirely replaced equestrian iconography among all but royal sealers. As heraldry became more regulated and standardized, fewer of the middling and upper elite used alternative seal images, including mounted knights, but also antique gems and other personal seals. The evidence for non-armorial personal seals

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108 Arthur Campbell may also have used equestrian iconography but the seal is badly damaged.
used by lower and middling people remains sparse through the end of the fourteenth century. By 1400, the triumph of the armorial seal was complete.

Evidence for sealing in Scotland between 1250 and 1400 benefited enormously from the political instability of the 1290s. The Ragman Rolls, recording the acts of fealty and homage of over 1,600, created a unique collection of Scottish seals, offering insight to the wide variety of people who possessed seals as well as the differing iconography of which they made use. The growing popularity of armorial seals and of seals emphasizing heraldic designs is illustrative of the changing values regarding visual representations of masculine identity. Armorial seals emphasized familial identity and composition in ways that equestrian seals and other types of seal images did not. Equestrian imagery, however, remained an unparalleled expression of elite masculine identity vested in tradition, authority, leadership, and independence.

**Comites Jure Uxoris: Buchan and Carrick**

Comparison of two sets of seals dating to the mid-thirteenth century, both belonging to earls who held their titles *jure uxoris*, offers interesting evidence of self-fashioning and meaning with respect to equestrian seals. William Comyn (d. 1233) and Adam Kilconquhar (d. 1271) both came from powerful families, but only held their earldoms through marriage to wealthy heiresses. Their seals show the different ways they chose to engage with this element of their lordships, as well as offering insight into their values and identities as constructed through image and text.

In approximately 1212, William Comyn became earl of Buchan by right of his wife, Marjorie, heiress of Earl Fergus of Buchan. The Comyns had arrived in Scotland during the reign of David I (1124-1153), as part of an Anglo-Norman influx to Scotland. Through the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, they gained land and power, arguably becoming the most powerful baronial
family in Scotland. William Comyn’s position from 1205, as Justiciar of Scotia, offered new prominence for the family, as did his elevation to earl less than a decade later. Comyn’s role in the suppression of the MacWilliam challenges to the Scottish throne, during the first third of the thirteenth century, has been cited as one of the reasons for his added authority. In granting Comyn the earldom of Buchan, the Scottish crown not only rewarded the efforts of a valued supporter, but also introduced a greater degree of royal authority to the north. Upon attaining this title, Comyn not only became the first ‘Norman’ earl of Buchan, but the first in all of the Scottish kingdom.

Four seal images may be attributed to Comyn, two in use after his elevation to the earldom, one counterseal, and one in use before 1212. The earliest seal depicts a knight on horseback to sinister, armed with sword and shield. After 1212, Comyn continued to make use of an equestrian seal, but differentiated his seal as earl from his previous seal with the knight reversed, riding dexter. The Comyn garb appears on the horse’s caparison on both the shoulder and hind quarters. This seal was used through the 1230s. This is countersealed with an armorial seal, showing a garb on a heart-shaped shield. The final version is an armorial seal, showing three garbs, the seal between three lions rampant.

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111 Ibid., 176–78; McDonald, Outlaws of Medieval Scotland, 165.
112 Young, “The Earls and the Earldom of Buchan in the Thirteenth Century,” 176–78; McDonald, Outlaws of Medieval Scotland, 165.
115 Ibid., 305; PoMS seal-matrix, no. 6256 (http://db.poms.ac.uk/record/matrix/6256/; accessed November 5, 2014).
117 PoMS seal-matrix, no. 6258 (http://db.poms.ac.uk/record/matrix/6258/; accessed November 5, 2014).
Comyn’s seals show an adherence to wider-European sealing practices and participation in the latest sealing trends. His seals may be read as indicative of his personal ambitions and his political allegiances. Dexter-facing equestrian seals are uncommon but not unheard of, especially when used to distinguish between an earlier seal as in Comyn’s case or to differentiate between family members of the same name. Comyn’s comital seals offer no concessions to, or acknowledgement of, his right to Buchan through his wife or her Gaelic family. Both image and legend, instead, serve to underscore his role as an agent of the crown with a sigillographic identity allied with common European practices. As with others in both Scotland and France, Comyn did not include his knightly status as part of his seal legends, with both comital seals reading *comitis*. The legend from his earlier equestrian seal was destroyed and cannot be known, though it is possible this once read *militis*. Typical of a counterseal, Comyn’s heart-shaped shield with a garb reads simply *SIGILLVM SECRETI WILELMI CVMIN*.

This is an early example of an armorial counterseal, appearing at a time when most counter seals used non-armorial imagery, preferring instead antique gems and images of animals.

Adam Kilconquhar’s seal, dating to c. 1266, is also an equestrian image but is very different from William Comyn’s. The seal was described by Bain in 1850 as “a remarkable seal exhibiting singular design, which is difficult to explain.” The unique characteristics of this seal, however, offer insight into Kilconquhar’s position in the Scottish kingdom as well as his desires in crafting his own representation. Kilconquhar is believed to have been a great grandson of Donnchad (Duncan), third earl of Fife (d. 1289), but it was Kilconquhar’s marriage to Marjory

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119 PoMS seal-matrix, no. 6257 (http://db.poms.ac.uk/record/matrix/6257/; accessed November 5, 2014).
of Carrick that made him an earl.\textsuperscript{121} Marjory was the daughter and heir to Niall (Nigel), hereditary earl of Carrick. After Kilconquhar’s death while on crusade in Acre, Marjory’s subsequent marriage brought the earldom to the Bruces. Kilconquhar’s seal depicts a mounted knight, but he is not the only figure present; in addition is a woman holding in one hand, a pennon with a cross, and in the other, a shield with three cinquefoils on it.\textsuperscript{122} As noted by Bain, this is not a common design, but the image used here serves to underscore the \textit{jure uxoris} nature of the earldom. The figure of the woman hands to the knight the tools of lordship: the pennon for his leadership and the shield for defence.

Interestingly, the seal’s legend also names its owner \textit{miles}. Some have used this as evidence to suggest this seal was used before Kilconquhar became earl of Carrick.\textsuperscript{123} Extant impressions have been dated to c. 1266 but may not be determined with greater specificity. By July of that same year, Kilconquhar appears as the earl of Carrick witnessing the Treaty of Perth.\textsuperscript{124} The use of \textit{milites} may well be helpful in dating the seal to before Kilconquhar assumed the earldom but while the mid-thirteenth century was the period in which French magnates begin to add the title to their seals, this still remained relatively uncommon in the Scottish context.\textsuperscript{125} It is possible that Kilconquhar was deliberately highlighting his knightly status with this seal, in addition to the masculine and martial symbols of lordship represented through the mounted knight, shield, and pennon. This is a calculated association with the “exhilarating international word of aristocratic fellowship” that chivalry represented, and one to which Kilconquhar was eager to belong, as evidenced, in part, by his participation in the Eighth Crusade led by Louis IX

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{121} Barrow provides the evidence for connection between Donnchad and Kilconquhar in Barrow, \textit{Robert Bruce and the Community of the Realm of Scotland}, 1988, 331.
\textsuperscript{122} Stevenson and Wood, \textit{Scottish Heraldic Seals}, 441.
\textsuperscript{123} PoMS seal-matrix, no. 6326 (http://db.poms.ac.uk/record/matrix/6326/; accessed November 5, 2014).
\textsuperscript{124} \textit{RRS}, iv, no. 61.
\end{footnotes}
of France. It is possible that the cross depicted on Kilconquhar’s seal indicated his interest in crusade even in 1266, the year before Louis IX took the cross and headed to North Africa.

Kilconquhar’s seal should be read as a balancing act between native and newcomer representations and value systems. Kilconquhar consciously took up a European iconographical vernacular, but one translated through his wife’s native power base in Carrick. Kilconquhar’s paternal ties to the mormaers of Fife connect him with one of the most powerful native families of the Scottish kingdom, but like so many in the thirteenth century, his ethnic identity is not entirely clear. Evidence from Kilconquhar’s brother, William, bishop of Brechin, suggests that their mother may have been a member of the Comyn family. Interestingly, as bishop of Brechin, William’s seal is also somewhat self-effacing, showing Christ as Saviour as the font of his personal authority.

Both William Comyn and Adam Kilconquhar made use of equestrian images on their seals as a way to demonstrate their authority. The mounted knight emphasizes their lordly attributes as martial and political leaders through a European visual vocabulary. Comyn’s articulation of this is complemented by proto-heraldic and armorial images that became closely tied to the Comyn family’s identity, following the latest trends and developments of European sealing practices that were without precedent in Scotland. Kilconquhar’s seal, on the other hand, suggests power and authority less vested in his person, than held in trust. By handing the knight pennon and shield, the female figure on Kilconquhar’s seal provides him with the tools of his lordship, transmitting her authority to him. The differences between Comyn’s and Kilconquhar’s

129 Stevenson and Wood, Scottish Heraldic Seals, 130.
seals indicate the differences in their own identities, their lordships, and the earldoms they ruled. With the final defeat of MacWilliam challenges to the Scottish thrown, Comyn, as earl of Buchan, controlled a region that could no longer support claims of autonomy from the crown. Carrick, on the other hand, remained “emphatically Celtic” until the end of the thirteenth century, in the words of G. W. S. Barrow.\textsuperscript{130} Even had Kilconquhar desired to act as a strongly Normanized earl, there is no indication he would have been able to, lacking Comyn’s authority, martial successes, and political connections, and given the region’s staunchly independent orientation. Through the same sealing practices and similar imagery, Comyn’s and Kilconquhar’s seals show differing values and identities; these seals show different ideas of lordship and different representations of personal authority.

Conclusions

Historians have long known the importance of seals and sealing. It is only recently, however, that researchers have begun to look to seals as evidence of more than diplomatic practices in the Middle Ages. Seals, it is increasingly acknowledged, offer important information about the identity, culture, and values of seal holders. For too long, sealing in the Scottish kingdom has been viewed as an Anglo-Norman import, through which Scottish sealers mimicked the practices common elsewhere in Europe, often at a pace that lagged behind their English peers. An examination of Scottish sealing practices from the perspective of a domestic adoption, however, has the potential to shed a great deal of light on the identity and values of individuals. While Scottish sealers—like their peers south of the border—made use of an established visual vocabulary supplemented with formulaic textual information, their choice of symbology and their adherence to, or rejection of, established practices was informed by the identity they wished

\textsuperscript{130} Barrow, \textit{Robert Bruce and the Community of the Realm of Scotland}, 1988, 25.
to construct and to present to the world. Together, image and text worked generatively, to create an identity that existed separately from one’s person.

Particularly for the study of a lay elite, equestrian iconography played an indisputably central role. As “the most striking symbol of feudal power and status,” the mounted knight was a symbol taken up and employed by many who sought to emphasize their lordly authority. Equestrian seals exude a confidence and masculine presence not conveyed through other types of seal iconography. The meaning displayed by these seals, should not, however, be directly connected to knightly status or chivalric values. Instead, the mounted knight made use of a visual vocabulary, French in origin, which was created by the most powerful magnates, not their knightly retinues. The wider adoption of this vocabulary continued to draw on the authoritative leadership represented by the equestrian figure.

While the mounted knight is one of the most formulaic of seal images, this does not necessitate a lack of personalization. The most common—though even in itself formulaic—type of personalization was the use of heraldic symbols to decorate shields and mounts. The Comyns, for instance, typically showed sheaves or garbs on their armour and horses. Lozenges, chequers, hearts, and stars were also common depending on family and regional origins. Others even further personalized their equestrian seals. John of Hownam, for example, emphasized the aristocratic habit of falconry on his mounted seals. Adam Kilconquhar’s particularly unique equestrian seal highlighted the source of his political authority, his wife. In each of these cases, formulaic patterns incorporating mounted knights are individualized through additional iconography and through personal legends that serve to underscore a sense that the holder is a leader, rather than a follower. There is an independence of authority conveyed by equestrian seals that does not appear as strongly in armorial seals.
As armorial seals gained in international popularity, some in the Scottish kingdom were quick to incorporate this new iconographical representation. Armorial and heraldic seals emphasized lineage in a way that equestrian seals did not and provided the opportunity to display familial connections. The use of heraldic imagery derived from an international chivalric community that was open to a wider range of social elites. The fourteenth century shows the responses to this development. For some, the chivalric community held great appeal and they enthusiastically participated in all elements of it, including newer seal iconography. Others, mostly those among the highest magnates, however, preferred the tried and true representation of lordly dignity conveyed through the mounted and armoured horseman. By the end of the fourteenth century, nearly all of the lay elite had converted to the identity represented through the armorial seal.

All medieval seals were chosen in such a way as to represent their owner in a legal and documentary realm. The choices seal holders made conveys considerable information about who they were and who they wanted to appear as. While geographic location and ethnic identity clearly informed the choices made by sealers in Scotland, they did not limit their options. Seals were one way medieval men and women were able to express and construct their identities for the larger world.
CHAPTER FOUR: MEN OF THE HEBRIDES: THE MAC SORLEYS

The medieval Scottish kingdom was home to diverse and complex constructions of ethnic identity, as explored in Chapter 2, which were closely, though not exclusively, tied to regionality. In turn, these ethnic attachments influenced the choices made regarding personal representation on seals as well as through other media. These patterns, apparent throughout Scotland, were heightened on the western coast, where politically and culturally significant attachments outside the Scottish kingdom were maintained throughout the thirteenth century and beyond. The descendants of Somerled mac Gillebride (d. 1164) claimed lordship, and sometimes kingship, over most of the Hebrides with their territories at the intersection of Scottish, Norwegian, Manx, Irish, and English influence. The Mac Sorleys, as they are known, crafted identities as men that are reflective of this cross-cultural position and their complex ethnic attachments.

Throughout the thirteenth century, Scottish kings increasingly sought to exercise effective control over the entirety of northern Britain. Previously, regions like Galloway or Caithness were technically within the Scottish kingdom but the exercise of power in such regions was largely outside of royal administration. This fragmentation allowed for the persistence of politically significant ethnic distinctions within the kingdom. Under William I (d. 1214) and Alexander II (d. 1249), much of the mainland resistance to the Scottish crown was suppressed and, through a variety of processes, both political and cultural, a great sense of Scottish cohesion developed. This ‘Scotticization,’ defined by one scholar as, “a local form of Europeanization linked closely to a Scottish identity based on the figure of the king,” was both actively embraced and resisted
throughout the kingdom.¹ By the mid-thirteenth century, the coastal and insular west of Scotland remained one of the few areas within a geographically contiguous region not subject to Scottish authority. The islands of the Hebrides officially had been held subject to Norwegian suzerainty as the result of King Magnus Barelegs’s (d. 1103) conquest in 1098, although Norse influence in the Irish Sea province extended a further two hundred years back. Between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, however, Norwegian overlordship in the Hebrides was exercised ineffectively and from afar.

The exact nature of the political relationship between the Hebrides and the Norwegian crown is unclear, though much discussed. Until the mid-thirteenth century, the Norwegian kingdom was a thalassocracy under which states that were largely independent principalities “lived on as before.”² In the century and a half between King Magnus and King Hakon (d. 1263), no Norwegian king even visited the Hebrides. There were no standard administrative, legal, or taxation practices held in common or imposed by the Norwegian crown across its domains. Instead, each principality appears to have operated according to unique conditions.³ The Hebrides, for instance, which the Norwegians considered part of the Suðreyjar (which also included Bute, Arran, and the Isle of Man), had a very different relationship with their suzerain than did the Norðreyjar (the archipelagos of Orkney and Shetland), where royal authority was both geographically nearer and more effectively administered.⁴ Furthermore, in terms of

¹ Hammond, “Domination and Conquest? The Scottish Experience in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries,” 83. See McDonald, Outlaws of Medieval Scotland.
³ Ibid., 22.
obligations between Hebridean reguli and the Norwegian crown, theory and practice differed wildly. The *Historia Norwegiae*, dated between 1160 and 1175, refers to the Hebrides as one of the *tributariis insulis* (tributary islands) and specifies that its rulers “*non modica personluunt tributa*” (pay no mean tribute). Robert de Torigni (d. 1186), on the other hand, cited a tributary payment of ten gold marks after which the king of the Isles owed nothing further to the Norwegian king. When that tribute was due, its political significance, and even whether it was consistently paid, however, have not been conclusively determined. Despite the ambiguity of the exact political situation, it is clear that the Norwegian kingdom had political and cultural significance for Hebridean rulers. Although that relationship changed dramatically as Scottish political influence grew in the west, the impact of centuries of Norse involvement did not dissipate overnight.

As part of the consolidation of Scottish authority in the western isles and the eventual loss of even nominal Norwegian overlordship, the relationship between the men who ruled in the isles and their cultural identities were redefined. The conflict between Alexander III of Scotland and Hakon of Norway divided the Hebridean elite, who were forced to choose between two kings to whom they each owed allegiance. The extent to which they only reluctantly did so demonstrates the complexity of the attachment in effect. Following the Treaty of Perth (1266), which officially transferred control of the Hebrides from Norway to Scotland, Hebridean leaders increasingly integrated with the larger Scottish political community. While men of the Hebrides

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6 *SAEC*, 245.

had long interacted with their counterparts on the Scottish mainland and engaged with Scottish institutions and practices, the conflict between Norway and Scotland, and Norway’s subsequent capitulation, set these behaviours in new light and gave new significance to Scottish integration. The situation, however, was once again to change only two decades later. The succession crisis resulting from the death of Alexander III and his heir, Margaret, in 1286 and 1290 respectively, widely fractured Scottish society. The new political environment of the 1290s and early 1300s again changed the patterns of behaviour of the Hebridean elite.

This chapter targets a small subject population for study, namely, the Mac Sorley lords between approximately 1240 and 1310. The seven men closely examined here include two generations of Mac Sorley men: Ewen and Alexander Mac Dougall, Angus Mór and Alexander Mac Donald, and Dugald, Alan, and Lachlan Mac Ruairi (Figure 2 displays a genealogical table for principal members of the Mac Sorley family). By exploring each of their lives in as much detail as the sources allow, their individual identities, particularly in terms of the impact of ethnicity and gender, become discernable. The Mac Sorleys lived during a period of momentous political and cultural change that disproportionately affected their corner of the world and the relationship between them and their cultural identities. The nuances of these impacts and the ways each of the Mac Sorleys responded are only accessible from close range. While experts in Hebridean history will find little of the following narrative ground-breaking, this chapter establishes the unique ethnic and cultural conditions of the Hebrides in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries and the complexity of the personal identities exhibited by the Mac Sorleys, before Chapter 5 introduces a new theoretical model with which to explore the gender and ethnic identities of the Mac Sorleys and other men examined elsewhere in this project.
A study of this kind requires reliance on a variety of sources the origins, audiences, and purposes of which vary widely. The Mac Sorleys appear unevenly in the available sources; the combination of charter and sigillographic evidence with saga material and Irish narrative sources still only allows for a partial reconstruction of their lives. In some cases, the records are more plentiful, offering greater detail for the construction of their lives, but for each of the Mac Sorleys, there are periods of time during which they disappear entirely from the historical record. Seals make up a small part of the evidence for this analysis, their broader context having been discussed in greater depth in Chapter 2, above. While it is highly likely that most, if not all, of the Mac Sorley lords possessed seals, only a few are identifiable, either extant or through recorded descriptions. Charter evidence is more plentiful, although still in smaller quantities than for many of the Mac Sorleys’ mainland peers. The relatively small number of Hebridean charters, however, should not be seen as indicative of a lack of faith in the written word, given, as demonstrated below, the casual confidence with which the Mac Sorleys participated in written conveyances.

The narrative and literary sources in which the Mac Sorley men appear are at once richer and more problematic than the documentary ones. These include Norse sagas, Gaelic annals and praise poems, and occasional mentions elsewhere. The Norse sagas, Hakonar saga and Magnus saga, were both commissioned by Hakon’s son, King Magnus (d. 1280), and written by an Icelandic poet, Sturla Þórðarson (d. 1284) in the second half of the thirteenth century. Like so many medieval texts, the sagas combine the historical, the biographical, and the propagandistic in their accounts, a mélange further complicated by the relationship among author, subject, and patron. Magnus, it seems, was closely involved in the writing process of Hakonar saga in order
to ensure a pleasing recitation of his father’s life, a concern that may have been well founded.\(^8\) Sturla, whose uncle, Snorri Sturluson, had been killed at Hakon’s instigation, was a staunch opponent of Hakon and his commission placed him “in the ironic situation of producing the biography of a man he detested."\(^9\) The Mac Sorleys appear only peripherally in Sturla’s sagas; however, these brief appearances offer valuable information regarding the perception of the Hebridean rulers. Gaelic sources also offer interesting insight into the perceptions of the Mac Sorleys. In Gaelic annals, like the Norse sagas, the Mac Sorleys appear infrequently, evidence that whatever psychological or cultural importance the Irish Sea province offered, Irish scribes saw the direct political impact of the Mac Sorleys in Ireland as relatively minimal. Gaelic praise poetry, however, offers proof of the cultural interconnectivity between Hebridean and Irish contexts. The poems to Donald Mac Ranald and his son, Angus Mór, interweave Irish and Hebridean values in praise of their subjects, highlighting desirable masculine qualities. Together, each of these sources helps to construct an idea of who the Mac Sorley men were, how they were perceived, and how they chose to represent themselves.

The Mac Sorleys, who collectively claimed lordship over most of the Hebrides, were the product of their environment: a maritime-focused society at the intersection of Scottish, Norse, Manx, Irish, and English influence. This nexus of competing spheres of cultural influence only existed because of the archipelagic context of the region and the seafaring proficiency of its inhabitants. While the seas surrounding the Hebrides served to insulate the region from effective Scottish control, they also connected the islands to other maritime-focused kingdoms and their influences. Close examination of the Mac Sorley kindred demonstrates the varying impact of their cross-cultural position on their personal identities through consideration of how the Mac

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\(^9\) Ibid., 106.
Sorley men represented themselves, how they were perceived by others, who they supported, and with whom they surrounded themselves. The ways in which the Mac Sorley men engaged with their world highlights the complexity of ethnic identity, particularly in a region that was at once connected to, and removed from, larger and more powerful kingdoms. These identities, in turn, were the products, and are reflective, of gendered meaning. The Mac Sorleys’ identities, as projects of masculinity, show the influence of ethnic attachment and how masculinity was both conveyed and perceived in one region of Scotland during the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.

**Archipelagic Context and Consequences**

Waterways, particularly maritime ones, frequently delineate political boundaries, marking areas of influence and control; water, however, also connects over vast distances for those able to master sea travel. For much of the Middle Ages, the North Atlantic was a crucial highway connecting the west coast of Scotland to Ireland, Iceland, the northern islands of Orkney and Shetland, and Norway, providing a route for social, cultural, political, and economic ties. Through Ian Armit’s vision of an island-centred geography, scholars have turned the map of the North Atlantic upside down, reversing the understanding of what is centre and what is periphery.\(^\text{10}\) Areas that are marginal, remote or inaccessible by land become, from the perspective of sea travel, of central importance. For scholars taking this approach, these far flung regions are not peripheral, but instead ‘nodal,’ a term that conveys both a central and connecting role.\(^\text{11}\) For much of the Middle Ages, the Scottish kingdom was strongly affected and, in part,

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defined by the power of foreign influences conveyed by ship through and between these nodal regions. In the Hebrides, the Mac Sorley lords presented identities reflective of both the local archipelagic context and the influence of other cultures.

