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“PAT FALS TRAITOUR” AND “EADWEARDUS TYRANNUS”: ROBERT I  
OF SCOTLAND AND EDWARD I OF ENGLAND IN THE IMAGINATIONS  
OF LATE MEDIEVAL CHRONICLERS

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## Abstract

Throughout the high to late medieval period, chronicle writing remained a popular form of historiography, even though it was waning during the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. Medieval chronicles often were written from a particular political point of view, containing a good deal of factual distortion and bias. As one of the most controversial topics in the British Middle Ages, the right of English feudal superiority in Scotland was a central point of bias in Scottish and English chronicle histories alike. This paper will discuss and analyze some of the most influential and widely-read Anglo-Scottish chronicles of the Late Middle Ages, focusing on the portrayals of Edward I of England and Robert I of Scotland during the Scottish Wars of Independence from 1296-1314, and concluding the analysis shortly after the Battle of Bannockburn (1314). Finally, after establishing the particularly nationalist biases present in each chronicle account and discussing the way each author manipulates character presentation and historical information, we will turn our attention briefly to the survival of the chroniclers' views of Robert I and Edward I into the modern Anglo-Scottish independence debate and popular culture.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Although often understood to be an immensely complex tangle of events and influences, history is, in its simplest terms, the interaction of people in recurring situations. One way that we can understand history is through a feeling of personal identification with these “larger than life” people. Here, we will discuss two such pivotal people, Edward I, King of England and Robert I of Scotland, commonly known as Robert the Bruce. My contention, in part, is that one of these two men found even more importance after his own time in the ongoing nationalist struggle between England and Scotland, and the other, though certainly important, stands out less clearly. Although many factors influenced this continued importance and even magnified it, one primary influence, particularly in Scotland, has been the medieval historiography that this paper will discuss in detail.

In *The Matter of Scotland*, R. James Goldstein attempts to analyze how modern nationalist and liberal ideologies have informed current views of events that occurred in medieval Scotland.<sup>1</sup> This paper, in contrast, ultimately seeks to discuss how Late Medieval attitudes and biases present in chronicle historiography have colored some of the current debates and ideologies in nationalist arguments. Because of their importance during the beginning of the Scottish Wars of Independence, contemporary and near-contemporary chronicle presentations of Edward I and Robert the Bruce are pivotal to accounts of this period. In the most important of the relevant chronicles, the portrayals of these two opposing figures are set against each other along nationalistic lines for specific political purposes. These portrayals of the late medieval relationship

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<sup>1</sup> Goldstein, R. James. *The Matter of Scotland: Historical Narrative in Medieval Scotland* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 26.

between Scotland and England shaped national development and destiny, particularly that of Scotland. The chroniclers' imaginative portraits of Bruce and Edward have indeed continued to be important to the present day, shaping folk stories, film presentations, music and academic discourse, among other areas.

Due to the immense breadth of the subject matter, this paper will concentrate on the chronicle form of historiography, with brief mention of other relevant source material. I am interested in both the portrayals of Bruce and Edward by the chroniclers themselves and the effects these portrayals ultimately had on Late Medieval and modern society. While there were certainly other important literary formative elements for both the medieval and modern portrayals of Edward I and Robert I, chronicles appear to be an important medium for the transmission of historical knowledge. One of the goals of this research project has been to identify and quantify that influence by analyzing the recurrence of the information in chronicle source materials in modern trends and popular history.

Chronicles are centrally important to medieval historiography in the British Isles because so many of the political claims of the monarchs rested on preserved histories found in the chronicles. Chris Given-Wilson, underscores this particular use of chronicles: "Chronicles, after all, were record evidence in the Middle Ages; they were cited in courts of law and in international diplomacy. Edward I used them to justify his overlordship of Scotland in the 1290s..."<sup>2</sup> Both the *Brut Chronicle* and the Middle English *Polychronicon* continued to be copied and later printed. They remained popular

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<sup>2</sup> Given-Wilson, Chris. "Official and Semi-Official History in the Later Middle Ages: The English Evidence in Context." in *The Medieval Chronicle V*. ed. Erik Kooper (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008), 5.