Reconsidering the north and west of Scotland from a maritime forward perspective is a highly successful strategy that demonstrates the close connections between geographically distant regions. The navigability of coastal Scotland, particularly in the west and north, creates archipelagic chains, which, in the Middle Ages, linked distant regions together politically, economically, and culturally. From the perspective of an island-centred geography, the Isle of Man, the Hebrides, Orkney, and Shetland take on entirely new significance far beyond their land-based peripheral context. To the inhabitants of these islands, “who plied the western seas in their war-galleys, these seaways defined their core; Scotland, Ireland, and England were their periphery.”

There is, however, some danger in overstating the closeness of these ties. This perspective may have defined the daily lives of the islanders and their coastal neighbours, but reminders that this was not the only opinion to matter were never far away. For the whole of the thirteenth century and onward, these regions were held on behalf of distant rulers, however autonomously they were permitted to govern local affairs. For these distant kings, the islands were nodal in that they formed connecting pathways, but they remained marginal in relation to the core of their kingdoms. In fact, it is only their marginality that permitted their nodality. For the Hebrides to act as a regional node, for instance, they had to exist outside the radius of easy control for Norway, Scotland, and Ireland. That this was the case is evident both from the centre’s need to reassert control and from the necessity of travel between node and centre in both

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directions. In other words, this was “an extensive sea-kingdom under formal Norwegian sovereignty and so able to assert its own independence from the kingdom of the Scots, yet so far distant from the land of Norway as to be beyond the range of direct rule.”\textsuperscript{13} In the case of the relationships between islands in the North Atlantic, sea travel facilitated these exchanges, but the sea remained both a connecting route and a dividing force. Through the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, as the relationship changed between the Hebrideans and other cultures, the impact of their geographically nodal location is apparent in the creation and perception of their personal identities, subject to both ethnic and gendered elements.

By the mid-thirteenth century, the western isles were dominated by three families—collectively, the Mac Sorleys—who traced their descent from Somerled mac Gillebride (d. 1164), styled in various sources as “\textit{regulus} of Argyll” and “king of the Hebrides and Kintyre.”\textsuperscript{14} Somerled had established himself in the first half of the twelfth century as a powerful ruler in the west with a vast maritime kingdom. A contemporary of Fergus of Galloway, Somerled similarly carved out a largely autonomous kingdom from which he both opposed and supported royal authority as suited his position. At his death, while in rebellion against Malcolm IV (d. 1165), Somerled’s kingdom was composed of parts of the Scottish mainland, including Lorn, Argyll, Kintyre, and Knapdale, to which he had added several important Hebridean islands wrested from Godred, king of Man and the Isles. Little conclusive can be said regarding Somerled himself, although he has long been of interest to scholars.\textsuperscript{15} His name alone, a Norse given name with a

\textsuperscript{13} John Marsden, \textit{Somerled and the Emergence of Gaelic Scotland} (Edinburgh: Donald, 2000), 21. See also, Crawford, “The Kingdom of Man and the Earldom of Orkney—Some Comparisons.”

\textsuperscript{14} The \textit{Manx Chronicle} and \textit{Chronicle of Melrose} both use \textit{regulus}, often translated as sub-king or under-king, and specify Argyll, while some of the Irish annals, \textit{Tigernach} among them, expand both his title and his region. See \textit{Chron. Man.} f. 35v; \textit{Chron. Mel.}, s.a. 1164; \textit{A.E.S.} II.245.

Gaelic patronymic, is indicative of the mixed cultural setting from which he arose. Somerled’s sons inherited from him domains at the intersection of Manx, Irish, Scottish, and Norse influence, as well as a similarly complex ethnic and cultural heritage, which they passed on to their own sons, and their sons after them.

Little is known of Somerled’s sons—the first generation of Mac Sorleys—who rarely appear in records. Of his five sons, nothing at all is known about Olaf; Gillabrigte was killed alongside his father in 1164; and, in 1192, Angus fought with another of his brothers, Ranald, defeating him, but was killed in 1210 together with his three sons. The remaining two brothers are better documented, but even here the sources are scarce. Dugald was likely the eldest brother, which is why in 1156, according to the *Manx Chronicle*, he was approached to be king over the Isles. Dugald next appears in an 1175 record from the church of Durham that states that Dugald, son of Somerled, had performed fealty to King Henry II (d. 1189) and committed to donate annually to the church. The date of Dugald’s death is unknown, as is the condition under which the kingship passed to his brother Ranald. Ranald appears in two undated charters: one, an endowment to Saddell Abbey in Kintyre, styles him as “Reginaldi filii Sorleti, qui se regem Insularum nominavit, dom. de Ergile et Kyntyre” (Ranald, son of Somerled, called king of the Isles, lord of Argyll and Kintyre). The second is the record of a donation to Paisley Abbey on behalf of himself and his wife, in which he is styled “dominus de Inchebal.” The significance of


17 A.E.S. II.254; *Chron. Man.* f. 40v., f. 41r.
20 *R.M.S.* II.3170 (1).
21 *R.M.S.* II.3170 (2).
the difference in titles is a matter of debate. While David Sellar argues against reading meaning into the change, A. A. M. Duncan and A. L. Brown suggest that the distinction is an important one, helping to date the Paisley Abbey donation to the period after Ranald’s defeat by his brother Angus (i.e. after 1192) and that the switch from rex to dominus reflects Ranald’s reduced power. It seems, however, unnecessary to read such significance into this change of terminology. One possible explanation for the difference simply may be that Saddell Abbey, located in Kintyre and founded by Somerled, was more likely to acknowledge and preserve the elevated title because of the close relationship between the abbey and Somerled and his sons. Further evidence of Ranald’s life is found in the Paisley donation, which also includes a description of Ranald’s seal, offering a valuable study of Ranald’s identity and how he wished to be perceived. As discussed in Chapter 2, the double-sided seal, depicting on one side, a mounted knight, and on the other, a manned galley, shows that whether or not he had suffered a reduction in territory, and consequently prestige, he still considered himself a powerful and important figure.

For the second half of the twelfth century and the first half of the thirteenth, the Mac Sorleys ruled largely without oversight. The second generation of Mac Sorleys continued to jostle for land and dominance in the Hebrides and it was in this generation that the three distinct Mac Sorley dynasties had their origins. From Dugald came the Mac Dougalls, traced through Dougal’s son Duncan or Donnchad (f. 1155-75), while Ranald, Donald or Domnall (d. c. mid-thirteenth century), and Ruairi or Ruaidri (d. c. 1227) became the eponyms of the Mac Donalds.

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24 See , above, 100-1.
and Mac Ruairis, respectively. Once again, little is known about these men. While nominally subject to both the Norse and Scottish kings, Somerled’s sons had passed an independence of authority on to their descendants.

Through the first half of the thirteenth century, neither the king of Scotland nor the king of Norway was able to exert effective control in the region, leaving the Mac Sorleys and the kings of Man and the Isles to dictate their own affairs. From time to time, one side or the other sought support from their nominal overlords. For instance, in the conflict between the brothers Rögnvald and Olaf, two claimants to the kingship of Man and the Isles, Rögnvald relied on King William I of Scotland (d. 1214) to keep his brother, Olaf, imprisoned. Despite this, it was the exception, rather than the rule that these Hebridean sea kings relied upon outside assistance.

The Mac Sorleys’ shared descent from Somerled established a degree of continuity in their circumstance and representation. Like Somerled himself, the Mac Sorleys derived much of their power and their identities from their mastery of the sea; an emphasis on nautical prowess, in fact, is one of the few commonalities among these men who were otherwise often divided. Sources for the lives of the Mac Sorley kindred originate from a variety of places, but the sea looms large in most of these accounts. Particularly in the Irish and Norse sources, maritime mastery acts as a prerequisite for masculine authority. While martial violence is lauded within these sources as central to masculine reputation, the sea is the vehicle by which epic battles were met and heroic action effected.

The centrality of the sea to Mac Sorley identity is apparent in sigillographic representations, where the use of galley or lymphad images on seals is one example of the fusion of chivalric values with Hebridean realities. From the late 1100s, there are records of Manx kings

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25 Chron. Man. f. 42r.
26 See below, 192-4.
using double-sided seals, combining ship and equestrian iconography.\footnote{Basil Megaw, “Ship Seals of the Kings of Man,” \textit{The Journal of the Manx Museum} 6, no. 76 (60 1959): 79.} Ranald, son of Somerled, used a very similar seal, described as showing, on one side, a ship full of armed men, and, on the other, a mounted warrior with sword drawn.\footnote{\textit{Pais. Reg.}, 149. See analysis of this seal at, McDonald, “Images of Hebridean Lordship in the Late Twelfth and Early Thirteenth Centuries.”} While Ranald’s use of equestrian imagery is reflective of his modern and magnatial identity, its combination with a galley shows him not only “straddling two worlds, Scoto-Norse and Anglo-French,” as McDonald identifies, but also translating between them.\footnote{McDonald, “Images of Hebridean Lordship in the Late Twelfth and Early Thirteenth Centuries,” 137.} In the same way that the double-sided seals used by kings, depicting a knight on one side and the king in majesty on the other, represented dual and indivisible elements of the king, complementary rather than supplementary, so too do the knight and galley on Ranald’s seal. The mounted warrior does not signify knighthood, per se, but instead an elite status vested in a man and conveyed through his leadership of other men; it represents the distillation of his masculine authority. It is complemented by a maritime image that conveys the same meaning in an alternative fashion. Ranald’s grandson, Angus Mór Mac Donald, and great-grandson, Alexander Mac Donald, as well as their cousin, Alexander Mac Dougall, all continued to use galleys on their seals, iconography inherited from their predecessors, reflective of their “Scoto-Norse context.”\footnote{Ibid., 135.} It is crucial to note, however, that it is not the equestrian seal that these Mac Sorleys adopted from their forefathers, but the image more representative of their maritime setting. While the galley does not offer the same clear connotations of chivalric values, it similarly conveys masculine authority, the leadership of men, and the possibility of violence. Here and elsewhere, the Mac Sorleys adopted the trappings and symbols of chivalric culture as filtered through Hebridean values.
The Mac Sorley Lords

Sommerled’s great-grandsons most strongly felt the political impact of their position between the Scottish and Norwegian crowns. As with their fathers and grandfathers, Ewen Mac Dougall, Angus Mór Mac Donald, and Dugald Mac Ruairi were nominally subject to both the Norwegian and Scottish crowns. While their forefathers held similar obligations, a key difference was that this time both kings were bent on consolidating and effectively controlling the margins of their realms. For the heirs, the pressures were different, but no less divisive. Of the Mac Sorley generation who held land directly of the king of Norway and of the Scottish king, Ewen best managed the delicate balance necessary. Through his early career, he was clearly a Hebridean vassal of Norway, obedient to Hakon and active between Argyll and Norway. In 1248, Ewen and Dugald Mac Ruairi approached King Hakon, both asking to be named king in the Isles. The actual area they sought to rule is somewhat unclear. *Hakonar Saga* states that it was the northern part of the Suðreyjar, with the Manx Hebrides, i.e. the islands of Lewis and Skye, likely excluded from this category. Hakon chose in favour of Ewen, but rather than returning to the Hebrides, both Ewen and Dugald remained in Norway for the winter. While Ewen and Dugald were in Norway, tragedy struck Haraldr, king of Man, and his new wife, Cecelia, Hakon’s daughter, who were drowned off the coast of Shetland. For Ewen, still in Norway, this misfortune represented new opportunity. Fearing the consequence of a power vacuum in the Suðreyjar, Hakon sent Ewen immediately west where he was to keep order. Dugald, on the other hand, remained with Hakon and participated in his Scandinavian campaigns, and while he was

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31 *Hakonar Saga*, 266.
32 *Hakonar Saga*, 266.
not initially nominated as king, he eventually returned to the Hebrides laying claim to royal title.\textsuperscript{33}

Until at least 1255, Ewen’s priorities, by accident or by design, lay in the Isles rather than his Scottish possessions. King Alexander died in 1249 while campaigning against Ewen, but there is little conclusive evidence regarding the outcome of his efforts. Most scholars now hold that Ewen was entirely displaced from Argyll proper, and possibly lost claim to his island territories as well.\textsuperscript{34} In 1255, Ewen was issued letters patent by King Henry III of England (d. 1272), announcing that Henry’s council would act as mediator with the Scottish crown on Ewen’s behalf.\textsuperscript{35} The next piece of evidence is internally datable to the period between 1242 and 1266, but is typically assumed to apply shortly after the letters patent were issued.\textsuperscript{36} Here, Ewen is recorded as owing hefty rents to the Scottish crown, the implication being that he had bought his way back into the king’s good graces and been restored to his mainland holdings.\textsuperscript{37} Ewen’s ability to go to the English king and to have him advocate on his behalf in his dispute with the Scottish king says a great deal about his position at this point, somewhat outside of the authority of both crowns but valuable nonetheless. The letters patent and the rent inventory indicate nothing about Ewen’s island territories, which, in theory at least, were vast and held of the Norwegian king. Whether he had the ability to enforce his claim is unknown, but as per Hakon’s

\textsuperscript{33} Hakonar Saga, 347. By 1263, Dugald was waiting for Haakon off the coast of the Isle of Skye, acting as ruler of the Hebrides, or at least part of them. Duncan and Brown, have speculated that Dugald was named king in 1255, replacing Ewen of Argyll, and McDonald argues similarly but suggests it occurred in 1249. I suggest Dugald and Ewen ruled different parts of the Hebrides or with Dugald as sub-king, from 1249.

\textsuperscript{34} Duncan and Brown, “Argyll and the Isles,” 211; McDonald, The Kingdom of the Isles, 103–4; Sellar, “Hebridean Sea Kings: The Successors of Somerled, 1164-1316,” 205. The traditional view, promoted mostly by quasi-scholarly clan historians, was that Ewen had maintained his mainland holdings and that Alexander’s efforts were unsuccessful Cf. Angus Macdonald and Archibald Macdonald, The Clan Donald, vol. 1 (Inverness: The Northern Counties Publishing Company, Ltd., 1896), 70. McDonald, The Kingdom of the Isles, 103.


\textsuperscript{36} Duncan and Brown, “Argyll and the Isles,” 212.

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.
direction in 1248, Ewen’s kingship in the Isles may have applied to three different configurations of the western isles. Ewen’s initial title, before Haraldr’s drowning, likely extended over the islands of Somerled’s sons, i.e. from Harris in the north to Islay in the south, excluding Skye. On Haraldr’s death, this was upgraded to include the Isle of Man and the Manx Hebrides, over which Ewen was to rule either as king of the entirety of the Suðreyjar, or as king until further assistance arrived.\(^38\) In the latter case, there is no indication over which portion of the isles Ewen might subsequently be left to rule; was it the territory of Somerled or the Manx islands? Either way, in 1249, Ewen had abandoned his mainland territories, forced out by Alexander, and made no serious effort to reacquire them for several years. In the intervening period, the sources show him active only in the Norwegian realm. At this relatively early point, Ewen’s ambitions centred on his island territories and his relationship with Hakon; however, that would not last long.

Ewen’s movements between 1249 and 1255 have him in Man in 1250 and with Hakon in Denmark in 1253. In McDonald’s evaluation, Ewen was “apparently reduced to a freebooting life in the Hebrides.”\(^39\) To Sellar, on the other hand, this was a continuation of Ewen’s “career as Hebridean sea-king.”\(^40\) The sources suggest, however, that the truth lay somewhere in the middle. In 1250, it appears that Ewen continued to lay claim to the title of rex insularum and sought to impose his authority on the Isle of Man. According to the Manx Chronicle, Ewen, together with Magnus, the son of Olaf Dubh, arrived in Man and began issuing orders as rex insularum.\(^41\) The Manx people, who apparently preferred Magnus to Ewen, demanded to see proof of Ewen’s kingship in the form of a letter from King Hakon and, unable to provide this, Ewen and his men were forcibly driven out. The Icelandic Annals states that in 1249, Dugald, son of Ruairi, the

\(^{38}\) The sources, however, are unclear as to which of these possibilities were intended.

\(^{39}\) McDonald, *The Kingdom of the Isles*, 104. Duncan and Brown also describe Ewen’s choices in terms of a settled existence in Lorn and a freebooting life with Haakon. See Duncan and Brown, “Argyll and the Isles,” 212.


\(^{41}\) *Chron. Man.* f. 48r.
same Mac Sorley who had petitioned with Ewen to become king in 1248, “took kingship in the Hebrides.”42 *Hakonar Saga* makes no mention of this, but in 1253 and again in 1263 Dugald is referred to as king.43 Duncan and Brown take notice only of Dugald as king in 1263 and suggest that the 1248 decision in favour of Ewen had been reversed in favour of Dugald, possibly in 1255 upon the return of Ewen’s mainland Scottish territories.44 McDonald suggests that Dugald directly succeeded Ewen in 1249, after the latter was no longer able to hold on to his lands.45 Both these arguments, however, put undue weight on the elevation of ‘king’ Dugald by assuming Dugald must have replaced Ewen as king in the Isles. There is another possible interpretation. Referring to Hakon’s 1253 campaign, *Hakonar Saga* proudly states that many noble men followed Hakon against the Danes, and with him were three other kings: his son, the future King Magnus, who was king together with his father from 1257; King John (Ewen) of Suðreyjar; and King Dugald.46 Frustratingly, the saga gives no sense regarding the extent of Dugald’s territory. Together, Ewen’s attempt to subdue the Isle of Man and the continued reference to King Ewen and King Dugald suggest that Ewen was perhaps intended by Hakon to be king of Man and the Isles, which Ewen tried unsuccessfully to effect in 1250, while Dugald, elevated in 1249, was to be king over a subsection of the isles, possibly the area over which Somerled had ruled. It is not until 1263, when Ewen had truly abandoned his bond with Hakon, that it appears the Norwegian king actually dispossessed Ewen.47 Neither a freebooter nor an effective sea-king, Ewen held legitimate authority in the isles, but lacked the ability to enforce it.

42 *A.E.S.* II.554.
43 *Hakonar Saga*, 347.
44 Duncan and Brown, *Argyll and the Isles*, 212 n. 2.
45 McDonald, *The Kingdom of the Isles*, 104.
46 *Hakonar Saga*, 286 (English); 275 (Old Norse).
47 *Hakonar Saga*, 363.
Through the 1240s and 50s, Dugald was present throughout the North Atlantic, acting on behalf of the Norwegian king and in his own interests. Like some of his Mac Sorley cousins, Dugald was noted for his raids in Ireland. The Irish annals, which style him ‘Mac Somurli,’ record:

A great fleet came from the Hebrides with Mac Somurli. They sailed round the west of Ireland into Connemara and robbed a merchant ship of all her goods; wine, copper, cloth and iron. The Sheriff of Connacht, Jordan d’Exeter, put out with a fleet full of Galls in pursuit of Mac Somurli and the fleet which had committed that piracy. Mac Somurli had landed on an island and drawn his ships up onto the land, and when they saw the Sheriff’s fleet approaching he and his men put on their armour and fighting accoutrement. When the Sheriff reached the island he and his men, with those of the Galls who were ready with him, went quickly ashore. But he was met and dealt with by Mac Somurli and his men, being killed at once, together with Piers Accabard, an excellent knight of his company, and other good men. The fleet of the Galls retired after losing the best of their lords, and Mac Somurli went back to his land, joyful and laden with spoil.48

While the Annals of Connaught suggests that Dugald’s activities in Ireland were of a ‘smash and grab’ nature, he also made lasting political alliances with the king of Connaught, Aed O’Connor, and helped to expel the English forces. In 1259, Dugald married one of his daughters to O’Connor and included as her tocher, or dowry, 160 warriors under the command of his brother, Alan.49 These “óglaigh” were the first of the galloglass in Ireland.50

Whereas Ewen and Angus attempted to use their position between their more powerful neighbours to increase their power and prestige by playing one off the other, Dugald and Alan’s engagements in Ireland were arguably part of their anti-Scottish, and the Irish Gaelic nobility’s anti-English, orientation. By strengthening Gaelic authority in the region, even with the assistance of the Norwegians, the Mac Ruairis and their Irish allies sought to limit encroachment

48 Ann. Connaught, s.a. 1258. There is certainly ambiguity regarding the identity of the perpetrator of this attack, but Seán Duffy, convincingly argues for Dugald Mac Ruairi based upon subsequent annalistic entries, which offer “firm evidence of Dubhghall’s association with both Ó Néill and Ó Conchobhair” (Seán Duffy, ed., The World of the Galloglass: Kings, Warlords and Warriors in Ireland and Scotland, 1200-1600 (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007), 18).
50 Ibid., 1.
from the English and Scottish crowns.  

This highlights fundamental differences in the approaches taken by the various Mac Sorley kin with regard to their nodal position.

Like Dugald, Angus Mór Mac Donald was known for his ability to mount successful raids across the Irish Sea. Angus Mór had the longest tenure of any of the Mac Sorley sea kings and for nearly fifty years acted as lord of Islay, although the significance of this position ebbed and flowed. Angus functioned primarily in a regional capacity rather than on the national stages; however, the role he sought in the Hebrides was of considerable prominence. A Gaelic praise poem directed to Angus described his raiding successes:

Striking land, more frequent forays,  
Is your desire on yonder folk;  
from now, there will often be a blood-tide  
washing the fair Hebrides.

You have sailed all round Ireland;  
rare the shore where you took no cows

This is one of the most interesting sources relating to Angus Mór. The anonymous Irish Gaelic praise poem dates to sometime after his father’s death in the mid-thirteenth century and begins, “Purchase your father’s poem, Aenghus.” Angus, son of Donald, not only presented himself publicly as his father’s son, but was seen by others as taking up Donald’s mantle and obligations. This paternal bond and patrilineal emphasis affected Angus’s actions throughout his life.

The poem offers insight into the character and reception of both Angus and his father. The first part of the poem emphasizes the inheritance that Angus received from his father, both in light of his goods and his rank. The author describes Angus’s inheritance, the material items as well as the intangible, and, in doing so, begins to define Donald’s place in the Irish Sea world:

To you he left his castle,

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52 McLeod and Bateman, *Duanaire Na Sracaire*, 87–9.  
53 See, 157–8, below where this is discussed at greater length.
yours each breast-plate, yours every gem,  
his land, his followers, his pointed weapons  
are yours, and his brown ivory pieces for chess.

Yours are your father’s slender dog chains,  
every treasure chest (?) is part of your lot,  
his house and his tribute without division  
yours Domhnall’s cattle herds and his studs.  

Angus was clearly expected to fully take up his father’s position, but it was a role that, according to the poet, Angus had not yet realized. The poem continues: “you are the son at the head of our battles,” once again underlining the connection between Angus and his father, but in even stronger terms. Angus’s authority and his entire identity are here tied to those of his father.

The poet addresses Angus directly using titles that draw on typical markers of lay masculinity. “O lion of Loch Cé,” and “O darling of women,” the poem’s author cries, in order to emphasize Angus’s nobility, bellicosity, and sexuality. The poem’s overall depiction of Angus is aggressive and energetic. In addition to the lion, Angus is also described as “otter-like” and as “a salmon searching every strand.” Neither of these animals conveys the gravitas of the lion, but they certainly reflect Angus’s comfort with and enjoyment of the sea. The poet also lists Angus’s genealogy—Síl Colla, Clann Somhairlidh, Síl Gofraidh, and Síl Cellaigh—describing his ancestry as “noble the blood from whence you sprung” and including Irish, Norse, and Manx family lines. Genealogies were one way to easily manipulate the impressions of a person’s identity by emphasizing or suppressing family connections as necessary. A Gaelic poem written

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54 McLeod and Bateman, Duanaire Na Sracaire, 83.
55 Ibid., 85.
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid.
58 Ibid., 89.
59 Ibid., 91.
in praise of Angus’ father, for example, emphasizes Donald’s connection to the tenth-century Viking king of Dublin, Amlaíb mac Gofraid.\textsuperscript{60}

Praise poems like this one should not be used as evidence of who a person was or what they did, but since they were intended to elicit a positive response, they shed light on how a person may have liked to be perceived. This particular poem was meant to flatter and to cajole, no doubt sentiments that inform behind many of the titles applied to Angus, including king of Lewis and Ireland’s king, rather than a reflection of historical reality. From the perspective of masculine identity, the poem emphasizes expected masculine traits and is particularly focused on Angus’s martial capabilities. By praising Angus’s ability to wage war and steal cattle, the poet makes a clear connection between aggressive, violent ambition and masculine identity.

Violence and, more specifically, its expression between men in competition, was a central component of elite lay masculine identity throughout the Irish Sea province and beyond. The Mac Sorleys had extensive opportunity to engage in martial activities on both regional and ‘international’ stages. Sturla Þórdarson, the author of \textit{Hakonar Saga}, glorifies violence in both the prose and skaldic parts of the saga. Alan Mac Ruairi, for example, is described in verse as \textit{fölkrakki} (battle-brave) and as \textit{felli} (a slayer).\textsuperscript{61} In chivalric society, knights were “privileged practitioners of violence.”\textsuperscript{62} As much as knights were members of an elite social class, their primary purpose was essentially and inescapably martial. Chivalric literature emphasizes the centrality of violence to knightly identity. Literary sources espouse the virtue of prowess, but it is clear that in these contexts, prowess was more than simply excellence. It required an especially bloody and violent form of excellence. Descriptions of Lancelot, the literary figure most known

\footnote{60}Ibid., 79.  
for knightly prowess, make clear the aggressively violent extent of medieval prowess: “Lancelot pursued them, hacking and eviscerating and slaying them as if they were dumb animals.” Less graphically, the *Chanson de Roland*, similarly offers clear ties between prowess and the exertion of extreme violence:

> Count Roland has gone back onto the field,  
> And wielding Durendal strikes valiant blows.  
> Faldrun of Pui he has there split in twain.  
> With him two dozen of the very best:  
> Never will man thirst for his vengeance more.  
> Just as the stag takes flight before the hounds,  
> So before Roland all the pagans flee.  
> Said the archbishop: ‘You do splendid deeds!  
> This is such valour as a knight should show  
> Who bears his arms astride a sterling steed:  
> In battle he should be both strong and fierce,  
> Or else four penny pieces are worth more,  
> And he should be a cloistered monk instead  
> And ever after pray for all our sins.’  
> Roland replies: ‘Strike on, no quarter yield!’

This passage defines chivalric prowess through Roland’s ability to kill the enemy’s bravest men by the dozen. Prowess, in chivalric contexts, embodied multiple medieval hegemonic masculine values: it was aggressive, active, and worldly. A knight without prowess was not worthy of being a knight at all, but instead, according to Archbishop Turpin, was like a monk, withdrawn from society and reliant on speech rather than action.

Perhaps surprisingly, the Mac Sorleys who spent time at Hakon’s court, including Ewen Mac Dougall and Dugald Mac Ruairi, likely had significant exposure to French chivalric literature as a result of King Hakon’s keen interest in the material. Beginning in approximately 1226, Hakon commissioned extensive translation of French literary works, including epic poems,

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courtly romances, lais, and fabliaux, known in Old Norse as *riddarasögur* or sagas of chivalry.\(^{65}\) In all, thirty-eight literary works were translated from Old French into Old Norse under Hakon’s direction.\(^{66}\) The Old Norse translations are perhaps more correctly considered adaptations of the original texts, most having undergone substantial alteration.

The *riddarasögur* were not the result of an organic penetration of literary texts, but instead formed a “well-planned programme,” designed to promote the values that Hakon wished his court to adopt.\(^{67}\) One aspect with which the Old Norse versions were especially concerned was the promotion of royal dignity. As a result, components of the stories that might be considered damaging to royal authority were frequently omitted.\(^{68}\) The Norse versions of Chrétien de Troyes’s works, for example, often give King Arthur greater prominence and present him as a more serious and better king than do the originals.\(^{69}\) These alterations demonstrate Hakon’s desire, and the agreement of his translators, to craft a literary landscape specific to his court.

The translations were one element of Hakon’s broader efforts to bring the Norwegian kingdom into the European community; however, the changes to the texts also offer some indication of how chivalric values were repackaged for Nordic consumption. More than simply straightforward copies of French material, the Norse versions reflect the influence of “a culture whose written and oral literature was traditionally composed of heroic epic, kings’ sagas, kings’


\(^{66}\) Irlenbusch-Reynard, “Translations at the Court of Hákon Hákonarson,” 387.

\(^{67}\) Ibid.

\(^{68}\) Ibid., 389.

praise poetry, and the myths of pagan gods.” For example, the translators frequently altered the physical appearance of characters. An emphasis on physical size, in particular, was one of the ways Norse translators altered the texts for the Norwegian court, exchanging dwarfs for giants and ensuring that heroes and their opponents alike were large in stature. The Norse versions, it seems, drew even stronger parallels between the physical size of a defeated opponent and the resulting honour. Norse translators also tended to privilege external action over thought or discussion, omitting or substantially shortening descriptions of feelings and internal deliberations. The riddarasögur originated as a consequence of Hakon’s own blended identity as both a traditional Norwegian king and a forward thinking and modern European monarch. His promotion of these French chivalric texts at the Norwegian court in modified versions helped to propagate Norse influenced chivalric values throughout the North Atlantic, and even into the Hebrides.

**Conflict Between Lieges**

The conflict between Hakon and Alexander came to a head in 1263, with Hakon descending on the Hebrides prepared to fight the Scots. For the Mac Sorleys, who had navigated between their two lords largely successfully before this point, direct conflict between Hakon and Alexander changed everything. The choices that Ewen Mac Dougall, Dugald Mac Ruairi, and Angus Mór Mac Donald made in this conflict reflect their priorities and their ambitions, while continuing to underscore the complexity of their personal identities.

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71 Bornholdt, “‘Everyone Thought It Very Strange How the Man Had Been Shaped.’”
72 Irlenbusch-Reynard, “Translations at the Court of Hákon Hákonarson,” 390.
Ewen, who is absent from the historical record between 1256 and 1263, chose to renounce his Norwegian allegiance in favour of the Scottish king early in Hakon’s invasion. *Hakonar Saga* depicts Hakon as surprised by Ewen’s change of heart and determined to win him back, but his efforts were unsuccessful.\(^73\) The saga continues to present Ewen favourably, giving no indication of personal animosity between him and Hakon, and although Ewen might have used the upheaval to try to hold onto all of his lands, instead he surrendered his Norwegian-held territories, begging the king to “fill that rule which he had given him.”\(^74\) Little is known about Ewen from the decade before Hakon’s invasion. He had several children, and although their mother’s name is unknown, it is likely that his heir, Alexander, and his daughter, Mary, were born before 1263. These two children offer a glimpse of his aims, now that he had reacquired his mainland territories and now that it was clear that his Hebridean aspirations would not be realized. Like his Mac Donald cousin, Angus, Ewen chose for his first-born son a name reflective of Scottish allegiances. The choice of the name Alexander reflects both the growing Scottish influence on the west coast and the changing orientation of west coast nobles.\(^75\) Perhaps Ewen hoped to curry favour with King Alexander III, given that his son’s birth likely occurred shortly before or shortly after Ewen received Argyll back from the king. Ewen’s orientation, however, was not strictly eastward facing. He reverted to Gaelic names for his younger sons, which may indicate cultural opportunism rather than true cultural adoption at this point. For his daughter, Mary, he sought the most powerful insular connection possible, marrying her to Magnus, king of Man and the Isles.\(^76\) While wholly conjectural, perhaps part of Ewen’s

\(^73\) *Hakonar Saga*, 347-8.
\(^74\) *Hakonar Saga*, 347-8.
\(^75\) McDonald, “Coming in from the Margins,” 186.
\(^76\) Interestingly, Mary appears in the Ragman Rolls (1296) performing fealty as Queen of Man, rather than her other possible titles at this point. PoMS, H6/2/0 (http://db.poms.ac.uk/record/source/7627/; accessed March 8, 2016).
willingness to abandon further attempts for the Isle of Man was related to this marriage agreement. There is no date available for the marriage between Mary and Magnus; Magnus had died by 1265, indicating that the marriage had occurred at an earlier date. Mary went on to marry three more times, appearing not to have had children by her first two husbands, Magnus of Man and Malise, earl of Strathearn. During this period Ewen seems to have abandoned his royal pretensions and settled in, crafting a new role for himself and for his family that was still no less at the heart of Hebridean power and politics.

It was only upon Hakon’s arrival in the southern Hebrides that Angus agreed to submit to him, appearing a rather reluctant participant hesitant to commit to either the Scottish or Norwegian position. The relevant passage in *Hakonar Saga* is not entirely clear, but it seems that Dugald, in his role as king of Innse Gall, may have helped negotiate Angus’s surrender.\(^77\) Angus agreed to give Islay to Hakon, who in turn resettled it on him and promised to ensure that Angus was protected should he and King Alexander come to terms. *Hakonar Saga* makes clear the significance of this exchange:

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\begin{align*}
\text{To Hacon squanderer of gold,} \\
\text{Angus gave Ilay island} \\
\text{As plunder to the warlike king.} \\
\text{[...]} \\
\text{What time those outlawed chieftains unruly} \\
\text{Brought to king Hacon, the queller of robbers,} \\
\text{Their helmeted heads, as a token of peace,} \\
\text{Bowing before him and doing homage.} \(^78\)
\end{align*}
\]

The terms described here suggest that Angus had not previously held his island territories from the Norwegian king, although others before him had. In surrendering to Hakon, Angus sought to protect his patrimony, which was otherwise threatened. While the saga refers to him as “Engus \(af\ Sátírì\)” (Angus of Kintyre) in his first mention, it is only the island of Islay that is named in his

\(^{77}\) *Hakonar Saga*, 348-9.  
\(^{78}\) *Hakonar Saga*, 349.
submission. This may indicate that Angus hoped to maintain his dual allegiance under King Alexander for Kintyre but his actions later that autumn would make that more difficult.

In the fall of 1263, Angus was one of the leaders of a raid deep into the Scottish mainland. Following failed negotiations with Alexander, Hakon sent sixty ships up Loch Long, across the portage at Arrochar, and into Loch Lomond. Commanded by a mix of Norwegians and Hebrideans, which included Angus and his brother, Magnus of Man, and Dugald and Alan Mac Ruairi, the men laid waste to the shore. On Hakon’s part, this strategy seems out of character unless it was aimed at diverting the Scottish force eastward; for the Hebrideans, however, the raid offered an opportunity not only to strike at the earls of Lennox but also the earls of Menteith, Lennox’s neighbours and allies, whose power was on the ascendancy and expanding in all directions. As Edward Cowan explains, “if the finer nuances of these subtle, and not so subtle, relationships escaped Hakon, there can be little doubt that Dugald, Alan, Angus, and Murchaid knew exactly what they were doing.” By pushing into the mainland, these men sought to reduce the power of their nearest competitors, and threats to their autonomy, while under the aegis of Hakon’s command. Whether or not the Lennox raid was in Hakon’s best interests, it offered his Mac Sorley supporters a chance to further their own, more regional, aims.

While other Hebridean leaders vacillated between Norwegian and Scottish overlordship, Dugald was staunchly in the Norwegian camp and is known for his adherence to the Norwegian cause, even after most of the Hebridean leaders had abandoned it. He appears to have been instrumental in Hakon’s campaign, helping to lead an attack on Kintyre, negotiating Angus Mór Mac Donald and his brother’s surrender, and as part of the force that attacked Lennox. Dugald’s

79 Hakonar Saga, 349 (English); 336 (Old Norse).
81 Ibid., 122.
brother, Alan, in particular, distinguished himself in Lennox according to *Hakonar Saga*, which states that Alan travelled almost across Scotland in his attack:

Sturdy swordsmen of the earl  
Far in Scotland pushed their forays,  
Feeding everywhere the wolf,  
Burning dwellings far and wide;  
Alan made their houses hot,  
Meting out to men fierce flame.\(^{82}\)

The Exchequer Rolls may corroborate this claim, with an entry for Stirling Castle listing 35s. 6d. spent on extra guards, given the presence of men from the Norwegian king in the area.\(^{83}\)

Hakon’s invasion was ultimately unsuccessful, despite the success of the Lennox raid. Perhaps in part a result of dividing his forces for this raid, the Battle of Largs (October 2, 1263) came to an inconclusive end and the Norwegian forces withdrew to Orkney in order to overwinter. While in Orkney, Hakon fell ill and died. His son, Magnus, was unwilling to continue his father’s Scottish campaign, and entered negotiations with Alexander, eventually resulting in the Treaty of Perth. As part of the terms of the treaty, Ewen and Angus were restored to their lands. Dugald, on the other hand, found continuing to harry the Scottish coast in Caithness in 1265, escaped the Scottish forces, possibly to Norway, together with his son, and disappears from the historical record.\(^{84}\)

Although Dugald was unwilling to accept Scottish suzerainty, many of the other MacSorleys exhibited a far greater degree of integration within the Scottish kingdom. This was not a new process, but the final transfer of the Hebrides from Norwegian to Scottish authority certainly accelerated it. Like many mainland Scottish nobles, the Hebridean lords were patrons of the Scottish church, and in particular, Paisley Abbey. In an undated donation to Paisley Abbey, \(^{82}\) *Hakonar Saga*, 355.  
\(^{83}\) These are “*hominum vigilancium.*” *Exchequer Rolls*, i. 24; Cowan, “Norwegian Sunset—Scottish Dawn,” 121.  
\(^{84}\) *Magnus Saga*, 377.
Angus granted half a mark annually from his own house and additional funds from every inhabited dwelling in his lands, “ad exemplum avi mei et patris mei” (following the example of my grandfather and my father). The order of the Paisley register also literally has Angus’s grant following similar grants from his father, Donald, and grandfather, Ranald (Reginald), but the idea of following in his father’s footsteps was a key theme throughout Angus’s life. Angus’s grants to Paisley Abbey primarily concern a church much closer to the heart of Angus’s power base than Paisley, the church of St. Queran, located in Kintyre. These donations specify his bestowal of the church of St. Queran to Paisley Abbey, excluding any episcopal obligations. In one case, however, the obligation ranges far more widely. One charter promises an annual financial donation “de singulis domibus per omnes terras meas de quibus fumus exit” (from every house throughout all my lands from which smoke is expelled). Taken literally, this would have included inhabited dwellings not only from Kintyre, but also the rest of the lordship of Islay, including Islay itself, Colonsay, Gigha, and the southern part of Jura. This charter, then, directed funds from lands held of the Norwegian king to a Scottish abbey, established and patronized by the Stewards of Scotland. This may, perhaps, be taken as further evidence of Angus’s early interest in full participation in the Scottish political community.

Given Ewen’s early transfer from Norwegian to Scottish allegiance, it is unsurprising that he also sought full integration with the Scottish political community. The last record of Ewen dates to 1268, when he witnessed a charter of Malise, earl of Strathearn (d. 1271), possibly on the occasion of his daughter’s marriage to Malise. Ewen’s death is traditionally dated to

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85 *Pais. Reg.* 127.
86 *Pais. Reg.* 127-30, 136-7. Only one of these charters is dateable (*Pais. Reg.*, 127-8), that being to the period between the birth of Alexander III and the death of Alexander II (April 4, 1241 X July 8, 1249).
87 *Pais. Reg.* 127.
sometime in or after 1268, but likely before 1275, when his son, Alexander, was operating independently.\textsuperscript{89} One of Ewen’s last acts, then, was to marry his daughter to a powerful, native Gaelic lord on the Scottish mainland. After Ewen, the Mac Dougalls continued to operate with an opportunistic and expansionist policy that, while now subject to the authority of the Scottish crown, still maintained a high degree of autonomy.

Like his father, Alexander Mac Dougall, known as Alexander of Argyll, took full advantage of his maritime position, operating widely in the Irish Sea province and beyond. While Alexander’s position as lord of Argyll automatically positioned him in a maritime milieu, his marriage to a daughter of the Red Comyn, John, lord of Badenoch (d. c. 1277), brought him into wider political prominence. In a local context, Alexander’s position pitted him against his Mac Sorley cousins, the Mac Donald lords of Islay, with whom he battled for Hebridean dominance, but on a larger scale, his personal and political allegiances tied the Mac Dougalls closely to the competition for Scottish dominance overall.

Until the death of King Alexander III in 1286, Alexander of Argyll predominantly functioned as a loyal Hebridean vassal of the crown, whose position was not insignificant but hardly one of great importance. He was active throughout the Irish Sea province and this early period, in particular, reflects the mercantile priorities of the lordship of Argyll. In 1275, King Alexander III was forced to write to the English king Edward I, requesting that some of Alexander of Argyll’s men, who had been arrested in Bristol on suspicion of piracy (\textit{raptores in mari}), be released together with their goods.\textsuperscript{90} The same year, Alexander participated in a campaign against his late brother-in-law’s illegitimate son, Godfrey, who had sought to make himself king of the Isle of Man. Alexander, along with his Mac Sorley cousin, Alan Mac Ruairi,

\textsuperscript{89} \textit{SAEC}, 382-3; PoMS, H1/8/90 (http://db.poms.ac.uk/record/source/996/; accessed March 8, 2016)
\textsuperscript{90} \textit{RRS IV.1}, no. 92.
likely contributed a significant portion of the ninety ships sent against Godfrey. Unlike his father’s attempt on Man in 1250, Alexander came to the island in 1275 not as a challenger to the Manx king but instead as an agent of royal enforcement, and this time the Manx defences were no match for the Scottish army sent against them. Alexander’s most politically significant role under Alexander III was as one of the participants, alongside Angus and Alan, in a council acknowledging the king’s granddaughter, Margaret of Norway, as heir to the crown of Scotland should the king die without a male heir. The Mac Sorley presence at this council is seen as evidence of their position “as equal and integral members of the community of the realm.” The state in which the Mac Sorley lords were counted among the most important barons of the realm, however, existed for only a brief period of time. Furthermore, the language of the charter resulting from this council suggests their prominence in this case was partly a consequence of their position as former vassals of Norway. Even the moment in which the Hebridean lords were most visibly acting as Scottish barons was connected to their Norwegian vassalage.

To some extent, as the fourteenth century approached, the political success of the families bore witness to the ethnic and cultural priorities of the Mac Sorley men. The Mac Dougalls, particularly Ewen, demonstrated personal identities with overlapping elements reflective of multiple ethnic attachments. Their flexibility in these identities and the successful strategic deployment of them created significant advantage through the shifting political context of the second half of the thirteenth century. Angus Mac Donald’s power and priorities, however, were largely contained within the Irish Sea province; the Norse, Irish, and Scottish heritage to which

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91 SAEC, 382-3; McDonald, “Coming in from the Margins,” 183.
92 PoMS, H4/42/5 (http://db.poms.ac.uk/record/source/4285/; accessed March 9, 2016).
93 Ibid., 184.
94 Foedera i. II. 266. Uniquely, this charter spells out the extent of the realm of Scotland with a high level of specificity, stating, “de toto Regno—de insula Manniae, & de omnibus aliis Insulis, ad dictam Regnum Scotiae spectantibus.”
he laid claim were combined to reflect a Hebridean identity he prioritized. One implication of this was that the Mac Donalds lacked a strong cultural ally to support their local efforts, at least until the rise of the Bruces. Dugald Mac Ruairi’s total inability to accept the reality of the Hebridean position after the Treaty of Perth shows the strength of his attachment to the Norse elements of his own identity. In contrast, Alan and his heirs seemed able to absorb the new significance of the Scottish kingdom without a loss of other elements.

Through the turn of the fourteenth century, the Mac Sorleys continued to engage in local disputes, jostling for primacy in the isles, and although they still sought to integrate with Scottish society, the Scottish political community was tearing itself apart. The death of Alexander III in 1286, followed by his granddaughter’s death in 1290, created a power vacuum into which the whole of the Scottish political community was drawn. The ‘Great Cause’ entrenched older patterns of support, dividing the Scottish nobility, and the resulting Scottish Wars of Independence spread into the Irish Sea province. For the Mac Sorleys, however, the conflict was more about local dominance than patriotism; during the last fifteen years of the thirteenth century and into the early fourteenth, the Mac Dougalls, now headed by Alexander of Argyll and supported by the Mac Ruairis, and the Mac Donalds, still with Angus at the helm, each attempted to exploit the changing situation to their own ends.

Of the three Mac Sorley kindreds, the Mac Ruairis held the least political authority during the Wars of Independence. In Dugald’s absence, Alan had become the de facto head of the Mac Ruairis. He and his sons, Lachlan (d. c. 1308) and Ruairi (d. c. 1318), were best known for their resistance to central authority, whether English or Scottish. Two late nineteenth-century historians characterized the Mac Ruairis as having “inherited a large share of the piratical tendencies of the ancient vikings . . . invading and carrying slaughter and depredations into the
islands."\(^{95}\) Almost uniformly, the Mac Ruairis are also depicted in extant contemporary records (exclusively from Scottish and English sources) as pirates and plunderers and it is no surprise that Alan and his heirs had a complicated relationship with the Scottish crown. While Alan’s participation in the 1284 council as a baron of the kingdom of Scotland indicates some integration with the Scottish political community, it may be more accurate to say that the Mac Ruairis maintained an alliance with Alexander of Argyll, and by following the Mac Dougall lead, present an appearance of having integrated, but without conviction.\(^{96}\)

While Ewen Mac Dougall had claimed an ineffective kingship over Argyll and the Isles, his son’s claims were nearly as far reaching but far more effectively employed, his prominence aided by his marriage into the Comyn family. In 1291, Alexander of Argyll became one of the auditors chosen by the Balliol/Comyn faction to aid in determining the next king of Scotland. Together with Alexander, two other men also married to daughters of the Red Comyn were chosen: Geoffrey Mowbray and Andrew of Moray.\(^{97}\) It is highly unlikely Alexander would have been asked to participate without his Comyn connection and none of the other Mac Sorleys were present for either party. Throughout his career, Alexander of Argyll sought to consolidate his family’s power in the west. In several instances this placed him in direct conflict with his Mac Sorley cousins, the Mac Donalds.