because they were understandable, applicable prose histories, and were used to educate English children into the Tudor period. In Scotland, the chronicles by John Barbour, John of Fordun, Walter Bower, and Andrew of Wyntoun were part of the beginning of nationalist historiography, and as such, have informed nearly every aspect of Scottish nationalism since their composition in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. In addition to this importance to England and Scotland in particular, chronicles in general appealed to the medieval mind due to their narrative based nature. Stories interest people, and the prose and verse chronicles used here are crafted around a synthesis of individual anecdotes. In Barbour's *Brus*, we see a central, dynamic, and interesting character who grips the reader through his chivalry and personal sacrifice for patriotism. Furthermore, W.F.H. Nicolaisen comments on the importance of intentional folk-story elements in Barbour's *Brus*, such as the triad structure, uncompromising hero, and limiting interactions between two characters.<sup>3</sup> The same Bruce is visible in Wyntoun's chronicle, and Fordun's *Gesta Annalia* adds a religious element to the story, tying him and the patriotic struggle of Scots against English domination closely to the Church and to God's will. Higden's Edward is shown as powerful, godly, and chivalrous; this same portrayal of the King is even more powerful in the vernacular *Brut Chronicle*.

This analysis will use only the information pertaining to Edward I and Robert the Bruce within the chronicles in order to make a detailed analysis of the coverage of these two crucial figures. The time period in question will also be limited, covering only chronicle accounts of 1296-1314, ending with the Battle of Bannockburn, and focusing

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<sup>3</sup> Nicolaisen, W.F.H. "Stories and Storytelling in Barbour's *Brus*," in *Bryght Lanternis*. ed. McClure, J. Derrick and Michael R.G. Spiller (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1989), 55-66.

primarily on the later years of Edward I (1301-1307) and the coronation and early kingship of Bruce (1306-1309). Because the primary question contained in this thesis is one of popular exposure and the effects of chronicle propaganda, I will also limit the specific chronicles covered. The Scottish works I analyzed were *The Brus* by John Barbour, Andrew of Wyntoun's *Orygynal Cronykil*, the *Gesta Annalia* by John of Fordun (and to a lesser extent, his *Chronica Gentis Scotorum* as background), and Walter Bower's later continuation of and additions to Fordun's work, the *Scotichronicon*. On the English side, I will cover two of the most influential works of medieval English historiography, the *Middle English Brut Chronicle* and Ranulph Higden's *Polychronicon*. I will also discuss John of Trevisa's Middle English translation of Higden's work. Although these are certainly not the only important works of chronicle historiography in the Late Middle Ages, I believe these chronicles are representative of the genre as a whole, as well as a greater nationalistic feeling that developed in mid-fourteenth century Scotland and flourished in England throughout the Middle Ages.

Coverage of this topic will be introduced by a presentation of the historical context from which to understand both the times of Edward I and Robert the Bruce and the ongoing struggle between England and Scotland that gave rise to the nationalistic, propagandistic nature of the chronicles. Next, will follow a detailed discussion of the individual chronicles, their authors, the languages used, and the manuscripts in which these fascinating works of historiography are preserved, focusing on the imaginative portraits each author gives to the two men in question. Finally, this paper will examine which of the chronicle portrayals may have survived to the present day.

## Chapter 2: Historical Background

The struggle for superiority, power, and territory between England and Scotland began almost concurrently with the political unification of the former under Aethelstan in the first half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Though it took slightly longer to develop a true “kingdom of Scots” with real power over the lords subject to the crown, the English often point to their massive victory at the Battle of Brunanburh, immortalized in a heroic poem contained in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, to establish their political superiority over the Scots.<sup>4</sup> Anglo-Saxon kings continued to develop a sense of lordship over the other Celtic nations in Britain. Bruce Webster points out this sense of superiority:

“England had long been the dominant state in the British Isles. The successors of King Alfred claimed to be the chief rulers of Britain; and Edgar at least tried to express this in ceremony when his coronation in 973 was attended by several British kings, who seemed to accept his superiority.”<sup>5</sup>

After the Norman Conquest in 1066, the Norman kings highlighted their political clout through invasions of Lothian and demands for homage from the Scottish king, although these missions were most likely little more than a desire to maintain a small manner of ascendancy and protection from Scottish raiding. One of the most important developments in the struggle between the Scots and the English came in 1174, with the Treaty of Falaise. While invading England, William the Lion of Scotland was captured accidentally by English knights, and brought before an ecstatic Henry II. The treaty

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<sup>4</sup> See “Reign of Aepelstan and The Battle of Brunanburh.” In *Old and Middle English c. 890-1400: An Anthology*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Ed. By Elaine Treharne (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2004), 28-33.

<sup>5</sup> Webster, Bruce. *Scotland from the Eleventh Century to 1603*. (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1975), 11.

established the clear feudal superiority of England over Scotland, and humiliated the Scottish crown. Although the terms were later removed by Richard I in return for crusading monies, the Treaty of Falaise nonetheless points to changing attitudes within the English state towards their northern neighbors. Throughout the next century, however, the relationship between Scotland and England was cordial, with only the ever-present minor border skirmishes taking place. The latter reign of Henry III (1216-1272) was a time of particular peace due to the marriage of Henry's daughter Margaret to the King of Scots, Alexander III.

The problem, however, came when, in 1286, King Alexander III fell from a precipice while visiting his new bride on a night of heavy fog. Alexander had no adult heir, and the Scottish state was plunged into a crisis of succession which was one of the major touchstones of Anglo-Scottish warfare for the next 700 years. Michael Brown writes in his book, *The Wars of Scotland*,

“This issue of the succession would turn from a short-term crisis into a drawn-out military and political struggle, and the next three generations of Scots would face the issues raised by this sustained crisis. At the centre of this would be the search for the kind of widely-accepted royal lordship exercised by Alexander III and his forebears, but the course of the struggle would transform the structure and character of the thirteenth-century kingdom and threaten its survival.”<sup>6</sup>

The nearest living relative was the dead king's granddaughter, barely three years of age, known as Margaret, the Maid of Norway. Edward I of England, as the young

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<sup>6</sup> Brown, Michael. *The Wars of Scotland, 1214-1371*. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 157.

maid's most senior relative in Britain at the time, saw his opportunity. The English king, famous for his skill in statecraft, brilliantly thought to unite the island of Britain under one Anglo-Scottish house by marrying his young son, Edward of Caernarvon, to the Maid of Norway. This would both satisfy his desire to have the English Crown sovereign over the whole of Britain<sup>7</sup> and eliminate the "dual-citizenship" status of many of the barons of southern Scotland and northern England that so often complicated relations between the two nations.

The English lords held some lands in Scotland, but the primary problem of loyalty lay with the Scottish magnates. Because many of the barons of Scotland were descended from the Anglo-Norman and from the old Celtic aristocracy, they held lands on both sides of the Anglo-Scottish border. This further complicated the situation for the Scottish effort to assert independence from England. The crisis became more detrimental to the Scots when the young Maid abruptly died on her passage from Norway, leaving the kingdom still with no direct heir.

As was common during the many crises of succession throughout the Middle Ages, a number of pretenders put forth their claim, among them Scottish nobles such as John Balliol, Robert Bruce, John Comyn, and even aliens such as King Edward (though his claim was quite tenuous—he simply wished to assert that he did have a faint right to claim the throne of Scotland). The Scottish, completely divided, required an impartial mediator. Edward I, through his judicial reforms in England, his diplomatic successes while a crusader, and his astute skill in foreign affairs, had gained a high reputation for legal prowess and impartiality. Due to his unique position as both a neighbor and one

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<sup>7</sup> This is seen in his conquest of Wales and his strengthening of royal authority through parliament and judicial statutes.

of the foremost legal minds of his day, the Scottish nobles asked Edward to arbitrate on the matter of Scottish succession. Edward, for his part, attempted to maintain impartiality by holding the proceedings on the border rather than entering the kingdom of Scots, while the Scots magnates promised to abide by his decision. The English king, because he had a stable, centralized government at his disposal, also agreed to run the Scottish government until a new king was chosen, thus allowing the kingdom of Scots to function continuously as a political entity. Michael Brown describes Edward's proceedings during his arbitration thus,

“Edward sought advice from legal experts from Oxford and Cambridge universities and from the masters of the University of Paris, whose opinions added greatly to the complexity of the case. Though each of the candidates put forward their separate claims in writing, the fact that the court of auditors included forty nominees each of Bruce and Balliol marked them out as the principal competitors.”<sup>8</sup>

After the most likely claimants, Bruce and Balliol, were identified, the main question became whether to follow the law of primogeniture or the concept of generational closeness. Edward supported the law of primogeniture (this was how royalty was determined in England), and subsequently declared in favor of John Balliol.<sup>9</sup>

Balliol was crowned King John I of Scotland in 1292, and everything seemed quiet until a summons came from Edward to King John in 1294, requiring the Scottish king to serve in Edward's army during the English campaign in France. When King

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<sup>8</sup> Brown, *Wars of Scotland*, 168.