In 1286, in what is known as the Turnberry Band, Angus Mac Donald, together with his son, Alexander of the Isles; Patrick, earl of Dunbar, and his three sons; Walter Stewart, earl of Menteith, and his two sons; Robert Bruce, lord of Annandale, and Robert Bruce, earl of Carrick; Richard de Bruce and his sons; and James Steward of Scotland together with his brother, John,

\(^{95}\) Macdonald and Macdonald, _The Clan Donald_, 1:87.
\(^{96}\) _Foedera_ i. II, 266.
entered into an agreement to support Richard de Burgh, earl of Ulster, and Thomas de Clare in an unspecified effort. By 1286, the competing Bruce and Balliol factions had already coalesced and begun to position themselves to best advantage. While those involved in the Turnberry Band were eventually Bruce supporters, this agreement was not, contrary to some beliefs, an early declaration of Bruce support. Nonetheless, Angus’s participation is an interesting development in his career, highlighting the limitations of his reach despite the illustrious company he was keeping. The Turnberry Band was decidedly westward facing and most likely related to activities in Ireland; thus despite the presence of the most powerful mainland Scottish political figures, Angus remained active primarily within the context of the Irish Sea province.

It seems that Angus was somewhat resistant to King Edward’s authority in the 1290s, being required in July of 1292 to swear to keep the peace in the isles and apparently refusing John Balliol homage after his accession in 1292. By 1294, Angus had died and was succeeded by his son, Alexander of the Isles. For most of his life, Alexander had served under his father’s lordship, which had not adequately prepared him for the conditions he would face. Alexander operated as lord of Islay for approximately five years during a period of extreme instability in the Hebrides and the British Isles more generally. During this period, the Mac Donalds and the Mac Dougalls increasingly came into direct conflict, buoyed by Edward of England’s involvement in Scotland.

At some point before 1293, either during Alexander III’s reign or in the first year of John Balliol’s reign (r. 1292-96), Alexander Mac Dougall was awarded an indistinct form of

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100 *Foedera* i. II. 761c, 787.
lieutenancy over the isles. An undated writ required the people of Argyll, Kintyre, and Lewis to be obedient and to support Alexander who had been given the “curam et custodiam insularum et aliarum terrarum nostrarum” (the care and custody of the islands and others of our lands). The writ, which was valid for less than one year, required Alexander to protect and defend the region and to collect royal debts as necessary. Duncan and Brown, who first published the writ, attribute it to the period between 1264 and 1293, excluding the period of the Guardianship (1286-92) based upon internal evidence. Others have suggested that the writ was issued in 1284, when Alexander was at Scone to acknowledge Margaret as the king’s heir. It is typically assumed to have been issued before John Balliol’s acquisition of the throne and, thus, used as a precedent to explain the powers vested in Alexander upon Balliol’s creation of three new sheriffdoms in the isles. However, there seems no particular reason for King Alexander to choose the lord of Argyll for this role. Alexander of Argyll was no more prominent or powerful, or even loyal to the crown, than was Angus Mór Mac Donald, at least before the succession crisis. Consequently, it may instead make sense to attribute the lieutenancy to the first year of Balliol’s reign and to view it as a stop-gap measure: the installation of a man, loyal to the Balliols, to ensure order on the western seaboard until a more permanent solution might be instituted. Compressing the timeframe for these events would indicate a rapid rise in Alexander of Argyll’s fortunes, even more closely tied to the Balliol/Comyn faction than previously thought. Redating the writ to a later period means that several other events may have preceded the creation of the lieutenancy, including Alexander’s obligation to keep peace in the isles in support of the

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102 Latin text, Duncan and Brown, Argyll and the Isles, 220. See also, PoMS, H1/9/1 (http://db.poms.ac.uk/record/source/7267/; accessed March 9, 2016).
103 Duncan and Brown, Argyll and the Isles, 217.
104 Ibid.
Guardians and his witnessing of Balliol’s fealty to Edward of England, in July and November, respectively, of 1292. By dating the creation of the lieutenancy to the very end of 1292 or beginning of 1293, a pattern appears of intense and deliberate consolidation and delegation of royal power in the west. Contrary to the analysis of previous scholars, Alexander of Argyll’s place at the centre of all this was very much a reward for his support of Balliol.

At Balliol’s first parliament in 1293, an ambitious new organization of royal authority was proposed in the west. The three new sheriffdoms under Alexander of Argyll, William, earl of Ross, and James Steward were created in order to effect royal authority on a local level. All three men served as auditors in the Great Cause; the earl of Ross, alongside Alexander, had served as one of Balliol’s, while James Steward had been appointed as a Bruce auditor. Through the sheriffs, the crown expected to extend protection of the west, both in terms of external and internal threats, given that as a result of “its innumerable inlets and islands, the western coast of Scotland was strategically very vulnerable to outside attack, and, given that the Bruce stronghold in Scotland lay in the west, vulnerable also to civil insurrection.” Balliol’s short and troubled rule meant that this plan was never fully realized. While there is evidence that Alexander acted as sheriff, neither the earl of Ross nor James Steward is addressed specifically in that role. The planned reorganization, however, once again emphasizes Alexander’s connection with the crown and integration with the Scottish ‘centre,’ as well as his role as a powerful Hebridean landowner.

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106 *Foedera*, i. II. 761a; PoMS, H1/51/2 (http://db.poms.ac.uk/record/source/6894/; accessed March 10, 2016).
108 *APS*, i, 453.
In February 1293, Alexander was required in his role as sheriff to ensure that Angus Mac Donald, absent from Balliol’s first parliament, appeared to do homage.\textsuperscript{110} Alexander was also frequently in conflict with Angus’s eldest son, Alexander Mac Donald, indicating the ambition of both men as well as the limitations of a region unable to support two separate power brokers. In the late 1290s, following a period during which Alexander of Argyll was clearly out of favour with Edward—imprisoned at Berwick Castle, his lands confiscated by yet another Alexander, the earl of Menteith—conflict between Mac Dougall and Mac Donald intensified.\textsuperscript{111} Alexander Mac Dougall’s fall from Edward’s favour sometime in 1296 provided an opportunity for Alexander Mac Donald to distinguish himself in service to the English king. In 1296 and 1297, he acted on behalf of Edward to suppress rebellion in Scotland.\textsuperscript{112} A series of exchanges between Mac Donald and Edward show Mac Donald operating as a key agent of English control on the western coast.\textsuperscript{113}

On his release in May of 1297, Alexander Mac Dougall wasted little time before once again challenging the Mac Donalds.\textsuperscript{114} A complaint by Mac Donald in 1297 claims that Mac Dougall, together with his brother-in-law, John Comyn (k. 1306), had burned and ravaged Mac Donald lands.\textsuperscript{115} He may also have been aided by their Mac Ruairi cousins, Lachlan (also known as Roland) and Ruairi, sons of Alan Mac Ruairi, who are both named in the complaint. Two years later, Alexander Mac Donald was killed by Mac Dougall, an event recorded by Irish annals and likely influenced by the roles that Alexander’s sons would play as galloglasses in Ireland.\textsuperscript{116}

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{110} PoMS, H1/51/4 (http://db.poms.ac.uk/record/source/7409/; accessed March 10, 2016).
\item \textsuperscript{111} PoMS, H1/27/0 (http://db.poms.ac.uk/record/source/7581/; accessed March 10, 2016).
\item \textsuperscript{112} Lamont, “Alexander of Islay, Son of Angus Mór,” 161.
\item \textsuperscript{113} PoMS, H3/0/0 (http://db.poms.ac.uk/record/source/9198/; accessed March 18, 2016); Rot. Scot. i, 22-23.
\item \textsuperscript{114} PoMS, H5/1/0 (http://db.poms.ac.uk/record/source/9147/; accessed March 10, 2016).
\item \textsuperscript{115} PoMS, H3/0/0 (http://db.poms.ac.uk/record/source/7965/; accessed March 10, 2016).
\item \textsuperscript{116} The Annals of Loch Cé, Annals of the Four Masters, and Annals of Connaught record this event and date it to 1299. The Annals of Ulster incorrectly places this under 1255.
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Mac Dougall appears to have remained outside of Edward’s favour through to the early years of the fourteenth century, when, in 1301, Edward issued letters patent for the admiral of the Cinque Ports to receive him and his family, including his two sons and his daughter together with her husband, Lachlan Mac Ruairi, into the king’s peace; by 1304, Alexander of Argyll was again in the king’s good graces and empowered to support the king’s efforts in Scotland.\textsuperscript{117}

Alexander Mac Donald’s complaint in 1297 demonstrates just how far out of hand the conflict on the west coast had become. Although he names Alexander Mac Dougall as the instigator, their Mac Ruairi cousins were the ones actively causing havoc. Ruairi and Lachlan, sons of Alan Mac Ruairi, were reportedly attacking the king’s army and plundering the islands of Skye and Lewis where they burned the land, killed the men, and raped the women.\textsuperscript{118} That the Mac Ruairis should be found actively supporting Alexander of Argyll is unsurprising, although it is unclear how far back Mac Ruairi support of the Mac Dougalls went. Alan assisted Alexander in 1275 to subdue the Isle of Man for the Scottish crown and at some point before 1301, possibly before 1297, his son, Lachlan, married one of Alexander of Argyll’s daughters, further cementing the bonds between the two kindreds.\textsuperscript{119} Alan disappears from the historical record by 1296 and was succeeded by his only legitimate child, a daughter. The illegitimacy of his two sons and the inheritance of the lordship by their legitimate half-sister, known as Christian, Christina, or Christiana of Garmoran, may well have contributed to their estrangement from

\textsuperscript{117} PoMS, H1/27/0 (http://db.poms.ac.uk/record/source/9245/; accessed March 10, 2016); McDonald, \textit{The Kingdom of the Isles}, 168.

\textsuperscript{118} Joseph Stevenson, ed., \textit{Documents Illustrative of the History of Scotland}, vol. II (H. M. General Register House, 1870), ii. 444.

\textsuperscript{119} Letters patent from June 6, 1301, issued on behalf of Edward I, include “Loughlan le fitz Aleyn, qi ad espuse la fille le fit Alexandre” (Stevenson, \textit{Docs}, ii. 610). An earlier document from 1297 makes clear that Lachlan should be kept from Alexander of Argyll’s lands for reasons connected to Alexander’s daughter, but the document was very damaged and the rest of that clause has been destroyed. Nevertheless, it is likely that Lachlan’s marriage to Alexander’s daughter predates his attacks on Skye and Lewis. The same document states that Lachlan gave up his son, Alexander, as hostage for his good behaviour. This may offer further evidence that the marriage occurred earlier, likely by several years. (\textit{Rot. Scot.} 40-41).
Scottish circles. Although named Alan’s heir, Christiana appears to have been unofficially supplanted by Lachlan shortly after inheriting. To Lachlan’s mind, and likely among Gaelic society more broadly, his illegitimacy was no bar to power. The tolerance within Gaelic Scotland toward illegitimacy has long been acknowledged as part of the “pursuit of male succession and furthering the clan interest;” however, in the Mac Ruairis’ case, a legitimate daughter’s inheritance took precedence over either of Alan’s illegitimate sons.  

Although it was Christiana Mac Ruairi who inherited claim to the lordship of Garmoran, her half brothers’ efforts and eventual acquisition of the lordship indicate both Lachlan and Ruairi’s determination and a broader acceptance of their claims in spite of their illegitimacy.

In 1308, the last mention of Lachlan in the historical record, William, earl of Ross, wrote to King Edward II seeking his help with Lachlan, who was in arrears for lands granted to him. The earl of Ross characterized Lachlan as, “si graunt seignor qe il ne veut respundre a nuly mes si ne soit par graunt detresse ou par dotainz de vous” (such a high and mighty lord, he will not answer to anyone except under great force or through fear of you). The difficulties of the earl of Ross, whose position in the west was analogous to Alexander of Argyll’s, in bringing to heel a subject lord demonstrates Lachlan’s stubborn independence as well as the generalized chaos still reigning on the west coast of Scotland. Lachlan, like his uncle Dugald, was unimpressed by the agents of Scottish royal authority, content to carve out, sometimes literally, his own place in the west.

While the Mac Dougalls are relatively well attested during the second half of the thirteenth century and the beginning of the fourteenth, the same may not be said of their Mac Sorley cousins, either Mac Donald or Mac Ruairi. For these branches, the records are sparser and

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120 Iain G. MacDonald, Clerics and Clansmen: The Diocese of Argyll Between the Twelfth and Sixteenth Centuries, vol. 61, Northern World (Boston: Brill, 2013), 164.  
121 CDS, iv. 400. Translation from Barrow, The Kingdom of the Scots, 348.
their activities are more difficult to follow. Unlike the lords of Argyll, the lords of Islay and of Garmoran struggled to integrate with the Scottish centre in the years after 1266. This changed with the ascendancy of the Bruces, whose identity and power base incorporated west coast elements that King Robert I particularly embraced.\textsuperscript{122} The sons and grandsons of Raonall Mac Sorley made different choices than the Mac Dougalls. In some cases, this diminished their authority, while in other instances their prestige increased. Nevertheless, the strategies they used demonstrate how their identities were shaped by the “multi-ethnic milieux” they inhabited.\textsuperscript{123}

**What’s in a Name?: Mac Sorley Identity, Names, and Titles**

Between the 1240s and early 1300s, the position of the Mac Sorleys had changed dramatically. The journey from vassals of Norway, if only nominally, to barons of the Scottish kingdom was not an easy one, and while much changed, many aspects remained the same. The Mac Sorleys, culturally and politically connected to Norway, Ireland, and Scotland, reflected their nodal geographic location through their complex and multifaceted identities. From the 1240s to the early years of the fourteenth century, the political context of the Hebrides had changed dramatically, but whether under official Norwegian or Scottish overlordship, the Mac Sorleys crafted identities that reflected their cross-cultural position. These identities were situational, and were frequently overlapping and concentric in ways that had implications for the Mac Sorleys within the Hebrides and beyond.

One of the ways in which the Mac Sorleys’ cross-cultural position finds expression in the records is through the Mac Sorley naming practices. These naming traditions included Norse, Gaelic, and Scoto-Norman names and the adoption of alternative versions eased the transition

\textsuperscript{122} See, above, 73-6.
\textsuperscript{123} McDonald, *The Kingdom of the Isles*, 10.
between cultural settings. Ewen Mac Dougall, for example, was Eugenius in Latin documents and Jon in Norse ones. In the earliest document in which he appears, a 1240 charter granting lands on the isle of Lismore to the church of Argyll, he is styled, “Eugenius miles, filius Duncani de Erregeithill” (Ewen the knight, son of Duncan of Argyll). This is not simply the case of a clerk Latinizing the names of all the participants because the witnesses to this gift overwhelmingly bear un-Latinized Gaelic names. In addition to representatives of the church, laymen, including Therthelnac Makdouenald, Gillecolm Makgillemichell, Dunedall Makgilascop, Kennach Makgillemichell, and Giliso Macmollrenni, are found lending their authority to the grant. Thus, the adoption of the Latinized name Eugenius may suggest a deliberate choice.

Lachlan Mac Ruairi was another who made use of multiple different name forms. He is also sometimes identified as Roland in contemporary documents, which adds an interesting dimension to his identity. Given that his orientation was extremely Hebridean and his actions demonstrate a rejection of central authority, the adoption of a typically Norman French name is perhaps unexpected. Unfortunately, the significance of the use of his different names in different contexts is unclear. There are four documents referring to him written in French, two of which use Lachlan and the other two using Roland; documents written in Latin are similarly divided, with one using Roland and the other, Lachlan. All of the records concerning Lachlan were issued by others and so evidence of Lachlan’s preferred form of address is lacking. No seal survives for Lachlan, but his Ragman Roll entry, to which he would have applied his seal, lists

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125 Ibid.
126 The French documents include, Instrumenta Publica, 157-9; CDS, iv, app., I, no. 14; Stevenson, Docs., ii, no. 610. The Latin sources are: Stevenson, Docs., ii, nos. 444, 445.
Rouland fitz Aleyn Mac Rotherik, which may indicate a personal preference for Roland. It is tempting, but certainly presumptuous, to imagine Lachlan Mac Ruairi casting himself as the hero of the *Chanson de Roland* and making his stand in defence of his personal Charlemagne, perhaps Alexander of Argyll. Lachlan Mac Ruairi, however, was not the only Lachlan to have used Roland as an alternative name. Lachlan of Galloway (d. 1200), the grandson of Fergus of Galloway, was also sometimes known as Roland and it is most likely that same pattern was replicated by Mac Ruairi.

The naming conventions for Angus Mac Donald, on the other hand, are striking in their consistency. With concessions for spelling and pronunciation, Angus is always identified as Angus, and typically, as Angus, son of Donald. Only one of his donations, a gift to Paisley Abbey, is from the original charter; all the others are preserved through later inspections. As a result, this one charter is of particular importance regarding Angus’s preferences. While the inspections invariably refer to Angus as *dominus*, his own donation simply titles him “Angus *filius Douenaldi***. This is similar to the legend on his seal, which reads S ENGVS DE YLE FILII DOMNALDI. This form appears in Latin-language, Scottish-issued sources as well as Irish Gaelic, and French-language, English-issued ones. The deliberate emphasis of his lineage conveys the legitimacy of his position as lord of Islay, but it also suggests something more about his personal identity. Angus’s sense of self was at least partially rooted in his place as his father’s son. Angus’s presentation of himself as an extension of his father is also reflected in the praise poem written for him. In that case, the poet played upon Angus’s connection to his ancestors and their reputations generally, but also the reputation of his father, Donald, more specifically.

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127 *Instrumenta Publica*, 157-59.
Donald is portrayed as generous and clever, fair-haired and blue-eyed, and as a man of established wealth and position. For Angus to live up to the ideal thus established, his own naval successes were not enough, he also needed to embrace his father’s responsibilities and debts. Angus’s representation of himself and the depiction of him by others that emphasize his role as his father’s son are unique among the Mac Sorleys. No other Mac Sorley so clearly crafted an identity built upon his father’s reputation.

Still, as fathers, sons, brothers, and cousins, the Mac Sorley men were defined, at least partly, through their relationships with each other. Given the nature of the sources regarding the Mac Sorleys, it is unsurprising that we know few details about their own perspectives on their relationships with one another; these sources, however, do indicate the centrality of the bond between fathers and sons. In a material sense, inheritance was a key element of this relationship.

The Mac Dougalls were the only family whose patrimony was passed between 1240 and 1310 according to primogeniture, lending some stability to the family line, if not their possessions, which varied as consequence of a series of resignations and confiscations. Both the Mac Donalds and the Mac Ruairis, on the other hand, saw some degree of lateral inheritance. Although Alexander Mac Donald was clearly designated as heir to Angus Mór, his father, on Alexander’s death in 1299, his brother, Angus Óg, inherited. The inheritance situation of the Mac Ruairis was complicated by Dugald’s stubborn allegiance to the Norwegian crown and illegitimacy within Alan’s family line.

The relationship between father and son also had significance beyond material considerations. The inclusion of the sons of key political figures in the Turnberry Band of 1286, for example, both literally required that the sons, including Alexander Mac Donald, participate in their fathers’ obligation and, more metaphysically, ensured its continuance through the next
In this way, the sons named in the band took on the personal obligation named, but also added a psychological weight to the significance of the relationship created. The participation of sons, and especially heirs, in their father’s transactions also helped to familiarize them with their future inheritances, introduce them to local and regional powerbrokers, and generally learn the business of lordship. In other words, by shadowing their father’s activities and taking on various tasks of their own they engaged in a kind of unofficial apprenticeship, a practice common throughout medieval Europe. Lachlan Mac Ruairi’s attachment to his father-in-law, Alexander Mac Dougall, may also have been rooted in a similar filial relationship. The bonds between Mac Sorley fathers and their sons had implications for the way these men thought of and presented themselves. The inclusion of a father’s name in charters and on seals emphasized a claim not only to the material inheritance, but also to the more psychologically valuable lineage and personal inheritance.

While the Mac Sorleys both chose to refer to themselves with reference to their fathers and were so referred to by others similarly, it is striking that not one of the documents issued by the Mac Sorleys nor any of their extant seals refer to their knightly status. Three of the seven men examined in this chapter, Ewen Mac Dougall, his son Alexander, and Angus Mór Mac Donald, are referred to by others in the sources in such a way as to suggest that they had been knighted and consequently were official participants in chivalry’s “exhilarating international word of aristocratic fellowship.” The evidence strongly suggests that Ewen had been knighted at some point prior to his first appearance in the historical record, although there is no account of who might have conferred his knighthood. He is twice referred to explicitly as a knight: in the

\[\text{\textsuperscript{131}}\text{ Fraser, The Red Book of Menteith, no. 12.} \text{\textsuperscript{132}}\text{ Davies, Domination and Conquest, 51.}\]
Lismore charter and in Matthew Paris’s *Chronica Majora*. In his account of Alexander II’s death, Paris embeds a story of Ewen of Argyll and his mistreatment by Alexander. Paris writes, “*iram enim voluntariam, quaerens saeviendi occasionem, exacuit in quendam de nobilioribus regni sui, nomine Oenum de Argethel, militem strenuum et elegantissimum*” (For, seeking an opportunity of oppression, he [Alexander] kindled gratuitous wrath against one of the noblest of his realm, by name [Ewen] of Argyle, a vigorous and very handsome knight). Paris’s representation of Ewen is flattering, even if some of his facts are incorrect; Paris, for example, wrongly identifies the location of the island as between Orkney and Scotland. Ewen’s son, Alexander, had almost certainly been knighted, given the consistency with which he is addressed with chivalric honourifics.

Alexander Mac Donald is the only Mac Sorley not addressed as a knight and for whom the lack of a knighthood would be surprising. Given his profile and interactions with King Edward I of England, it is possible that Alexander Mac Donald was also knighted, perhaps at Edward I’s instigation, however, this is not clearly reflected in the sources. In an inspection of one of his father’s grants (1274x92), the scribe includes what appear to be deliberately chosen titles and of the eleven men named in this charter, only three are not addressed as *dominus*: Alexander, Robert Bruce, who is listed as his father’s heir, and Patrick, a clerk. The scribe further lays out the difference between those who are *domini* by ecclesiastical, comital, and knightly titles. This attention to detail and matters of rank suggest that at least at the time of

133 PoMS, H3/33/1 (http://db.poms.ac.uk/record/source/2747/; accessed March 4, 2016).
136 Edward was known to have occasionally had hundreds of men at a time knighted, as he did in 1306 at an event known as the Feast of the Swans.
issuing, Alexander was not a knight; unfortunately, the document cannot be dated with any specificity. King Edward I’s correspondence to and regarding Alexander uses the formulaic, but meaningful, *dilectus nobis* (our beloved) rather than any formal title. Alexander, in fact, is only once given a title (*dominus*) in the documentary sources, which appears in a statement that he initiated.\(^{138}\) His use of *dominus* and its corresponding lack of external recognition are indicative of a disjointure between Alexander’s representation and his perception by others. Despite Alexander’s desire to participate fully in the Anglo-Norman chivalric sphere, he was unable to do so. Acting on behalf of Edward by asserting English authority in the Hebrides and referring to himself as *dominus* were not necessarily sufficient cause for others to view this Hebridean lord as a member of the chivalric brotherhood.

Of course, the assumption of knighthood is not necessarily indicative of the penetration of chivalric values or the adherence to them. In fact, the only document to name Angus Mór *miles*, an order from John Balliol to Alexander of Argyll to ensure that Angus and two other men appear to perform homage, appears chiding, suggesting that Angus was perhaps not living up to the chivalric ideals expected of him.\(^{139}\) Alexander of Argyll’s own opposition to royal authority and his violation of both his fealty and his parole to Edward I in the later 1290s were also hardly knightly behaviour. In Alexander’s case, however, it can be argued that it was actually John Balliol to whom Alexander owed his fealty and from whom came his position; certainly the MacDougalls remained Balliol supporters long after others had abandoned the king. Alexander would certainly not have been the only one for whom fealty to Edward was little more than lip service. The Mac Sorley engagement with knighthood demonstrates the value that the native elite


\(^{139}\) PoMS, H1/51/4 (http://db.poms.ac.uk/record/source/7409/; accessed March 31, 2016).
attached to knightly status as well as the ways in which it was filtered and adapted to new settings.

Studies have shown that while the Scottish kingdom broadly adopted the titles, practices, and trappings of European-style knightly culture, its reception was hardly uncomplicated, particularly in the western and northern regions of the kingdom. Knighthood, with its accompanying codes of conduct, social, and cultural implications, was introduced to Scotland in the early twelfth century, but for the Gaelic elite “acceptance of Continental notions about the knight and his place in society required that native lords consider in novel ways not merely fundamental practices such as warfare, military obligation, and land ownership, but also that they reinterpret deeply ingrained notions of social status, manhood, and self-identity.”

This was doubly true for the Hebridean lords, who were exposed to knightly and chivalric values from Scottish, English, and Norwegian fronts. While the Mac Sorleys were participants in a social context that relied on chivalry to set the “seal of approbation on norms of conduct,” the sources for their lives shed only partial light on their own engagement with these norms.

Conclusions

If the maritime context of the Hebrides both connected its people to other seafaring cultures and insulated them, allowing independent development, there are no better examples of this cross-cultural setting than the Mac Sorleys. The Mac Dougalls, Mac Donalds, and Mac Ruairis inhabited a sea-oriented world at a confluence of Norse, Scottish, Irish, and English culture. These Hebridean lords had extensive interactions with the people and cultures of Norway, Scotland, Ireland, and England, and yet, their nodal and peripheral location permitted a great deal

\[140\] McDonald and Neville, “Knights and Knighthood in Gaelic Scotland, c. 1050-1300,” 62.

\[141\] Maurice Keen, Chivalry (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 249.
of autonomy, even as royal authority was more effectively asserted through the end of the thirteenth and into the beginning of the fourteenth centuries. The Mac Dougalls went from claiming kingship in the isles to barons of the king of Scots to virtual exiles in the service of the king of England. Ewen of Argyll was unable to enforce his kingship or, for much of his life, maintain his territorial possessions, but died having achieved a measure of prominence within the mainland Scottish political community for himself and his children. The connections that brought Alexander of Argyll to prominence, especially his marriage alliance with the Comyns and incorporation within the Balliol/Comyn faction, also helped to bring about his ruin as a consequence of the improved fortunes of Robert Bruce. During the same period, the Mac Donalds were far less effective in their exertion of Hebridean control. Despite this, both Angus Mór and his son, Alexander, developed reputations in the Irish Sea province that their successor, Angus Óg, was able to leverage in order to lay the foundations for the Lordship of the Isles, the most powerful late medieval challenge to royal authority in the Scottish kingdom. By the end of the period, the Mac Ruairis remained the most removed from Scottish political culture. They had experienced perhaps the greatest drop in prestige, from king in the isles under Dugald, to pirates and plunderers, but as the earl of Ross’s characterization of Lachlan indicates, that had not humbled them.

Ewen and Alexander Mac Dougall, Angus and Alexander Mac Donald, and Dugald, Alan, and Lachlan Mac Ruairi engaged with their multi-ethnic heritage and context in different ways. The identities that they crafted as men are illustrative of the complexity of ethnic identity and of how, particularly in a region that saw significant political change, the situational nature and strategic deployment of ethnic identity created opportunity for political and material gain. The Mac Sorleys’ participation in a variety of cultural settings in addition to their own nodal
Hebridean homes also exposed them to different values and expressions of masculine identity, some of which were adopted and others translated for a regionally specific setting. While the Mac Sorleys had long participated in the Scottish cultural and political community, in addition to their interactions with other powerful kingdoms, the relationship between the Hebridean lords and Scotland changed dramatically in the thirteenth century. As barons of the realm, the Mac Sorleys’ fate was increasingly interwoven with the fate of the Scottish kingdom—a prospect far less daunting in 1266 than it became only two decades later as change affected the whole of the Scottish kingdom. The Mac Sorleys chose to respond to these changes in different ways, which had consequences for how they represented themselves and how they were perceived by others as leaders, as individuals, and as men.
CHAPTER FIVE: CAPITAL, ETHNICITY, AND MASCULINE IDENTITIES

There are different ways in which to categorize the various masculine expectations that confronted medieval men. Medievalists have often looked to social roles to determine gender pressures: clerical conceptualizations of masculinity or those of the lay elite, the way masculinity was constructed among craftworkers and other ‘middling’ types, and so forth; some of the consequences and conclusions of this approach for the study of European masculinities appear in Chapter 1. The opportunity to do similarly for thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Scotland, however, is limited as a result of the paucity of source material available. Consequently, this thesis looks exclusively at an elite population, mostly magnates and their families, who are better represented by available source material, but in doing so also applies an explicitly ethnic analytical lens to the population. Throughout the Middle Ages, ethnic identity and place were closely connected. The recognition of geographic context in considerations of Scottish history is commonplace in political and cultural studies, but is generally lacking in Scottish gender scholarship. As Chapter 2 explored, regional and ethnic identities were intertwined, even through the seeming homogeneity that developed during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. As seen in Chapter 4, place and regionality often fostered complex constructions of identity, drawing on multiple ethnic attachments, which are particularly visible in nodal areas like the Hebrides. The ways in which ethnic and regional identities shaped masculine identity are key to understanding both the behavioural models and the lived experiences of men in medieval Scotland.

Applying both R. W. Connell’s and Pierre Bourdieu’s theories to gender in the Middle Ages—and in Scotland more specifically—provides useful vocabulary and ways of understanding the hierarchical and relational elements of masculine identity and representation. The ways in which gender and ethnicity act as overlapping fields of practice and the consequent
struggles that result, better help historians to understand how multiple, overlapping, fluid, and sometimes conflicting ideas of masculinity manifest in an agent’s masculine identity. In this chapter, a medieval masculinity field model is proposed, based upon the combined theories of Connell and Bourdieu and the more recent work of Tony Coles, which helps to reveal both larger social patterns and to create a framework in which individual experiences and lived identities may be placed.¹ Rather than a static system of hegemonic and subordinated masculinities, a masculinity field model allows for the possibility of multiple dominant masculinities that both support and challenge hegemonic values. It creates space to evaluate expressions of masculine identity that appear to be dominant in relation to certain qualities and to be subordinate in relation to others, highlighting the contextuality of gendered identity. Finally, a masculinity field model shows how masculine identities have the potential to change over time, especially as a result of changing capital.

**Establishing the Theory**

Since the 1977 English translation of Bourdieu’s *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, English-speaking sociologists have worked with the concepts of habitus, fields, and capital as a way of understanding practice. Bourdieu describes these not as rules of any type, but instead as a “set of thinking tools.”² These concepts allow scholars to posit relationships among differing values, ideas, and behaviours that result in unequal privilege and status, while still maintaining an eye toward personal agency and variation. Bourdieu’s aim was to “make possible a science of the dialectical relations between the objective structures . . . and the structured dispositions within

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which those structures are actualized and which tend to reproduce them.” 3 It is within this space, the space connecting structure and agency, that gender historians tend to naturally operate, with or without fully recognizing it.

Bourdieusian concepts like habitus, field, and capital offer valuable vocabulary for historians seeking to understand the connections between individuals, or groups of individuals, and their societies. The concept of habitus is the central component of the nexus between structure and agency in Bourdieu’s theory. 4 According to Rogers Brubaker, habitus is “defined abstractly as the system of internalized dispositions that mediates between social structures and practical activity, being shaped by the former and regulating the latter.” 5 Bourdieu’s use of habitus includes bodily postures, gestures, ways of eating, talking, or walking and a variety of other activities that “function below the level of consciousness and language, beyond the reach of introspective scrutiny or control by the will.” 6 The concept of habitus incorporates both the objective structures within a given group but also personal experience and history, thus ensuring that it is not fixed or merely copied from one person or generation to the next.

A field, Bourdieu defines as

a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions objectively defined in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions, by their present and potential situation (situs) in the structure of the distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as by their objective relation to other positions (domination, subordination, homology, etc.). 7

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4 Coles, “Negotiating the Field of Masculinity,” 34.
In other words, a field is the social arena in which struggles over access to resources and stakes, as well as over the resources or stakes themselves, take place.\(^8\) While Bourdieu himself did not explore gender specifically as a field, Tony Coles has proposed that masculinity may be read as such because within the field of masculinity “there are struggles and contestations over definitions of what is, and what is not, considered to be masculine/masculinity resulting in a relationship of orthodoxy and heterodoxy as those with valued capital defend their position against those who seek change.”\(^9\) By this logic, considering masculinity as a field offers a way to understand and structure differing gendered expectations and expressions.

The concept of capital is central to both Bourdieu’s original construction and to viewing gender as a field. The expectation that ‘capital’ refers only to economic standing has long since been superseded by more inclusive definitions. For Bourdieu, capital extends “to all goods, material and symbolic, without distinction, that present themselves as rare and worthy of being sought after in a particular social formation.”\(^10\) While this continues to incorporate money and material goods, the extension to forms of capital that are symbolic in nature greatly adds to the proposed model. Bourdieu primarily worked with two other forms of capital: social and cultural capital. All three, he argues, are connected and convertible.\(^11\) Social and cultural capital are more frequently symbolic, incorporating ideas of honour, prestige, and education among other aspects; however, cultural capital may also take the form of goods or “culturally valued consumption patterns.”\(^12\) The key element offered by the concept of capital is that it represents a valued


\(^{9}\) Coles, “Finding Space in the Field of Masculinity: Lived Experiences of Men’s Masculinities,” 234.

\(^{10}\) Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 178.


resource within a given field. Crucially, not all fields are contingent upon the same types of capital, have the same understanding of it, or value the same elements.

Within a field of masculinity, economic, social, and cultural capital all play important roles; so too, however, does a fourth form of capital not considered by Bourdieu. For Bourdieu, physical or embodied capital operates as a subset of cultural capital. In this sense, physical capital is “a cultural resource invested within the body,” primarily, in a Bourdieusian sense, produced through sporting or leisure activities. Given the extent that constructions of gender rely on bodily difference, however, physical capital must considered in broader terms. Physical capital has the potential to be a central and valuable component when considered from a bodily perspective. As Coles argues, “although social, economic, and cultural capital all carry weight in the field of masculinity, the centrality of the male body to men’s masculinities means that physical capital requires critical attention.” The notion of a bodily physical capital allows for integration and consideration of the physicality of gender identity, providing a way for genital difference and other physical distinctions to be incorporated in a historicized and non-essentialized gender model.

La domination masculine is the site of Bourdieu’s most explicit engagement with gender theory. The foundation of his approach corresponds with how most gender historians view gender, namely, that biological and anatomical differences are used as justifications for social

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14 Ibid., 654.

15 For the remainder of this thesis, the phrase ‘physical capital’ refers to the revised definition offered here rather than Bourdieu’s original sense. In other words, bodily or physical capital is the potential for valued capital inherent in one’s body. From a masculine perspective this incorporates a variety of physiological aspects, including, but not limited to, a penis and testicles, perhaps more specifically, a penis capable of erection, or even ejaculation, masculine musculature, facial hair, etc.

16 See Shilling, “Educating the Body”; Coles, “Negotiating the Field of Masculinity.”

17 Ibid., 37.
constructions of differences between men and women, resulting in unequal relationships and that this is done in such a way as to appear natural and ahistorical, a process Bourdieu terms “circular causality.”

The theory for which this work is most known is the titular ‘masculine domination,’ which encompasses the unequal relationship between men and women attributed to the expression of real or symbolic violence on the part of the dominator (men) towards the dominated (women). Manliness, Bourdieu argues, is relational, is constructed against women but primarily for other men, and “must be validated by other men as actual or potential violence.”

One of the weaknesses of Bourdieu’s model in *Masculine Domination* is the lack of dimensionality it offers masculinity. By opposing masculine with feminine in a relatively simple dichotomy, even while acknowledging how the creation of masculinity occurs between and in front of other men, Bourdieu flattens gender experience in a way that does not allow for lived realities. Further, masculine domination as a concept, used without the subtlety of Bourdieu’s other work, lacks the specificity necessary for meaningful historical analysis. The domination of one group over another does not negate domination and other unequal relationships within the dominating or dominated groups themselves. It is here that the concept of masculine domination, together with the ideas of habitus, field, and capital, benefit from integration with Connell’s popular masculinities theory.

In much the same way that Bourdieu’s gender model is critiqued, Connell’s approach similarly falls short of its potential complexity and, therefore, its representativity. While Connell is careful to stress that hegemonic masculinity and other categories (complicit and subordinated

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19 Ibid., 53.
20 A similar claim may be made regarding feminine experience, however, the focus here is on masculinity.
21 For a sociological discussion of this aspect, see the review article by Howie Chodos and Bruce Curtis in which they argue that the main weakness of *Masculine Domination* “stems from a failure on Bourdieu’s part to make the best possible use of his own conceptual repertoire” (398). Howie Chodos and Bruce Curtis, “Pierre Bourdieu’s Masculine Domination: A Critique,” *Canadian Review of Sociology/Revue Canadienne de Sociologie* 39, no. 4 (November 1, 2002): 397–412, doi:10.1111/j.1755-618X.2002.tb00627.x.
masculinities, as well as emphasized, dominant, and subordinate femininities) change over time and exist only in a constant state of challenge and opposition, there remains a tendency among gender historians to critique these forms as, at worst, fixed and ahistorical, and perhaps at best, as whiggish, evolutionary, and teleological. This is because Connell’s model lacks the necessary mechanisms to explore and explain the processes of change within and between different gender forms, a shortcoming that may be alleviated by incorporating Bourdieusian concepts and, as a result, strengthen historicized gender understandings.

Tony Coles has proposed an integration of Connell’s masculinities theory with Pierre Bourdieu’s theories of social relations, particularly the concepts of habitus, capital, and fields, in order to present a “theoretical model of a field of masculinity in which various subfields exist to account for the variety of dominant masculinities that may be present at any given time.” This theory offers a structure that allows for multiple expressions of masculine identity, even multiple versions of dominant masculinities, while maintaining the recognition of hierarchal and potentially complex order within this plurality.

The connection between hegemonic and dominant masculinities is of central importance when applying a masculinity field model to individuals or groups. There has often been a tendency on behalf of scholars to conflate hegemonic and dominant. Since hegemony cannot

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23 Coles, “Negotiating the Field of Masculinity,” 31.

24 Ibid., 33, 52.

encompass multiple forms, this requires the identification of a single hegemonic form to which all others are subordinated and this premise simply is not reflective of lived experiences. Instead, it must be remembered that while hegemonic masculinity is dominant, not all dominant masculinities are hegemonic.

In Connell’s theory, both hegemonic and complicit masculinities are culturally dominant. The former must be dominant in order be hegemonic; the latter, however, must also be culturally dominant through its realization of what Connell terms the “patriarchal dividend.”26 This is the idea that men benefit in tangible and intangible ways from a hegemonic form that is masculine, even if the individuals in question are not themselves reflective of hegemonic masculinity. That complicit masculinities are also culturally dominant creates space to incorporate the experiences of real men, who rarely, if ever, express hegemonic masculinity but are nonetheless subject to the pressures, expectations, and rewards with which it is allied. Connell’s theorization itself falls short of the potential offered within the complexity of dominant masculinities and the implications of this for relationships specifically between men. As Coles has argued, “hegemonic masculinity may be that which is culturally exalted at any given time, but dominant masculinities need to be drawn from this and contextualized within a given field (or subfield), as well as located culturally and historically. It is possible to be subordinated by hegemonic masculinity yet still draw on dominant masculinities and assume a dominant position in relation to other men.”27

Rather than a simple duality between hegemonic and subordinate forms, this model offers space to explore the ways masculinity is constructed in a relational sense, oriented toward hegemonic masculine values, and encompassing multiple dominant forms.

26 Connell, Masculinities, 79.
27 Coles, “Negotiating the Field of Masculinity,” 33.
The model combining Bourdieu’s and Connell’s theories has the potential to explain better the structure of masculine relations, their complexity, and the interconnected hierarchal structure that exists between masculinities in a historical sense. Further, it offers a valuable analytical tool with which to explore masculinity on a social basis, which is as wide or as narrow as required, with fields and subfields that may be expanded or contracted as necessary. A masculinity field model may contain as many or as few subfields as necessary within which dominant and subordinate forms interact. Although visual representation is not strictly necessary for the application of a masculinity field model, Figure 3 illustrates the ways in which subfields operate according to internal principles of dominance and subordination within the larger field of masculinity.

**Figure 3: Masculinity Field Model**
The combination of fields and subfields allows for the creation of more complex models that better account for the variety of masculine experiences and expectations. Further, this model permits exploration of the ways a person, or ‘agent’ in Bourdieusian terms, may be influenced by multiple subfields. As Andrea Cornwall and Nancy Lindisfarne state: “the many different images and behaviours contained in the notion of masculinity are not always coherent: they may be competing, contradictory and mutually undermining;”28 these aspects may be reflected in a masculinity field model that also acknowledges the relational and hierarchal association between forms.

**Thinking with Connell and Bourdieu in the Middle Ages**

The combination of Connell’s masculinities theory and Bourdieu’s theory of practice resolves some of the concerns scholars of medieval masculinity have regarding hegemonic masculinity, particularly the criticism that hegemonic masculinity represents a fixed and ahistorical caricature of men. Far from static, hegemonic masculinity is continually contested by those inhabiting various subfields where habitus and capital interact, creating practice and defining dominant and subordinate groups that are oriented toward and relative to hegemonic qualities. A medieval masculinity field model relies on the possession of capital—material capital, but especially symbolic capital—that is constantly in flux and the significance of which is subject to debate. As a result, a multiplicity of hierarchal masculinity forms is created by agents seeking to maximize their hegemonic potential.

28 Cornwall and Lindisfarne, *Dislocating Masculinity*, 12.
Broadly speaking, symbolic capital was far more important than economic capital in the Middle Ages. In Bourdieu’s construction, economic capital refers to both monetary capital and property, the most valuable of which is typically land. In the Middle Ages, however, the economic value of land as property was overshadowed by its value as symbolic capital. From the perspective of masculinity, the ability to independently occupy or possess a space for the purpose of establishing a household was a key element of ‘full’ adult masculinity at nearly every level of society. The form this might take, however, varied widely. In most contexts, especially non-urban ones, the availability of land was far greater than the availability of monetary capital, but despite this, the opportunity to, and the ways in which one might, ‘own’ land were limited. Even among the elite, land ‘ownership’ was, in theory at least, impermanent and couched in terms emphasizing its symbolic value. It was, for example, ‘gifted’ by the king, given, granted, and confirmed. Economic benefit derived primarily from what one was able to do with the land, either through personal labour or the work of others, rather than as a result of land value itself; again, this was a characteristic that scales with social status, but that was accessible to most of society.

In extremely short supply, monetary capital was primarily significant in its ability to become symbolic capital. Warfare and tournaments, for example, required a financial investment that rarely saw a fiscal return; the symbolic return, however, made such a speculative

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30 Regarding early modern Cambridge, Alexandra Shepard has argued that “notions of manhood rooted in economic independence and in heading and provisioning a household were therefore part of the common conceptual currency” (90). There is no more basic an element of provisioning a household than providing, broadly speaking, the house itself. Thus, at its most basic level, the significance for masculine identity regarding the possession of land, in terms of its legitimate occupation, trumps the significance of its ownership. See Alexandra Shepard, “Manhood, Credit and Patriarchy in Early Modern England c. 1580-1640,” Past & Present, no. 167 (May 1, 2000): 75–106.
investment worthwhile. Spoils taken in battle, Andrew Cowell argues, held greater symbolic value than if the same item were purchased outright, and by gifting the item, a process that typically worked downward, from lord to man, the symbolic dividends multiplied.\textsuperscript{33} This offers a marked divergence from the modern response to a similar situation, where a gift forcibly acquired, or even one purchased at a notable discount, would typically be seen to hold less value than one purchased outright. In both instances, the manner of acquisition conveys important information regarding the gift’s significance and the consequent symbolic capital at stake.

In the Middle Ages, symbolic social capital was particularly valuable and accessible to all levels of society, although hardly of equal value across society. The value of social networks, prestige, and individual honour all relied on social recognition to which, theoretically, anyone was entitled. One element of social capital is the network of other individuals upon which an agent was able to draw, especially those formally connected to them through bonds of kinship, marriage, or lordship. Medieval communities, both in the sense of villages or towns and other social collectives spanning geographic regions, were capable of recognizing and judging the value of one’s social capital in ways that are often inaccessible to historians given that it was instinctive, hierarchical, and highly contextual. An agent’s prestige, on the other hand, another aspect of social capital, is more readily visible and documented through titles, wealth, and recognized social position. Prestige marks the extent to which all forms of capital were considered valued and rare. To a large degree, prestige was a collective effort, closely tied to one’s social network and reflective of the sum total of the prestige of the network and valuation of the entire network’s capital. If prestige reflected collective value, honour, on the other hand, was more reflective of individual achievement. Even more than other forms of symbolic capital,

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., 59–60.
honour is seen as operating according to a zero-sum economy, for one to have gained honour, someone else must have lost it.⁴⁴ Always in flux and at risk, the recognition of honour in historical sources is never more than a snapshot of a particular moment in time.

As symbolic capital, honour is acquired through recognition by one’s peers and necessarily involves participation in a larger group. Honour and its opposite, shame, are the collective evaluations of an individual’s adherence to social norms and expectations.⁵⁵ A preoccupation with honour is something many different cultures share, but it does not necessarily follow that different groups of people perceive the same behaviours as honourable or shameful.⁶⁶ Despite this, throughout medieval Europe, and particularly in aristocratic circles, ideas of honour and shame were heavily influenced by chivalric conventions, discussed below as chivalric habitus.⁷⁷ This created some degree of conformity regarding ideas of honour and shame across the elite and resulted in consistency in translation. Through translation, honour might become social titles, prestige, and even economic wealth. In the Middle Ages, the potential of honour as capital was vast.

The idea of physical or bodily capital is particularly important for discussions of gender as well as in pre-industrialized societies. The centrality of physical labour in the Middle Ages is undeniable; whether the elite work of a knight in battle, the monastic *opus dei*, the skilled efforts of a craftsman, or the labour of a peasant farmer, the bodies of men (and women) were put through enormous physical strain. As discussed in Chapter 1, bodily difference was also an important signifier of gender identity, in which genitals, hair, and other physical attributes

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⁶⁶ Ibid., 56.
⁷⁷ See below, 198-209.
influenced both gender portrayal and reception. Physical capital includes some elements with
which one is born, in fact or in potential, as well as those that might be created under specific
conditions. While neither a young boy nor a young girl is likely to have significant facial hair,
for example, one of the two is born with a greater potential of growing a beard. Both, on the
other hand, could become physically stronger or weaker as a result of activity or access to food.
The consideration of these characteristics as physical capital maintains a connection between
physical sex and gender identity while underscoring the ways bodily difference was valued as
well as contested.