<sup>9</sup> For more detailed coverage of the lineages concerned in the Great Cause, see Appendix A.

John refused to attend the summons, the fundamental misunderstanding between the two kings about the nature of Scotland's relationship with England became suddenly clear. Although King John did admit Edward to be his superior, he nevertheless considered Scotland an independent nation, not simply a fief of England, as King Edward considered it.

This difference in opinion between the two kings was easily exploited by Edward's enemy, the king of France. As would become common practice in the many wars between France and England, the French sought to use anti-English, nationalistic feeling latent in Scotland in order to create a division among Edward's supporters. King John, unfortunately, was the casualty of this scheme of making Scotland the "back-door" to England. King John subsequently raised the flags of rebellion, and allied himself with the French against England. The incensed English king moved north with an army, and, after the humiliating Scottish defeat at Dunbar, forced Balliol's total surrender and removal from kingship on July 10, 1296. After Dunbar, many of the more powerful Scottish magnates capitulated. They acknowledged Edward as their lord; the English king took direct royal control of affairs in Scotland, setting up an occupation force and English authorities over key Scottish political offices and castles. The Scots were made to swear fealty to the English Crown, making Scotland into a direct fief of England. Edward, however, was unable to complete the destruction of the Scottish royal house and contingent claim to separate identity and power.

In 1296, Edward thought that the situation in Scotland was relatively stable, and returned his attention to his wars with France. In 1297, however, this was proved to be a naïve position, for the Scottish landholders felt threatened by Edward's constant wars

of expansion, fearing to be sent to France. In the spring of that year, fighting began between the English officials and the Scots, with William Douglas and William Wallace rising to the forefront as leaders of these pockets of resistance. English officials had early successes against the Scottish rebels, but like Edward I after his removal of Balliol, underestimated their enemies and overestimated the magnitude of their own successes. Wallace's army grew swiftly, and other resisters began to rebel against English overlordship. However, the greatest threat to Edward lay not in those in open rebellion, but in those who vocally supported England, yet truly supported the rebellion.<sup>10</sup>

Culminating in the famous Battle of Stirling, the successes and popularity of Wallace's rebellion showed the English that Wallace was a serious problem rather than simply a brigand. Scotland was led by a man, however, who, though he had been made Guardian of the Realm, did not have complete aristocratic support and exercised his authority in the name of an absent king that had been put into power by the very foreign ruler who now claimed Scotland for his own. Edward invaded Scotland with a huge army in 1298, disastrously defeating Wallace at the Battle of Falkirk through the aid of the treacherous Scots nobles, who refused to commit their cavalry to the battle, fleeing at a crucial moment. In 1299, John Balliol re-emerged as a leader, although he was physically still in France, and in 1301, Edward began a new campaign to fully conquer Scotland. Many Scots magnates supported Edward, further highlighting the still-divided political fabric of Scotland.

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<sup>10</sup> Brown, *Wars of Scotland*, 184. Brown brilliantly quotes an English chronicler, "although the magnates were with our king in body, their hearts were far away from him."

Finally, by 1304, Edward had reduced all of the major resistance, and had exacted oaths of fealty from the Scottish magnates once again. Unlike in 1296, Edward made sure of his total victory, taking care in setting up a workable governmental system for defeated Scotland. Peter Traquair writes of Edward's conduct after his victory in 1304,

“The king has been praised for the ordinances even by his sternest critics: ‘The political wisdom of King Edward is shown by his resolve to consult Scottish leaders on the new constitution to be devised for the country and to give them some measure of responsibility for making it work...’<sup>11</sup>

Edward's victory appeared certain, but the rising costs of maintaining a force of occupation began to take their toll upon Edward's coffers.

All did seem quiet, overall, until the watershed year of 1306. The Scottish magnates were untrustworthy vassals of Edward, and still the question of who could be king of Scots rankled among the three families who had the strongest claim in 1290, the Comyns, the Bruces, and the Balliols. The John Comyn II traced his right to rule back to Donald III, who ruled in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, but chose to throw his support behind John Balliol rather than consolidate his own claims to the throne.<sup>12</sup> John Balliol, who had a stronger claim than Comyn, traced his ancestry to David, earl of Huntingdon (Huntingdon was the brother of William I of Scotland), through David's daughter Margaret. Finally Robert Bruce of Annandale traced his lineage through Isabel, also David of Huntingdon's daughter. John Balliol's son, Edward Balliol, was even claimed

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<sup>11</sup> Peter Traquair. *Freedom's Sword* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1998), 123.

<sup>12</sup> G.W.S. Barrow, *Robert Bruce and the Community of the Realm of Scotland* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1965), 60.

as rightful by Ranulph Higden in the *Polychronicon*, while the true power struggle, after Balliol's removal from the throne, remained between John Comyn and Robert Bruce. During a famous meeting between Robert Bruce and John Comyn, the former murdered the latter in front of the high altar of a church in Dumfries. Alexander Grant equates Robert Bruce's murder of John Comyn with the much later and pivotal Battle of Bosworth Field, drawing parallels and explaining how the event set Bruce on an irrevocable path toward the declaration of his kingship and the protracted war of independence that would define his reign until the Declaration of Arbroath in 1321.<sup>13</sup> After this moment and his subsequent coronation, Bruce waged a total war against Edward, no longer content to waver between rebellion and appeasement. Traquair describes Bruce's bid for the throne, "[He] was not just resuming a war of liberation—he was starting a civil war."<sup>14</sup> Traquair proceeds with a discussion of this early campaign, emphasizing a lack of universal and unified support for Robert Bruce's cause. Bruce attempted to meld his cause as king of Scots with the plight of the people of Scotland. Throughout his reign, he further attempted to legitimize his reign by this association of his fortunes with the fortunes of Scotland as a whole.

Supported by the influential Bishop of Glasgow, Robert Wishart, Bruce claimed the crown, but was not immediately successful in the early years of his reign. After losing the Battle of Methven in June of 1306, Bruce fled into the highlands. Edward captured many of Bruce's supporters, putting them to death in a manner similar to his execution of William Wallace in 1305. In early 1307, Bruce resumed his campaign

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<sup>13</sup> Alexander Grant. "The Death of John Comyn: What was Going On?" *Scottish Historical Review* 86.2 (2007): 176-224.

<sup>14</sup> Traquair, *Freedom's Sword*, 129.

against Edward and his supporters; Bruce, however, was still unable to gain a solid footing or any meaningful victories. Even though Bruce won at Loudoun and Glen Trool, these victories would only later have positive effects for Bruce due to the way he portrayed them rather than to their tactical significance.<sup>15</sup>

When Edward I died at Burgh-on-Sands in July of 1307, his much less able son, Edward II, ascended the English throne. The vast difference between Edward I's successes and Edward II's failures goes much deeper than simply a difference in monarchical ability. One primary difference in success between the two kings was precisely how each monarch was perceived. Both his subjects and his enemies perceived Edward I to be strong, indomitable, terrifying, and successful; that positive perception, in turn, added to his ability to win wars, control finances, and influence parliament. Edward II, on the other hand, was viewed as weak, unwarlike, infantile, and uninterested in parliamentary and legal matters. Ridiculed rather than feared, Edward II's kingship was doomed by the negative perception both the English and Scottish had concerning his abilities. The importance of this dichotomy of positive versus negative portrayals and perceptions will become apparent when applied not to Edward I and his son, but to Edward I and Robert I throughout the central portion of this thesis.

Bruce consolidated his supporters, drawing more and more troops to his cause, and leading a largely successful campaign against the English occupation force. Throughout the period of 1308-1314, Bruce continued this consolidation, using Edward II's problems with his barons to bolster Scottish support for his kingship. Robert Bruce

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 147.

fought a guerilla war to prevent invasions similar to those of 1296 and 1304.<sup>16</sup> Edward II was unable to press his advantages in Scotland because of his own political incompetence, thus adding to the success of Bruce's efforts to legitimize his kingship.

The king of England acted too late to salvage his position in Scotland, as would become apparent in June 1314. Edward led a large army into Scotland in an attempt to strengthen the flagging public opinion of his reign among his own subjects with a victory, and to prevent the commander of Stirling Castle from surrendering it to the Scots, as per agreement with Bruce. This invasion culminated in the famous Scottish victory and debilitating English defeat at Bannockburn, only a few miles from the site of William Wallace's decisive 1296 victory at Stirling Bridge. The enormity of this victory to both Scottish morale and the popular opinion of the Bruce kingship is cannot be ignored. Bannockburn cemented Bruce's place as King of Scots, turning the war in his favor and igniting a new fervor of patriotism among the Scots. Central to any discussion of Bruce's successes in Scotland, it is at this battle that I will conclude my brief introduction to Anglo-Scottish history in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century/early 14<sup>th</sup> century and turn instead to the question of historiographical portrayals of these events.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 157.