The competition over the meaning of capital and its acquisition, broadly speaking, ‘the
struggle,’ is intrinsic to Bourdieu’s theory of practice and is an aspect that relates particularly
well to understanding masculinity from a field model perspective. Bourdieu defines the idea of
struggle within a field as “the strategies whereby the occupants of these positions seek,
individually or collectively to safeguard or improve their position, and to impose the principle of
hierarchization most favorable to their own products.”38 In a field defined by masculinity, agents
are able to manipulate the perception of their capital, and especially, its value, by drawing upon
subfields in which they are seen as dominant. On an individual level, this allows the agent to
construct an identity defined by dominant characteristics, rather than subordinated ones, oriented
toward hegemonic qualities; on a broader level, it enforces struggle within the field ‘system’
challenging both the ideas of dominant and hegemonic masculinities. This idea of struggle does
not require a shift in thought of gender historians who have long seen gender as acquisitional and
performative, with gender identity in need of constant bolstering through behaviour, speech, and
thought.39 Specific behaviours, ways of speaking or of holding oneself are continually remade at

38 Wacquant, “Towards a Reflexive Sociology,” 40.
39 See above, 31-2.
an individual level and, while socially read, are not strictly bound to social interpretations. These elements are the subject of constant struggle, reinforced at the same time as they are undermined. This remaking or performance is not a neutral prospect, but one that risks the improvement or the loss of position.

A masculinity field model posits a multiplicity of masculinity forms that are both relational and hierarchal. An agent’s engagement with different forms is contingent upon the possession of capital that is valued within a particular subfield or within the larger field of masculinity itself. Agents typically seek to maximize their hegemonic potential by constructing identities that draw upon the subfield’s dominant qualities and by rejecting those characteristics the particular subfield perceives as subordinated. In this way, even those people whom hegemonic masculinity constructs as subordinated are able to craft identities based upon dominance. The field of masculinity itself is produced and maintained by the struggle between these groups as capital undergoes change and translation, and as agents seek to impose their own “principle of hierarchization” and valuations upon the field.40 As a theoretical system, a masculinity field model helps historians to understand both the multiplicity of masculinities in the past and the interconnectedness between masculinity forms and other social categories.

Studies by various medievalists have emphasized that on an individual level, masculine identity was more often presented in a way that emphasizes dominant characteristics over marginalized ones, even in cases in which external viewers might have no doubt about the subordinated quality of masculine presentation. Peter Abelard is perhaps the best known of these cases. Martin Irvine, for instance, has explored Abelard’s strategies following his castration “for positioning himself as a masculine subject in a world where castrates were feminized,” thus

40 Bourdieu in Wacquant, “Towards a Reflexive Sociology,” 40.
emphasizing a process of “remasculinization.” Others, including Bonnie Wheeler, Yves Ferroul, and Jacqueline Murray, similarly emphasize that Abelard saw himself as irrefutably masculine following his castration, without losing sight of both the personal and social impact of castration.42

The ‘masculinity project’ of this situation may be read in several different ways. Traditionally, Abelard’s self-fashioning following his castration shows either the relative unimportance of genitalia, vis-à-vis his continued masculine identity based on the social premium placed upon intellectual prowess and celibacy, or the centrality of genitalia based on the necessity of his remasculinizing self-fashioning. However, the construction of a medieval masculinity field model offers a different perspective on Abelard’s case as well as the experiences of medieval men more generally. By considering Abelard as an agent in a field of masculinity and his genitalia as physical capital, taken from him as a form of punishment, but also convertible into other types of capital, it is possible better to follow the interactions between culturally valued forms of masculinity and Abelard’s experience of them. Abelard’s loss of physical capital circumscribed his successful practice within a masculinity subfield composed of laymen, where his castration limited, if not outright prevented, sexual performance and the engendering of heirs.43 Further, the scandal caused by the exposure of his relationship with Héloïse and the condemnation from her family negatively affected his social capital. Were Abelard to maintain the definitions and expectations of masculine identity within this subfield,

43 See the discussion in Ferroul, “Abelard’s Blissful Castration,” 134ff regarding the likely extent and physical consequences of Abelard’s castration.
his loss of capital would have cast him as subordinated to the dominant expectations. Rather than accepting this role, Abelard reconstructed his masculine identity, converting the capital he continued to possess as well as making the most of his loss in other areas. When Wheeler suggests that “Abelard’s bodily manhood was no longer intact but his psychic manhood, his perception of his own essentialized gender status, was never in danger,” she is only partially correct. The threat to Abelard’s masculine identity was real and was significant; like many others, however, by refusing to accept marginality, Abelard changed the characteristics by which he should be judged, defining himself in terms of dominance instead. As Bourdieu might argue, Abelard changed the rules of the game. This should not lessen the importance, however, of other constructions of masculinity that did very much define castration as emasculation and saw sexual performance and sexual abilities as key to ‘true’ masculinity.

With Abelard, it is possible to see an individual engage in a process that happens on both personal and social levels. The exclusion of an agent from dominance and their subordination within a particular subfield is often met with a lack of acceptance on the part of the agent. Instead, by refusing their subordination within that subfield, they create or participate in a different subfield in which their specific combination of habitus and capital allows them to define themselves as dominant in relation to whatever characteristics that subfield rejects. This concept helps to explain the presence of “competing, contradictory and mutually undermining” elements that appear when defining masculinity. While Abelard’s loss of physical and social capital restricted his continued participation within his original subfield, its conversion to other capital, marked by intellectual prowess and spiritual parallels, and its translation to an alternate subfield, allowed Abelard to continue to profess an identity based upon masculine dominance in

45 Cornwall and Lindisfarne, Dislocating Masculinity, 12.
that subfield. In doing so, Abelard maximized his hegemonic potential despite his inclusion in a non-hegemonic subfield.

**A Masculinity Field Model for Medieval Scotland**

A masculinity field model may be applied to many different social and geographic contexts in medieval European society. One of the key strengths of this model is the flexibility to examine subfields defined in a variety of different ways. In considering Peter Abelard, above, subfields are delineated along socio-vocational lines. Abelard’s loss of bodily capital as a result of his castration restricted his full masculine participation in lay society, but not in the monastic communities he subsequently joined. A masculinity field model provides historians with thinking tools, to use Bourdieu’s term, to understand better the interplay between capital, habitus, and hierarchal constructions of gender. This model would be well suited to explorations of gender identity in other times and places with subfields defined in whatever terms are reflective of the context and sources. The subfields explored through this project, however, are defined primarily in ethnic and geographic terms with the intention of “adopting an analytical framework that distinguishes local, regional, and global masculinities . . . to recognize the importance of place without falling into a monadic world of totally independent cultures or discourses.”[^46]

The interactions of capital and habitus are seen to shape masculine values, behaviours, and expectations within subfields in which men in medieval Scotland acted as agents. Like Abelard, Scottish men created identities that were negotiated between overlapping and potentially contradictory culturally determined ideas about masculinity. Their geographic location, their ethnic identity, and the social worlds in which they engaged all offered men particular masculine subfields in which to exist.

The masculinity field model for medieval Scotland used for this thesis considers subfields defined largely in ethnic terms within which individual systems of dominance and subordination existed. Politically and culturally, the relationships between subfield categories themselves were not neutral, but were instead hierarchal. The hierarchal relationship between subfield categories may be seen as part of the motivation for agents to engage in different or blended subfields where they “negotiated masculinity within other subfields in the field of masculinity, in which the capital they owned was valued.”47 The unequal relationship between subfields created the opportunity for agents to remake themselves in contexts where their capital might hold greater value, and consequently maximize their hegemonic potential, but the engagement with other subfields was not a risk-free prospect.

Despite complex and hybrid identities and institutions, power in the Scottish kingdom during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was largely constituted in Anglo-Norman terms. This is not to suggest that only those of Anglo-Norman descent might wield significant power in medieval Scotland, but rather that the structures conveying authority and the ways authority was represented were predominantly of Anglo-Norman origins as reflected in the historical record. One might argue that this is a result of sources bias, where document survival privileges charters and Anglo-Norman textual evidence, consequently suppressing the significance of non-textual and diverse expressions of power, but this is, in fact, the point. Richard Oram argues that “the use of parchment records and forms was a development that spread from the centre out, one which probably saw the imposition of a uniform technical, legal language over a variety of regional or local usages, and which created an impression of commonality where diversity had

been the norm.” The very action of ‘papering over’ diversity shows the necessity of projecting power through Anglo-Norman structures, almost regardless of conditions on the ground. While other ways of conveying authority were persistent and significant, Anglo-Norman constructions were overwhelmingly powerful on a ‘national’ scale.

The same processes, whereby power was projected in Anglo-Norman terms, are also apparent visually among the highest levels of Scottish society. For example, the adoption of sealing in Scotland, discussed in detail in Chapter 3, shows how first Scottish kings, then earls and knights, participated in this Europe-wide practice, which had its roots in northern Europe. The basic elements of a seal—the combination of an image and text, the general size and shape, and the types of images that were chosen—and the esoteric significance of the combination of these elements when pressed into warm wax, was established outside the Scottish kingdom and represented an investment in written documents the native Scottish aristocracy did not initially make. Scottish sealers emulated the sealing practices of their neighbours, both across the Channel and south of the border, while adapting them for their own purposes precisely because of the potency of the form as a result of the growing, European-wide, cultural hegemony of Anglo-Norman legal practices.

The ways men in the Scottish kingdom engaged with these projections of power varied widely. For some, these Anglo-Norman articulations were comfortable and supported the worldview with which they were familiar. Others, meanwhile, found it necessary to adjust, translate, or otherwise alter Anglo-Norman practice. Still others were wholly unable or unwilling to engage in such forms. The broad dominance of Anglo-Norman values benefited those in the first category, at least on a ‘national’ scale. This included men like William Comyn (d. 1233),

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who acquired the earldom of Buchan by right of his wife and whose seal is discussed in Chapter 3. Comyn and those like him were fluent in this particular language of dominance and their social, cultural, and symbolic capital, overall, supported these claims. More commonly, however, the evidence is that men whose capital did not support their full participation in a position of national dominance, instead prioritized an articulation of power in more regionally specific terms. This reflects the hierarchal ordering of ethnic and cultural categories in the medieval Scottish kingdom.

When ethnic groups are considered from the perspective of subfields, it becomes easier to identify differences, especially regarding how a given subfield values capital. In the case of medieval Scotland, there are several particularly conspicuous ethnic or geographic subfields. This project focuses on subfields within the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Scottish kingdom defined as Scoto-Norman, Scottish Gael, and nodal Hebridean, and to a lesser extent those outwith the kingdom, including Irish, French, Flemish, and Norwegian. These subfields represent broadly identifiable ‘ethnic’ groups. While the terms are undoubtedly modern, the categories they represent likely would have resonated with inhabitants of the medieval kingdom. There is, however, some danger in defining these subfields too explicitly. According to Bourdieu, a field should be “relational and elastic . . . defined using the broadest possible range of factors, including those overlapping with other fields, that influence and shape behavior;” subfields should be considered similarly. The subfields outlined above might potentially be further broken down into other, more narrow, groupings and certainly other categories should be added for different periods of time; the northern islands of Orkney and Shetland, for example, offer undeniably unique ethnic and cultural contexts, but were not part of the Scottish kingdom until

49 See above, Chapter 2, for a discussion of the some of the complex issues regarding medieval ethnicities.
The subfields examined here, Scoto-Norman, Scottish Gael, and nodal Hebridean, though reflective of real meaning, are also artificially superimposed and applied on a relatively brief moment in time.

This strategy differs from previous approaches to ethnicity in Scotland in several key ways. First, this view maintains ethnicity as a social construct, rather than the strict result of birth or biology, leaving room for agents to lay claim to any identity they wished, at the same time recognizing that other members may refute or deny their belonging. Second, it diverges from the dual or hybrid model in that an agent’s participation in a particular subfield does not necessarily affect their future or past engagement with other subfields. Third, this model emphasizes the situational and strategic elements of ethnicity, acknowledging the complex, overlapping, and hierarchal impacts of ethnic attachment. Finally, this approach offers nearly limitless elasticity of categories, rather than closed boxes within which to categorize human experiences.

The first objective of the masculinity field model used here is to determine what characteristics and forms of capital were valued with respect to masculine identity within particular subfields. The second objective is to explore the relationship of these subfields, and consequently their systems of valuation, to each other. In combination, the individual subfields, subject to individual systems of dominance and subordination, create a larger field of masculinity. With respect to masculine identity, the unequal relationship between ethnic categories also created disparity between culturally situated ideas about masculinity and masculine identity. Ultimately, this produces a model within which to analyze the individual experiences of men, whose changing ownership of capital over time resulted in conscious and subconscious strategies of identity. Nothing about this model, or an agent’s position within it,
however, is static. Dynamism is a key element within and between subfields, with both hegemony and dominance subject to constant reformulation.

**Forms of Valued Capital**

In each of the core subfields considered here, Scoto-Norman, Scottish Gael, and nodal Hebridean, it is possible to identify the existence of valued capital along social, cultural, and physical lines. The forms in which it was most valued and the principles of hierarchization that underlie these valuations, however, are not necessarily consistent across these fields. These differences contribute to the depth of the field of masculinity, creating individual systems of dominance and subordination and affording agents the opportunity for the improvement or loss of position as a result of movement between subfields.

The importance of different types and forms of capital vary according to subfield. The significance of titles, for instance, a form of symbolic social capital, appears to be much greater within the Scoto-Norman or Scottish Gaelic subfields than within the nodal Hebridean subfield. The variety of titles applied to Ewen Mac Dougall and his cousin Dugald Mac Ruairi, for example, suggest both an ambiguity on behalf of the written records as to their exact positions, but also a looser connection between authoritative power and clear naming hierarchies. Ewen’s identification as *rex insularum, konungr* (Old Norse, king), or *miles*, is contextual and, perhaps at times, aspirational, but it does not correspond to a significant change of personal identity.⁵¹ When William Comyn, on the other hand, was made earl of Buchan in 1212, his documentary identity markedly changed. Not only did he use * Comes de Buchan* in written documents and have

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⁵¹ *Chron. Man.* f. 48r; *Hakonar Saga*, 286 (English); 275 (Old Norse); PoMS, H3/21/49 (http://db.poms.ac.uk/record/source/2813/; accessed Oct. 4, 2016). See above, Chapter 5.
COMITIS DE BVCHANN added to the legend of his seal, he altered his seal image as well. In order to convey a clear distinction in his sigillographic identity after becoming earl, the image on the comital seal was flipped, with the horse riding to dexter. This way, there could be no confusion between Comyn’s actions as lord of Kirkintilloch and Lenzie and his actions as the earl of Buchan. If titles were meant to be reflective of position and power, the words themselves held the greatest value within a Scoto-Norman subfield. While the power these words symbolized mattered greatly to men outside of that subfield, it was conveyed within the subfield in alternative forms.

Valued forms of cultural capital also varied by subfield. Gaelic praise poems offer one such example. These were popular in Ireland and appeared in the Hebrides in poems dedicated to Angus Mór and to his father, Donald. These poems layer cultural capital in ways that were highly powerful within nodal Hebridean and Irish subfields, but were virtually meaningless outside these fields. Cultural capital was conveyed through the art form itself as the creation of these poems involved the patronage of a highly educated, professional poet, familiar with the stylized and complex poetic structure. Further, the poems contain imagery and symbolism drawn from the Irish Sea world and the maritime-focused context of their creation. The frequent references to hounds, cattle—particularly cattle theft—and ships, emphasize the priorities of elite men within the Irish Sea world. In the poem addressed to “Domhnall mac Raghnaill of the Stately Gaze,” referring to Angus Mór’s father, the poet gives a sense of what it was like to travel on a Hebridean lord’s raid:

Our time feels short in the king’s ship,

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52 RRS ii. 522.
53 Stevenson and Wood, Scottish Heraldic Seals, 305. ; PoMS seal-matrix, no. 6256 (http://db.poms.ac.uk/record/matrix/6256/; accessed 05 November 2014).
ourselves, the heroes and the noble hawk,
our own spritely ship at risk,
the beating of the oars, heavy at her side.

He has his targe with his blade,
in one strong tapered hand;
his second lance in the other hand,
he throws the belly of the fight on its back.\textsuperscript{55}

Appreciation of these themes may not have been limited to the nodal Hebridean and Irish
subfields, but full understanding both of the poems, which were written in Gaelic, and of the
symbolic meaning they conveyed necessitated particular forms of cultural capital. The Gaelic
language and Gàidhealtachd culture were highly valued forms of capital within a nodal
Hebridean subfield.

Language or linguistic capital, in fact, was an important form of cultural capital in all of
the subfields examined here, revealing vital information about the possessors’ status. In the
Hebrides, the dominant languages were Gaelic and Norse, at least until the mid-thirteenth
century.\textsuperscript{56} The Hebridean elite, however, had to be multilingual to an astonishing degree, even by

\textsuperscript{55} McLeod and Bateman, \textit{Duanaire Na Sracaire}, 77.

\textsuperscript{56} The degree to which the general Hebridean population spoke one or the other of these languages or, in
fact, spoke both, is a more complex proposition than might be supposed and lies largely outside the scope of this
study. The question about the extent of the establishment of Norse in preference to Gaelic, its subsequent reversal,
and the significance of this, was the subject of considerable discussion in the 1970s and has continued to play a
central role in more recent scholarship of the region. The evidence available, particularly for the periods before
Norse settlement in the ninth century and in the early years following, is scarce and difficult to interpret, composed
largely of place-names, archeological records, naming and administrative conventions. The volume of evidence
grows through to the mid-thirteenth century, but is still inconclusive. Linguistic evidence, mostly from place-names,
shows remarkably little Gaelic influence on Norse place-names suggesting that the Norse had limited interaction
with the previous inhabitants and that they were considered to be of very low, possibly enslaved, status (Arne Kruse
and Andrew Jennings, “One Coast - Three Peoples: Names and Ethnicity in the Scottish West during the Early
Viking Period,” in \textit{Scandinavian Scotland - Twenty Years After}, ed. Alex Woolf (St. Andrews: University of St.
Andrews, Committee for Dark Age Studies, 2009), 86). The lack of Gaelic influence on Norse has been interpreted
by some to suggest the total, or near total, dominance of Norse at all levels of society for the entirety of the Norse
period. This argument is made, for example, by Margaret Gelling, who has argued that the place-name evidence in
the Isle of Man demonstrates a high number of Norse-speaking newcomers, the majority of whom were of relatively
low status themselves (Margaret Gelling, “Norse and Gaelic in Medieval Man: The Place-Name Evidence,” in \textit{Man
Archaeological Reports, 1978), 260). Countering this is the perspective that Gaelic had an important, even vibrant,
existence in the western isles for much of the period of Norse rule. Basil Megaw, whose scholarship often
challenges Gelling’s, has argued that in the Manx context, at least, Gaelic must have “held its own” (Basil Megaw,
medieval standards. Analysis of the Mac Sorleys, as above in Chapter 4, illustrates the variety of languages with which Hebridean lords interacted, whether or not they themselves had mastered the language with any fluency. In addition to the language needs of their local population, which were changing under the continuing pressures of ‘re-Gaelicization,’ Hebridean leaders also issued charters in Latin, exchanged correspondence in French, and participated in Scots parliaments, much like their mainland counterparts. As Norwegian vassals, they also attended court and engaged in military campaigns where an inability to speak the language would have seriously disadvantaged them. While Gaelic was the primary language of communication for Hebridean lords, the significance of Latin and Scots as valued capital in a nodal Hebridean subfield grew through the second half of the thirteenth century, while the value of Norse as cultural capital fell. This both reflected the political realities of the times and offered a way for Hebridean lords to orient themselves toward higher status subfields.

Language valuation within the Scottish Gaelic and Scoto-Norman subfields also incorporated a variety of linguistic pressures. Following the influx of immigrants to the Scottish kingdom, beginning during the reign of David I (r. 1124-53), Scotland’s Highland zone, the geographic region that corresponds with a Scottish Gaelic field, was “a complex mosaic in which a notable majority of Gaelic speakers, noble and common, rubbed shoulders with men and women whose first, and sometimes only, language was French, English, Breton, or Flemish.”58 In the generations following, however, it was the newcomers’ languages that lost ground.

“Norseman and Native in the Kingdom of the Isles,” in Man and Environment in the Isle of Man, ed. Peter J. Davey, vol. ii, BAR British Series 54 (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1978), 265). There is general agreement that around 1300 or soon afterward, Norse was no longer spoken with any frequency in the Hebrides or the Isle of Man, following the Treaty of Perth (1266), which transferred the islands to Scottish suzerainty, and the Battle of Ronaldsway (1275), where Manx resistance to Scottish control was crushed (Ibid., 279). The use of Norse in the Irish Sea province was closely tied to Norwegian administration, and when that ended, so too did pervasive use of the language.

57 For discussion of “re-Gaelicization,” see, McLeod, Divided Gaels: Gaelic Cultural Identities in Scotland and Ireland c. 1200-c. 1650, 18–33.
58 Neville, Native Lordship in Medieval Scotland, 215.
throughout the kingdom. With the exception of Latin, languages from the Continent never gained status or authority as the language of the elite in Scotland as they had in England. French, D. D. R. Owen has argued, was “a language with no future” in the Scottish kingdom.\(^5\) Indeed, by the fourteenth century, French had a very limited presence within the kingdom.\(^6\)

Diglossia, with respect to Gaelic and Scots, was particularly pronounced within the Scottish Gaelic subfield. Through the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the use of Scots, or ‘Inglis’ as it was known, grew, pushing the region in which Gaelic was the dominant language north and west. Earlier scholarship has depicted this as a fairly totalizing process resulting in the near complete replacement of Gaelic by Scots in the kingdom’s Lowlands; however, this is demonstrably untrue.\(^6\) It would, nevertheless, also be unfair to represent the linguistic capital that each language conveyed as equally valuable. One way to assess the value as symbolic capital that each language offered is to consider the socio-economic status of its speakers; this assessment privileges the Scots language as the language of the landowning class by the late thirteenth century “from laird to earl,” for the area from “the borders of Galloway to the Mounth and east of the Highland line.”\(^6\) On the face of it, during the later thirteenth and fourteenth centuries within a Scottish Gaelic subfield, the Scots language offered greater value in terms of linguistic capital for its speakers than did Gaelic. For those Scots speakers who also spoke Gaelic, however, Gaelic enhanced their specific linguistic capital. In the earldom of Strathearn,

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\(^6\) Duncan, *Scotland: The Making of the Kingdom*, 450.
for example, the office of *judex* was traditionally held by native Gaelic lords, a practice that continued as late as the tenure of earl Malise III (d. c. 1317). As linguistic capital, Gaelic helped to confer an authority vested in tradition that Scots was unable to provide.

While forms of social and cultural capital play indirectly into gendered identity, the role of physical or bodily capital is much more directly related. Bodily difference is crucial for the perception of gender identities and typically influences the creation of those identities as well. The cultural value ascribed to genitals in gender identity, in particular, underscores the role of physical capital in gendered contexts. For the medieval Scottish kingdom, however, information about valued forms of physical capital is much more difficult to access. Bodies are everywhere and nowhere in medieval records. Every charter is representative of the goals and desires of bodies, is created by bodies, or at least a body, and is official through witnessing undertaken by other bodies, but the bodies themselves, their condition, and their significance, all disappear. Narrative sources more commonly refer to bodies “doing things,” but also often hide the role of the body in the production of the text itself.

The praise poem to Angus Mór is one of those rare sources that offers information about the bodies of both subject and author. The poet—he is anonymous, though sometimes identified as Giolla Brighde Mac Con Midhe—describes his debilitating fear of the sea, which he provides as justification for his inability to meet Angus in person:

I would make a poor oarsmen,  
blue eye, on a perilous sea;  
even on a calm river I tremble  
when in charge at the helm [...]

It is my grip that holds the ship together  
as I drag her towards me, O prince of Fál;  
so the waves won’t break the ship asunder,

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63 Neville, *Native Lordship in Medieval Scotland*, 63.
I grasp the gunwale in my hand.\textsuperscript{64}

The image of the poet, white-knuckled and shaking with fear, contrasts sharply with that of his subject, whose confident raiding of the Irish coast demonstrates his sailing acumen and martial abilities. These differences in physical capital underscore the differences in social status between author and subject as well. While professional poets were highly respected, educated, and well-positioned men within the Gaelic world, there is no doubt as to who was socially superior.

The seaborne raids for which the Hebrideans were known, like those described in Angus Mór’s poem, required a combination of physical and mental abilities. A much later Jacobite poem, \textit{The Birlinn of Clanranald}, details some of these qualities in lamentation of Gaeldom’s lost culture.\textsuperscript{65} The poem describes the different roles that men undertook while sailing a \textit{birlinn} and the characteristics best suited to each role. A helmsman, for example, should be

\begin{quote}
  a weighty champion,  
  Powerful, free of limb  
  
  Thickset and broad-based,  
  Quick and nice of hand, and careful,  
  Watchful, wary,  
  Dextrous, patient, and unfurried  
  In the face of danger.\textsuperscript{66}
\end{quote}

The man in charge of the rigging should be sedate, while those designated as reserves, who might be needed to jump into any role necessary, must be “quick and ready, Handy, lively.”\textsuperscript{67} These descriptions show some of the differences, both in body and in temperament, that the ideal candidate for a position must possess, underscoring the contextual nature of some forms of

\textsuperscript{64} McLeod and Bateman, \textit{Duanaire Na Sracaire}, 82, 87.  
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., 89, 98.
bodily capital. While bravery and steadfastness were desirable qualities for most of the positions, one man, “the teller of the waters,” should be

a man that’s somewhat timid,
Shrewd and cautious,
But I ask not a complete,
Thorough coward.\(^{68}\)

While the characteristics emphasized as desirable in *The Birlinn of Clanranald* may not exactly reflect the qualities expected of individual fighters on land, the ideal Hebridean warrior may simply have needed the physical capital for both contexts. In 1258, Irish annals record a raid by Dugald Mac Ruairi in which he attacked a merchant ship and robbed it of the goods it carried, including clothing, wine, copper, and iron.\(^{69}\) After this act of piracy, Mac Ruairi and his men took refuge on an island where they were pursued by the sheriff of Connacht, Jordan d’Exeter. On seeing the sheriff and his forces, “Mac Somhairle put on his armour, and his dress of battle and combat; and his people then put on their armour along with him.”\(^{70}\) This passage suggests no distinction between Mac Ruairi’s sailors and his warriors. The men raiding with him were physically suited to and capable of both, indicating both very specific and very diverse valued bodily capital.

Beyond physical utility, attractiveness and good looks also constituted bodily capital for both men and women in the Middle Ages given that outer beauty was considered representative of desirable inner qualities. While a woman’s appearance is often given significant attention in literary sources, a man, on the other hand, is more commonly only cursorily described. For example, in the *Romance of Fergus*, an Arthurian romance set and likely written in Scotland by

\[^{68}\] Ibid., 95.
\[^{69}\] Ann. Loch Cé s.a. 1258.5. This incident is discussed in greater detail above, 133.
\[^{70}\] Ann. Loch Cé s.a. 1258.5; Duffy, *The World of the Galloglass*, 17.
Guillaume le Clerc, Fergus, the hero, is described without explanation as handsome while his love, Galiene, is the subject of significant appraisal:

She had a shapely mouth as pretty as if adorned with roses. Her teeth, small and completely even, were whiter than ivory or crystal. Her shoulders were a trifle broad but not immoderately so; for Nature’s attention to her formation had been so close that she made not the slightest error in it. She had small breasts just like two apples, and her flanks were graceful and shapely. But I fear I have wasted my words in describing her appearance, for there is nobody who could tell with his lips or conceive in his heart the beauty that Nature was pleased to assemble to make so attractive a body.71

The detailed description of Galiene’s beauty, even with Guillaume’s claim concerning the inadequacy of his words, makes clear the kinds of physical features desirable in a woman, but there is no parallel offered for Fergus. Nevertheless, the audience is told on several occasions how handsome Fergus is. Guillaume describes Fergus and his brothers as “most handsome sons of fine physique, well built and tall. Had they been a king’s sons, they would have looked the part well, I think, and might easily have been knights.”72 Guillaume, like many of his contemporaries, makes a connection between physical looks and social status. Although Fergus and his brothers were not actually the sons of kings, there is no doubt that Fergus’s ability to look the part of a noble knight, or in other words, his possession of valued physical capital, aided his efforts at social advancement.

As with all other forms of valued capital, valued physical capital may be leveraged or traded upon for benefit in other areas, as in Fergus’s case; it is also, however, subject to changes outside one’s control that limit its exchangeability. Aging, for example, changes the body, with both the very young and the very old marginalized in terms of their physical capital. Puberty and, for women, menopause usher in irreversible physical changes that affect the valuation of one’s body with relation to others’. Illness and injury may, in a moment, forever alter someone’s...

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72 Ibid., lines 331-3.
current and potential physical capital. The consequences of any of these changes and the extent
to which valued capital is positively or negatively affected are socially and historically
dependent as is the case with all capital, despite the seeming ahistoricity of the human body.73

Physical capital itself is impermanent, easily changed by time and circumstance, and
unpredictable. In the Middle Ages, however, men and women sometimes sought to fix physical
capital through the use of tomb effigies. Like sealing, this was a European expression of power
that resonated most strongly within a Scoto-Norman subfield but was also more broadly adopted,
especially during the later Middle Ages. Tomb effigies offer stylized and idealized
representations of valued physical capital, which may or may not have reflected the condition of
the person while alive.74 Studies of English tomb effigies, appearing both in greater numbers and
typically in better conditions than their Scottish peers, have suggested that effigies often engage
in “visually deceptive strategies,” which were intended to increase the prestige of the referent
and their family.75 This was effected by drawing upon symbolic capital in a variety of ways:
through dress, as a knight or a cleric; through positioning, with hands folded in prayer, for
example, or the legs posed as if to take a step; and through heraldry or symbology. Effigies are
also physically deceptive, portraying figures likely much taller than their prototypes. The effigies
of Malise (f. 1239-70), eighth earl of Strathearn, and his wife, who is not identified on the tomb
but is likely his fourth wife, Mary, the daughter of Ewen Mac Dougall of Argyll, depict Malise

73 See above, 24-6. The area of disabilities studies in the Middle Ages has undergone significant growth in
the past decade. See, inter alia, Irina Metzler, A Social History of Disability in the Middle Ages: Cultural
Considerations of Physical Impairment, Routledge Studies in Cultural History 20 (New York: Routledge, 2013);
Joshua Eyler, Disability in the Middle Ages: Reconsiderations and Reverberations (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010). As
this field becomes more established, the possibility of exploring medieval gender from this intersectional perspective
is particularly promising.
74 Tomb effigies during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries certainly did not represent the current
condition of their referent, although effigies depicting the process of decay, known as transi, did become common
starting in the fifteenth century.
75 Rachel Dressler, “Steel Corpse: Imaging the Knight in Death,” in Conflicted Identities and Multiple
as six feet, nine inches tall and his wife as only slightly shorter. The effigy of Walter Stewart (f. 1248-1292), earl of Menteith, also depicted alongside an identified woman, likely his wife, Mary, through whom he inherited the earldom, is seven feet and six inches tall. While the heights of the effigies are no doubt the result of practical purposes to some extent—barring Procrustean tendencies, a tomb would have to be larger than the body it contained, and the lid larger still—their height ensures that in death, they truly live on larger than life.

The manifestations of physical capital and the hierarchal valuation of it within specific subfields are especially difficult to access in a medieval Scottish context beyond the few examples given above. The sources available for the period examined here, the mid-thirteenth to early fourteenth centuries, are too inconsistent to offer much in the way of conclusions regarding bodily capital, particularly in terms of lived experience. Many of the men discussed in the previous chapters, the owners of seals, the Mac Sorleys, and so forth, appear too briefly in the historical record to assess changes over time in their physical capital.

Each of the subfields considered here, Scoto-Norman, Scottish Gael, and nodal Hebridean, contained unique principles of hierarchization regarding the possession of valued capital. In some cases, the relationship between different manifestations of a particular form of capital is quite clear. This is the case, for example, for linguistic capital in each of the three subfields. Each subfield valued a given language according to its own principles of hierarchization, which subsequently affects the potential for translation to other forms of symbolic capital. Similar valuations underlie the relational significance of other forms of valued capital, whether social, cultural, or physical. As a result of the limitations of source material, however, it is not always possible to determine the effects of this relationality. Regardless, the

differences in valuation and principles of hierarchization across subfields afforded agents the opportunity to change their position, for better or worse, as a result of movement between subfields.

The forms of capital discussed above, though contestable in definition and hierarchy, are relatively tangible in comparison to other forms of symbolic capital, such as honour and violence. Nevertheless, in constructing masculine identities, all of these forms of capital are significant. Together, they aid in structuring the unequal relationships between men both in their lived experiences and in abstract. It is, however, in these final two categories, honour and violence, that the relationality, hierarchy, and competitiveness of masculinity are made most clear. For elites in Scotland, understanding these aspects was inextricably tied to the concepts of chivalry and chivalrous behaviour. From the late twelfth century onward, chivalry offered elite men, in particular, a way of looking at the world that was international and unifying. Chivalric values were expected to supersede more regionally and culturally specific practices, providing a homogeneous code of behaviour and clear understandings of licit and illicit behaviour in a variety of contexts. The impact of a chivalric ethos was felt throughout the Scottish kingdom and played a role in all three of the subfields examined here, affecting the valuation of capital and providing underlying principles of hierarchization. While honour and violence were certainly important concepts outside chivalric culture, in no other context do they operate so clearly as symbolic and exchangeable capital.

**Chivalric Habitus and the Scottish Kingdom**

From a prescriptive perspective, chivalry defined the interactions between men and their place in the larger world. It was both an unrealizable ideal and “a cultural and a social phenomenon, which retained its vigour because it remained relevant to the social and political realities of the
time.” Chivalry in Scotland is more commonly studied with respect to the fifteenth century, particularly in terms of its literary impacts. It is clear, however, that key chivalric texts and romances were available in Scotland from at least the late twelfth century. Material artifacts, like the Perth mirror-case, depicting a scene from the romance *Tristan and Iseult*, as well as the use of the name Tristam are both indicative of the dispersal of these texts in Scotland. As a lens for understanding elite lay medieval masculinity, chivalry created both the playing field on which masculine value was proven through competition and the rules for judging masculine success.

Within a Bourdieusian model, chivalry may be best seen as a form of habitus: “a ‘socially constituted system of cognitive and motivating structures’ which provide individuals with class dependent, pre-disposed ways of relating to familiar and novel situations.” While chivalry broadly fits within the mould of habitus, there are also several ways in which it deviates from it. Habitus, for example, is typically considered to operate below the level of consciousness, whereas the self-conscious struggle to be chivalrous and to uphold chivalric values particularly in the face of adversity are at the heart of nearly all chivalric romances. David Crouch has also argued that the “codified” nature of chivalry disqualifies it from a classification as habitus, citing Bourdieu’s argument that habitus cannot be the product of a conductor. Chivalry, however,

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78 Keen, *Chivalry*, 219.
79 For discussions concerning the fifteenth century and later, see, *inter alia*, Stevenson, *Chivalry and Knighthood in Scotland, 1424-1513*, especially, pp. 131-69; Carol Edington, *Court and Culture in Renaissance Scotland: Sir David Lindsay of the Mount* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994); William Calin, *The Lily and the Thistle: The French Tradition and the Older Literature of Scotland* (North York: University of Toronto Press, 2013). Calin also examines the earlier period, however, much of the work addresses the fifteenth century.
even in the attempts to structure it—as in works like Ramon Llull’s *Book of the Order of Chivalry* (c. 1280)—was never the product of a single or even a small group of conductors. These were instead, at best, an attempt to direct a movement already afoot. These efforts were also not wholly successful as evidenced by the variety of ‘chivalries’ detectable in literary and historical sources. Contrary to what Crouch proposes, chivalry did operate as ‘a system of acquired, permanent, generative dispositions,’” and the consideration of chivalry as a type of habitus helps to elucidate its role in the structuring of symbolic capital.\(^{83}\) The manifestation of chivalric habitus among ‘real’ men, as opposed to literary representations of men, is elusive. It is, in part, “difficult to envisage because of its subjective, embodied nature.”\(^{84}\) The very act of recording the stories, behaviours, and actions of historical men also distances the recorded accounts from their embodied habitus and the practice of their day-to-day lives. For these reasons, analysis of chivalric fiction is one of the most effective ways of accessing chivalric habitus and its structuring of valued capital.

The examples used below are drawn from two literary texts with Scottish associations: the *Romance of Fergus* and *Olif and Landres*, also known by its Norse title, *Landres Pàatr*. As examples of early ‘Scottish’ romance, the *Romance of Fergus* and *Olif and Landres* support the hypothesis that chivalric romances were more popular in the Scottish kingdom than might be supposed at first glance; however, provenance in both cases is far from conclusive. The Scottish connection of *Landres Pàatr* relies on internal claims of its origins. Passed down within a compilation about Charlemagne, *Landres Pàatr* is allegedly an Old Norse translation of a ‘lost’ Middle English romance, itself most likely a translation of an earlier French romance. The

\(^{83}\) Ibid., 290. n. 1. Danielle Westerhof similarly challenges Crouch’s construction arguing: “in Bourdieu’s theory as I understand it, habitus is always present . . . and codification is therefore part of it. Moreover, it is important to make a distinction between ideal and day-to-day behaviour.” (Danielle Westerhof, *Death and the Noble Body in Medieval England* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer Press, 2008), 33–4).

\(^{84}\) Ibid., 34.
narrator of *Landres Pâtrr* proclaims in the prologue, “Lord Bjarni Erlingssen of Bjarkey found this saga written and told in the English language, in Scotland, when he stayed there during the winter after the death of King Alexander.”

Lord Bjarni was a member of the delegation sent to Scotland in advance of Margaret, Maid of Norway, (d. 1290) in order to make preparations for her arrival, having also participated in the negotiations of her parents’ marriage in 1281. One theory is that Bjarni heard the story while staying with the Bruces of Annandale, however, there appears little evidence regarding this one way or the other.

Evidence is also inconclusive regarding the provenance of the *Romance of Fergus*. The author identifies himself as Guillaume le Clerc and the setting of the romance uses highly specific Scottish geography; beyond this, however, little is clear. From the actual identity of Guillaume to the identity of his patron and the date of composition, there is little agreement among scholars. A minority opinion suggests that there is no evidence that *Fergus* was written in Scotland or by a Scot, and considerable indication of Continental origins. More common interpretations hold that the author may or may not have been William Malveisin, bishop of Glasgow in 1200 and bishop of St Andrews from 1202 to his death; it may have been written on behalf of Alan of Galloway (f. 1199-1230), thus mythologizing his great-grandfather Fergus of

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89 Wilkerson, “The National Origin of the Romance Le Roman de Fergus.”
Galloway (f. 1131-41), or, perhaps, Dervorgilla of Galloway (d. 1290) as propagandistic buttressing of her family’s claims to the Scottish throne. As a consequence of these alternatives, the proposed creation dates range from the late twelfth to the mid-thirteenth centuries.

Although questions remain regarding the extent of the ‘Scottishness’ represented by Landres Pàtrr and the Romance of Fergus—a discussion better suited to another study—these texts are highly indicative of chivalric romance associated with the Scottish kingdom long before the fifteenth century. For the purposes below, Continental texts might easily be substituted. There seems value, nonetheless, in employing sources connected, however tenuously, with the thirteenth-century Scottish kingdom instead.

The most important form of capital within the world constructed by chivalric romances, bar none, was honour. In studying honour, sociologists have emphasized its bifurcated nature, noting internal and external elements. In the often-cited words of Julian Pitt-Rivers, “honor is the value of a person in his own eyes, but also in the eyes of his society. It is his estimation of his own worth, his claim to pride, but it is also the acknowledgement of that claim, his excellence recognized by society, his right to pride.”

Honour is constructed in front of one’s peers and is judged by them, something the authors of chivalric romances are careful to include. From the perspective of chivalry, in particular, simply to be honourable was insufficient: one’s honour must also be recognized by others. Chivalric conceptions of honour helped to create order within elite society and to direct aggression and competition. In warrior cultures the “fear of shame and humiliation offers one of the most powerful motives for an individual to risk life or limb,” and despite the non-martial elements of chivalry, it was, in its lay form, inescapably bellicose.

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91 Taylor, Chivalry and the Ideals of Knighthood in France During the Hundred Years War, 71.
of shame, in its most beneficial guise, encouraged men—and women too—to uphold social norms and values, even in instances where it might work against individual well being.

Informed by chivalric habitus, honour operated particularly clearly as symbolic capital. Like other forms of symbolic capital, honour was convertible, conveying social status and prestige, and providing the opportunity for social elevation. In theorizing about honour, it is conceived of not only as rare, but of limited quantity. In chivalric contexts, honour may not be created anew, but must be acquired through another’s loss. For this reason, the greatest honour to be gained comes from challenging someone of comparable or, ideally, greater status. In the Romance of Fergus, the calculation of this exchange is made clear. Fighting in defence of his love’s kingdom, Fergus

   goes frantically seeking the king who was maintaining this siege. To his sorrow, he could not find him. In his rage and anger he secured a very good exchange: on his way he encountered the seneschal, a man of high standing; so he struck him on his gemmed helmet with the good sword that used to be Perceval’s. He slices through him down to the horse, pulls out his sword, and drops him dead.\footnote{Fergus of Galloway, lines 4910-4923.}

Unable to find the king, Fergus’s “very good exchange” requires that he defeat the highest status man that he can find on the field. That he so inarguably defeats the seneschal lends further weight to the honour he might claim.\footnote{A similarly defeat of an opponent is echoed in Barbour’s Bruce (c. 1370), when Robert Bruce kills Henry de Bohun, splitting his head with a single blow (Barbour, The Bruce, XII.40-74).}

   As capital, honour has an insulating effect. The man judged by his peers as honourable may occasionally defy norms and transgress expectations. His ownership of ‘honour capital’ allows him a presumption of honour, even when his behaviour might not appear to support it. It is this insulating effect that Gawain relies on in the Romance of Fergus when meeting Fergus on the jousting field in order to urge him to speak to the king. Although Gawain is not afraid of being challenged, by Fergus or by any other man, his purpose there is not to fight. When Fergus
finally appears, Gawain “thought and said to himself that he has no wish at all to joust with him if he can amicably get him to come—not that he feared him, but he never acted with aggression unless someone had started it first.”94 It is only because of Gawain’s reputation, the extent of his honour capital, that he is able to act in such a way. Fergus, on the other hand, a man still working to establish his renown and to acquire honour capital, must not only meet every challenge put to him, but is compelled to initiate them.

It is impossible to discuss honour without reference to shame; however, the relationship between the two, especially from the perspective of symbolic capital, is not as simple as it first appears. If honour is both the estimation and the acknowledgement of a right to pride, shame is either or both of these denied.95 Furthermore, in order for honour to have value, shame must be a possibility. The public reception of an action or behaviour, and the internalization of these standards, relies on the possibility of at least two possible judgements; without shame, honour itself has no value. The public disavowal of a claim to pride is certainly shameful, but even the potential of public discovery is sufficient to disrupt the personal estimation of that claim to honour. According to chivalric habitus, shame was an essential aspect of the acquisition of honour. Honour, according to chivalry, was dependent upon challenge, the resolution of which necessarily involved shame. In this “continuing exchange of somewhat hostile social reciprocities,” defeat might equate to a loss of honour, but did not make someone dishonourable.96 The shame incurred as part of the game of social reciprocities was, in a sense, an honourable sort of shame. The challenge itself acknowledges the possession of honour capital, recognizes membership within a select group, and confirms the worthiness of the holder. Despite

94 Ibid., lines 6742-66.
96 Miller, Humiliation, 121.
the loss of honour one party or the other must accept, neither is made dishonourable through the exchange. An absence of challenge, in fact, can sometimes be more shameful than defeat. In the Romance of Fergus, the Black Knight decries his lack of challenges from worthy foes: “What’s the reason for Gawain, Lancelot, Erec and Yvain not coming? Or Sagremor the Impetuous, or that ninny Perceval? Or else let that disreputable, cowardly king [Arthur] bring with him twenty knights, or his whole army should he want to. He’s very craven to be so afraid of me.”97 The Black Knight even threatens to turn that shame back on Arthur by killing Fergus and sending his head to Arthur in the care of the most menial servant he can find. Fergus’s ultimate defeat of the knight after a prolonged battle wins honour for Fergus and shames the knight; in finally being defeated, however, in finally meeting a worthy foe, the knight’s potential for honour is acknowledged.

According to chivalric habitus, shame threatens honour, but may also provide an opportunity to amplify it depending on one’s response. As William Ian Miller writes, “one of the many little paradoxes of honour is that the honourable person must not only be shameable, he must also occasionally suffer shame or remain forever untested.”98 Shame has no symbolic capital itself, it is neither rare nor desirable, but it must exist in order to activate the symbolic value of honour.

Chivalric habitus gave both the noble individual and elite society specific ground upon which to construct ideas of honour and shame and tied them closely to violence. Among other socio-economic groups, exactly what constituted honourable behaviour might be organized around alternative principles. Derek Neal’s broader analysis of late medieval English

97 Fergus of Galloway, lines 2321-24.
98 Miller, Humiliation, 120.
masculinity, for example, identifies honesty as a key organizing principle for masculinity.⁹⁹ According to chivalric values, however, which applied to “those who fought,” shame might result from any number of perceived slights, but honour was established, maintained, and reacquired (to the extent it was possible) through real or threatened violence. As a result, violence operated within chivalric contexts as a form of symbolic capital, but it was only under particular conditions that violence might be translated into honour. While uncontrolled violence is unquestionably destabilizing, chivalric habitus contained, directed, and restrained the expression of real violence.

The operation of violence as translatable symbolic capital is particularly visible in literary sources.¹⁰⁰ This is the key plot element of the Romance of Fergus, for instance, and in Landres Pàattr. In both texts, violence—in threat and in actuality—allows the male protagonists, in particular, to establish and defend their claims of honour in order that those claims be recognized by others.

In Fergus, Kay’s mockery is the central motivating force for Fergus’s need to leave Arthur’s court and prove himself. Kay’s shaming of Fergus results in both actualized violence against those Fergus meets on his adventures and threatened violence towards Kay. To Kay’s ridicule, Fergus responds: “By the faith I owe Saint Mungo, if I wouldn’t be thought an idiot, sir vassal with the braided hair, you’d pay dearly for your gibes at my expense! If you weren’t in the king’s presence, I’d let fly at you to such effect that I’d slice through all your ribs.”¹⁰¹ In this example, violence acts as both an asset and a liability: to allow Kay’s taunts to pass without

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⁹⁹ Neal, *The Masculine Self in Late Medieval England.*
¹⁰⁰ One of the few works by medievalists to treat violence as symbolic capital implicitly adopts this framework by paralleling modern and medieval fictional portrayals of symbolic violence, see Laurie A. Finke and Martin B. Schichtman, “No Pain, No Gain: Violence as Symbolic Capital in Malory’s ‘Morte d’Arthur,’” *Arthuriana* 8, no. 2 (1998): 115–34.
¹⁰¹ *Fergus of Galloway*, lines 819–865.
response would be to incur shame, but to draw a weapon in front of the king would be a graver sin. The threat of violence—perhaps made more real by the presence of the decapitated heads of a band of robbers Fergus had earlier encountered, which he had hanging from his saddle—serves to activate its symbolic capital in a contextually appropriate way. That the appropriate response to this particular situation is threatened violence, rather than an alternative course of action, is the conclusion provided by Fergus’s habitus.

In Landres þattr, the role of violence as symbolic capital is more ambiguous; it is framed largely in terms of righteousness and the antagonists’ use of violence rarely offers the opportunity for successful conversion as symbolic capital. Far more Christian in tone than Fergus, Landres þattr frequently features God’s intervention in cases of unequal or unwarranted violence. The steward Milon, for example, is kept from raping Queen Olif “thanks to God’s protection.” In another instance, the knight Ingelbert, despite riding a mule and carrying a wooden club while dressed in nothing but a hair shirt, is kept from harm in a duel as Olif’s champion against Milon, thanks to Olif’s innocence and Ingelbert’s faith in God.102 In both cases, Milon is prevented from effecting violence and unable to benefit from its symbolic value.

Milon’s grandson, Malalandres, the product of the marriage Milon orchestrated between his daughter and the king after Queen Olif’s exile, is also unable to benefit from the violence he enacts. In Malalandres’s case, the main problem is the target of his violence. While chivalric values primarily endorse competition between one’s equals or betters, Malalandres “never wished to fight against the sons of powerful men, but he always wanted to mistreat the sons of poor men if he could arrange it.”103 When he did compete with his social equals, Malalandres was outclassed. While playing a ball game with a number of young men, Malalandres hit his half

102 Hieatt, Karlamagnús Saga, 194.
103 Ibid., 203.
brother, Olif’s son, Landres. In response, Landres hit Malalandres back with a blow hard enough to break his cheekbones and knock most of his teeth out: “‘God knows, brother,’ says he [Landres], ‘that this blow which I gave you is worth three of the one you gave me.’”104 Ultimately, Malalandres’s tendency toward unequal fights is reflected in his death. His lack of honour, in part the result of the form his violence takes and the subjects towards which his violence is directed, means that he is unworthy of receiving honourable violence. Instead of being killed directly by his brother in battle, the fatal blow comes instead from Landres’s horse.105

In the Romance of Fergus, legitimate violence is employed to defend and even increase honour, providing a positive translation between violence and other forms of symbolic capital, whereas Landres Pàtrr emphasizes the inverse of this relationship: illegitimate violence may not be positively translated to other forms of symbolic capital. Violence clearly operates as symbolic capital in chivalric romances. The conditions, however, under which it was translatable to other forms of capital, especially honour, were limited and defined by chivalric conventions, manifest as habitus.

Chivalry offered a “socially constituted system of cognitive and motivating structures,” or habitus, which informed the ‘rules’ of translation and helped structure the valuation of symbolic capital.106 In both fiction and real life, chivalric habitus predisposed men to make particular choices as a consequence of internalized principles of hierarchization. These principles take into account all forms of symbolic capital—forms of social capital, cultural capital, and bodily capital—but especially the symbolic capital represented by honour. For “those who fight,” honour was inextricably entwined with the exercise of violence in its many forms. The

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104 Ibid., 206.
105 Ibid., 219.
106 Bourdieu, Outline of a Theory of Practice, 76.
interactions of chivalric habitus and symbolic capital aided in structuring the unequal relationships between men both in their lived experiences and in abstract.

Conclusions

The combination of R. W. Connell’s theory of masculinity and Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of practice into Coles’s masculinity field model offers useful tools, vocabulary, and ways of understanding with which to approach questions of gender and ethnic identity in medieval Scotland. On their own, both Connell and Bourdieu’s constructions fall short of their potential complexity, and therefore representativity, but together create a model that incorporates dimensionality and processes of change. According to Coles, “using both Bourdieu and Connell provides a lucid insight into how masculinities are produced and reproduced, both at the structural level and the individual level; the hierarchies involved; and how men come to negotiate masculinities over the life course.”

A masculinity field model allows for multiple expressions of dominant masculinities that both challenge and support hegemonic values. Similarly, space is created for masculinities that hegemonic masculinity constructs as subordinated but that resist this subordination and attempt to implement differing principles of hierarchization. In this final chapter of the thesis, Coles’s masculinity field model has been adopted and adjusted for consideration of men in the medieval Scottish kingdom during the later thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.

The subfields used for this thesis have been defined largely in ethnic terms in order to explore the interrelationship between gender and ethnicity. The understanding of ethnicity articulated here emphasizes the situational and strategic nature of ethnic attachment and the view of ethnicity as a social construct, thus allowing an agent to lay claim to any identity without

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107 Ibid., 42.
necessarily affecting future engagement with that or any other form of ethnic identity. Furthermore, it allows that these claims might be rejected or denied by others.

In the medieval Scottish kingdom, the hierarchal relationship between ethnic categories created an unequal foundation from which dominant and non-dominant masculinity forms were accessed and negotiated between. An agent’s engagement with these forms was largely dependent on their possession of capital, in its broadest sense, which was valued within the subfields accessed. The types and forms of capital valued within different subfields, together with the principles that underlay these valuations, could vary widely. Social, cultural, physical, and other forms of symbolic capital were expressed and valued in different ways within Scoto-Norman, Scottish Gael, and nodal Hebridean subfields. Capital, however, might be exchanged, acquired, or converted within and between subfields, affording agents the opportunity to change their position for better or worse.

One way the exchange and conversion of capital was regulated in the medieval Scottish kingdom was through the effects of chivalric habitus. Chivalry offered individuals “class dependent, pre-disposed ways of relating to familiar and novel situations,” and assisted in structuring the valuation of capital. The relationship between honour, shame, and violence was especially affected by chivalric habitus, with honour acting as highly valuable social capital. As part of a much larger system, chivalric habitus undergirded the efforts of elite men to maximize their hegemonic potential in the shifting and hierarchal world of masculine identity.

Ultimately, a masculinity field model offers a dynamic construct within which to consider the individual experiences of medieval Scots, whose changing ownership of capital over time resulted in a variety of strategies of identity. Masculine expectations, more broadly, in

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108 Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, 76.
Scotland were constructed within and between groups with unequal relationships to each other and unequal access to all forms of capital. This, in turn, created a complex network within which dominant and non-dominant masculinity forms were accessed and negotiated between.
CONCLUSION: MAXIMIZING HEGEMONIC POTENTIAL

Men in medieval Scotland created identities that reflected the complexity of their ethnic attachments, the interconnectedness of place and culture, and the multiple and changing pressures that exist over a person’s lifetime. The ways this was manifest for the vast majority of medieval Scots is lost to history. Of those who survive in historical records of all types, the sense of who they were and how they perceived themselves is often frustratingly incomplete. Nevertheless, some idea of the identities they constructed and the ways they portrayed themselves can be gleaned from the records of their lives. A handful of men appear in previous parts of this project for whom the historical record offers particular insight into how they conceived of themselves and how they constructed an identity for others’ consumption; this includes William Comyn and Adam Kilconquhar, respectively, the earls of Buchan and of Galloway, and the Mac Sorleys. While each of these men had a unique sense of his place in the world and experienced a variety of different identity-shaping pressures, there are patterns in their manipulations of symbolic capital. Some were able, at certain times in their lives, to align themselves with hegemonic models, asserting overall dominance, while others were able to assert dominance within several subfields, but in doing so sometimes came into conflict with differing principles of hierarchization. For those with more restricted capital, translation between subfields allowed men to maximize their potential, while still others embraced their subordinated position, in a subversion of hierarchizing principles. All these men consciously and subconsciously sought opportunities to translate the symbolic capital they possessed between subfields in their efforts to maximize their hegemonic potential.

A medieval masculinity field model posits the existence of multiple forms of masculinity that are relational and hierarchical, where an agent’s engagement with different forms is largely
dependent upon their possession, or their lack thereof, of valued capital. Capital, whether
economic or symbolic, social, cultural, or bodily, may be acquired, translated, and lost through
processes both within and outside an agent’s control. The ownership of valued capital is
constantly in flux and the significance of various forms of capital is the subject of debate, thus
creating a dynamic model where hegemony, dominance, and subordination are continually
challenged and reasserted. Within the field of masculinity, multiple subfields are identifiable
within which further unique principles of hierarchization create individual systems of dominance
and subordination. These individual systems are not necessarily reflective of the larger systems
of dominance and subordination that play out at the level of the whole field. Instead, these
differences contribute to the depth of the field of masculinity. The unequal relationship between
subfields and the differences in subfield principles of hierarchization create the opportunity for
agents to remake themselves in contexts in which their capital might hold greater value. In doing
so, agents maximize their hegemonic potential by constructing identities that draw upon a
subfield’s dominant qualities and that reject those qualities that particular subfield subordinates.
This manipulation of the perception of their capital, in addition to the acquisition of new capital,
allows an agent to construct an identity oriented towards hegemonic values and defined by
dominant characteristics, rather than subordinated ones.

For some men, hegemonic models of masculine identity were within close enough reach
that they were able simply to align themselves with these models. William Comyn, for example,
drew upon hegemonic expressions of masculine identity through his iconographical identity, the
management of his earldom, and his family relations. In each of these categories, his possession
of valued capital, ranging from the prestige and honour he had acquired through his service—
both martial and diplomatic—to the crown, to the social network he developed as *pater familias*
of the Comyns, supported his claim to an identity grounded in hegemony. While Comyn himself may not have personified hegemonic masculinity, he was able, as a result of the capital he possessed, to craft an identity that drew upon the “widespread ideals, fantasies, and desires” that entailed hegemonic masculinity in medieval Scotland.¹ While the previous earl of Buchan, Comyn’s father-in-law, Fergus (fl. 1184-1204), operated within a Scottish Gaelic subfield, Comyn’s commitment to a Scoto-Norman subfield is particularly clear in his activities as earl. As an outsider to the region, and as the first ‘Norman’ earl in Scotland, Comyn was likely under significant pressure to conform to the expectations common in the Gaelic earldom of Buchan. William Comyn’s position and the valued capital he possessed were sufficiently strong and aligned with hegemonic models that he did not need to translate or rely upon locally dominant forms of capital or masculine identities in order to be effective as earl of Buchan. Rather than conforming to them, Comyn’s alignment with hegemonic expressions of masculine identity allowed him to transcend them instead.

Not all efforts to align with hegemonic models of masculinity were as successful, however. Alexander Mac Donald, whose father, Angus, was a significant force in the Irish Sea province and whose brother would lay the foundations for the Lordship of the Isles, the greatest medieval challenge to the authority of the Scottish Crown, was largely unsuccessful in transitioning from a nodal Hebridean masculine identity to one based upon hegemonic models. In part, this was no doubt the result of timing. Alexander Mac Donald was long overshadowed by his father and operated independently as lord of Islay for only seven years between the death of Angus and his own death (c. 1293-99), during a period of intense instability. Mac Donald’s efforts during this period, however, show a desire on his part to participate in hegemonic models,

¹ Connell and Messerschmidt, “Hegemonic Masculinity,” 838.
although without successful application. His apparent lack of a knighthood, despite sometimes referring to himself as *dominus*, is one such example, accentuated by the unwillingness of others to accord him the same title.² Mac Donald’s inability to successfully establish an identity grounded in hegemonic values underscores the extent to which one’s possession of capital is always partly beyond personal control.

Most of the men examined here found themselves, like Mac Donald, in a position where their possession of valued capital was restricted in some way. The most common response to this was to acquire new capital, insofar as it was possible, or to translate the capital they possessed into other forms or other subfields with different principles of hierarchization. It was this route that Adam Kilconquhar, Angus Mór Mac Donald, and Alexander Mac Dougall took, although with varying degrees of success. The different approaches that these men adopted underscore the variety of expectations faced by men in medieval Scotland, the uneasy hierarchy between these expectations, and the contextual nature of both expectation and response.

Both Adam Kilconquhar and Alexander Mac Dougall gained particular prominence through advantageous marriages. These marriages, however, also necessitated their participation in alternative subfields and this participation had consequences for the perception of their capital. Kilconquhar’s marriage to Marjory of Carrick made him an earl, although his seal clearly indicates that the origin of his authority in Carrick was through his wife.³ His dependence on Marjory for political authority may have been part of his motivation to engage in crusade. As a crusader, Kilconquhar would have accrued symbolic capital attributable to no one but himself. As a crusading knight, Kilconquhar would have engaged in an international community of knights and chivalry, and no doubt hoped to win honour and prestige. Kilconquhar died in Acre

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³ See, 110-12, above.
and the Eighth Crusade was widely considered a failure, but had he returned after valiantly defending Christendom, his engagement with such a hegemonic model of masculinity would have translated positively even within a Scottish Gaelic subfield. It is worth noting that one of Kilconquhar’s crusader peers, Robert Bruce (VI), successfully mobilized the benefits that he accrued on crusade, marrying Kilconquhar’s widow upon his return to Scotland and in turn becoming earl of Carrick. It was this connection to Carrick that helped their son, Robert I, win over the Gaelic nobility of Scotland.4

Alexander MacDougall’s marriage worked in the opposite sense of Adam Kilconquhar’s. Whereas Kilconquhar’s marriage to Marjory of Carrick resulted in increased prestige within a less valued subfield, MacDougall’s marriage to one of John Comyn’s daughters—her name is unknown—offered him a lesser position within a higher valued subfield. Within a nodal Hebridean subfield, few were able to challenge MacDougall’s dominant position. At the apex of his subfield, the only opportunity for him to improve his position required him to look outside. His marriage to Comyn’s daughter offered this opportunity and allowed him full access to a Scoto-Norman subfield, where the capital he possessed carried less weight, but in which his hegemonic potential was maximized. His engagement with the Scoto-Norman subfield also paid dividends within the nodal Hebridean field, at least for a time, as evidenced by his lieutenancy and sheriffdom and by the desirability of his children, both sons and daughters, as marriage partners. This translation offered great reward, but also great risk, ultimately costing him his position in all regions of the Scottish kingdom.

Rather than through translation between subfields, Angus Mór Mac Donald sought to maximize his hegemonic potential by acquiring new capital within a nodal Hebridean subfield.

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His purposeful identification with his father’s name and legacy, his general unwillingness to commit to political alliances beyond the Irish Sea province, his ambiguity towards knighthood, and his patronage of local churches all underscore his efforts to secure dominance within his regional subfield, complemented by his lack of interest in engaging with the values of other subfields. In the long run, this benefited his second son, known as Angus Óg, who was largely unburdened by previous alliances and commitments and was therefore able to capitalize on Robert Bruce’s ascendancy. Angus Mór’s ability to embrace nodal Hebridean dominance permitted him a dominant identity clearly oriented toward hegemony without the risk that transference between alternative subfields might have entailed.

In their construction of their identities as gendered beings each of these men emphasized qualities and characteristics that the subfields they chose to operate in constructed as dominant. Both consciously and unconsciously they positioned themselves in ways that maximized their hegemonic potential while minimizing their weaknesses and other qualities judged as subordinated. Not everyone chose or was able to do so, however. Lachlan Mac Ruairi lacked one element of symbolic capital every other man discussed above possessed: the rights bestowed upon a legitimately born son. Lachlan, however, refused to accept the principles of hierarchization that subordinated illegitimacy and, instead, attempted to impose his own rules, which appear to equate to ‘might makes right’. On a personal—though no broader—level, Mac Ruairi’s subversion of various masculine expectations, including chivalric dictates about appropriate targets of violence, were successful. He was eventually able to wrest control of Garmoran from his half-sister and made powerful alliances with Alexander Mac Dougall, marrying one of his daughters. Lachlan’s reliance upon the social capital of his father-in-law, however, also brought with it negative ramifications, making Mac Ruairi dangerous and
powerful enemies. There is only a short-lived period during which Lachlan was active in the historical record, but his activities during this time show a refusal to accept subordination and illustrate a masculine identity founded in dominance, not through translation to an alternative subfield, but through a subversion of masculine ideals.

An agent’s position within a masculinity field model is dependent on possession of capital that is valued within a particular subfield. The possession of capital itself, however, is constantly in flux and its significance is subject to change. Subfields and their underlying principles of hierarchization, too, are subject to change as dominance and subordination are continually challenged and reinforced, oriented toward and in relation to hegemony. Agents like William Comyn, Alexander Mac Donald, Adam Kilconquhar, Alexander Mac Dougall, Angus Mór Mac Donald, and Lachlan Mac Ruairi used conscious and unconscious strategies to craft identities defined by dominant characteristics by manipulating the perception of their capital. By translating capital between relational and hierarchal subfields or by acquiring new capital, they sought to maximize their hegemonic potential and construct identities grounded in dominance, rather than subordination, even where they do not conform to ideas of hegemonic masculinity. A masculinity field model helps to make clear the varieties of expectations that confronted men in medieval Scotland and creates a framework within which both larger social patterns and individual experiences are revealed. It shows how masculine identities may change over time as the result of both changing expectations and changing ownership of capital, while highlighting the contextuality of gendered experience.

Both today and in the past, masculine identities are constructed in the face of multiple, overlapping, often contradictory, culturally situated ideals and values. This dissertation has examined the ways in which elite men in the medieval Scottish kingdom negotiated, represented,
and deployed their identities specifically as men with particular attention to the role of ethnicity.

While the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in Scotland are often viewed through a lens of centralization and unification as a result of the crown’s expansionist policies and the narratives that arose during the Scottish Wars of Independence (1296-1353), the reality of the situation, particularly with respect to personal identity, was much more complex.

As the significance of different ethnic groups as political realities decayed in the mid-thirteenth century and the expediency of presenting a unified ‘Scottish’ identity grew through the early fourteenth, it is often assumed that alternative ethnic identities disappeared altogether. To the contrary, these alternative ethnicities remained both in plain sight and in more subtle interactions. Across the Scottish kingdom, and especially in newly acquired regions like the Hebrides, both the common and elite population held pluralistic cultural and ethnic identities. Whether in the Mac Sorleys’ careful dance among their Hebridean, Irish, Scottish, and Norwegian ancestry or in Robert I’s deliberate portrayal of himself and his kingdom as aligned with the shared origins of the Irish and Welsh, ethnicity in medieval Scotland was situational and strategic, often overlapping and concentric. These complex and multifaceted ethnic identities had consequences for and influenced the expectations and portrayals of gendered identities as well.

While the study of masculinity in medieval Scotland is relatively new, the ways that medieval gender historians have approached masculinity have helped to challenge assumptions of masculine universality. Gender historians have shown that men, like women, have been subject to historical and culturally situated sex-based assumptions and expectations to which men, like women, have responded in diverse ways. This uncoupling of men from a normative and naturalized discourse has made it more possible to see the ways men have acted as gendered beings and crafted identities founded upon gendered values.
The pressures facing men varied according to a wide array of factors and with overlapping effects. These factors included, but were hardly limited to, ethnic identity, age, occupation, social status, and marital status. Different groups of men also experienced different expectations of masculine behaviour at different times in their lives. In turn, they responded to and represented these expectations in ways that supported, challenged, or transgressed social values.

As historians have worked to make sense of these influences, the work of R. W. Connell has been particularly conspicuous. Connell’s theory of masculinities relies upon acknowledging the existence of multiple masculinities (and femininities) that operate relationally and in which certain models are preferred over others. This theory has been widely adopted and widely criticized, but its influence on historians of gender is undeniable. One of the strongest critiques of the model, however, is that it lacks the mechanisms necessary to explore and explain the processes of changes within and between the gender forms it names hegemonic, dominant, subordinated, and so forth. It is for this reason that Connell’s theory particularly benefits from the integration of Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of practice, as proposed by Tony Coles.  

A masculinity field model, as Coles articulates, helps to create a framework within which individual experience and larger social patterns are revealed. In the medieval Scottish kingdom, the masculine identities of political elites were created as a consequence of conscious and subconscious negotiation between dominant and non-dominant masculinity forms oriented toward hegemonic masculinity. Masculine expectations of the elite in medieval Scotland were constructed within and between groups whose relationships to each other were unequal and who experienced uneven access to capital, both economic and symbolic.

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5 Coles, “Negotiating the Field of Masculinity.”
The hegemony of Anglo-Norman power structures in the Scottish kingdom, and Europe more broadly, required that other forms be positioned relationally. Represented in this project as Scoto-Norman, Scottish Gael, and nodal Hebridean subfields, ethnic categories offered social arenas in which struggles over access to resources, the resources themselves, and the meaning of their possession took place. Within these subfields, individual systems of dominance and subordination operated according to local principles of hierarchization. The hierarchal relationship between subfields themselves provided motivation for men to engage in different or blended subfields in which they might maximize the hegemonic potential of their specific capital. This manipulation of the perception of their capital allowed men to construct identities grounded in dominance, rather than subordination, even where they did not conform to hegemonic values.

It is a truism of Scottish history that compared to most other regions source material is scant. The variety of sources employed in this study, including charters and other documentary sources, literary texts, poems and works of fiction, and iconographical materials, especially seals, only partly illuminates the complex lives of men in the medieval kingdom. The representativity of a masculinity field model in particular would benefit from first-person narratives, which are lacking for thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Scotland. Even with the addition of such material, however, any analysis of masculine identity may only shed light on a brief moment in time, a glimmer of understanding towards a complex and ever-changing subject.

The medieval Scottish kingdom was positioned at the edge of the European world, both geographically and ideologically. It was not, however, isolated. Instead, cultural influences came from a variety of directions, with unequal impacts across the kingdom. The shifting political situation of the thirteen and early fourteenth centuries, from centralization to fragmentation and
back again, created new pressures within the kingdom and brought new opportunities to its inhabitants. Political elites were required to be conversant in the gendered symbols of power and legitimacy across the variety of different cultures encompassed by the Scottish kingdom, in addition to those ‘foreign’ kingdoms that continued to play an important ideological, if lessening political, role. The different ways in which men constructed, represented, and deployed their identities as masculine beings highlights the differences in how they negotiated between dominant and non-dominant forms, the shifting possession of capital and its meaning, and the contextuality of gendered experience.
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