### Chapter 3: Anglo-Scottish Historiography

In any area of historiography, historical background and context is absolutely crucial for attempting to understand the thought processes, prejudices, and culture extant in a given era and location. This paper, however, is less concerned with what actually happened during the Wars of Independence than how the later historical writers portrayed that history, and subsequently, how those portrayals affected Scottish and English understandings of Bruce and Edward. Before discussing the individual historians and their works, it is important to understand how the tradition of historical writing developed in each country.

The monks of England began writing historiography as early as the 8<sup>th</sup> century when the famous and somewhat anomalous Bede composed his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*. This flowering of historical writing continued for almost a century in Northumbria, halted only by the ferocity of the Northern pagans, who conquered many of the splintered Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. Once the kingdom of Wessex gained ascendancy, the kings of England created a national program of propagandistic chronicle writing in the late 9<sup>th</sup> century under Alfred the Great. This tradition continued, and Geoffrey of Monmouth's synthetic account of British history became a cornerstone of English justification for conquests in Wales, Scotland, and Ireland. Geoffrey of Monmouth's idea of a universal British history connected with a classical origin myth continued to be utilized by English chroniclers, most notably by Ranulf Higden in the *Polychronicon*. As John of Trevisa translated Higden's work into the vernacular English and the Middle English *Brut Chronicle* gained in popularity, a viable Middle English chronicle tradition grew alongside the existing Latin monastic tradition and the Anglo-

Norman historiographical tradition (though largely defunct by the 14<sup>th</sup> century). These Middle English chronicles had the most definite effects upon the common people of England.<sup>17</sup>

Scotland developed a tradition of historical writing around the same time as England with works such as Adomnan's *Life of Columba* and the *Senchus Fir nAlban*. Narrative history in Scotland was never devoid of nationalist feeling, and truly, the first piece of narrative history scholars have access to is John Barbour's *The Brus*.<sup>18</sup> Although *The Brus* is both historiography and romance literature, it is important to discuss the piece due to its preeminent position as the first extant piece of Scottish historical writing. Barbour's *Brus* was also central to any later interpretations of the time of Robert Bruce, such as Wyntoun's and Bower's respective chronicles. Contemporary with *The Brus*, John of Fordun's *Chronica Gentis Scotorum* and *Gesta Annalia* became staples of Scottish historiography, exhibiting many of the same themes and emphases found in Barbour's work. In the mid 15<sup>th</sup> century Walter Bower copied, expanded, and continued Fordun's work in his compendious *Scotichronicon*.

These different traditions of historiography came into conflict, and, as the physical war dragged on between Scotland and England, Edward I initiated what R. James Goldstein calls a "war of historiography."<sup>19</sup> As arbitrator between the Scottish factions in the Great Cause, Edward I requested that his subjects send him any document or record that touched upon the question of Scottish succession. When attempting to justify English claims of overlordship in Britain before the papal curia in

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<sup>17</sup> Taylor, John. *The Universal Chronicle of Ranulf Higden* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966).

<sup>18</sup> Webster, *Scotland from the Eleventh Century to 1603*, 42-43.

<sup>19</sup> Goldstein, *The Matter of Scotland*, 57.

1301, the legal representatives of Edward I used chronicle evidence to argue England's traditional primacy in Britain. Citing information from supposed ancient mythology contained in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*, Edward attempted to establish a precedent of English superiority over Scotland. Geoffrey of Monmouth continued in the tradition of universal history, beginning with a story emphasizing the classical origin of the English people. In Geoffrey of Monmouth's story, Brutus invaded Britain, conquering it and dividing the constituent nations (Wales, England, and Scotland) among his sons upon his death.<sup>20</sup> When Albanactus, the king of the land area that would become Scotland, died, his title reverted to his elder brother, the King of England. This reversion upon the death of a king was utilized by Edward I to mirror the situation after the death of Alexander III and the subsequent deposition of King John and unprecedented seizure of direct control.<sup>21</sup> Edward's delegation highlighted the right of conquest, stating that, as he had taken Scotland, and furthermore legitimately held the title based on Albanactus' death, Edward held all the rights to demand Scotland in fief. This made the act of direct seizure determined by ancient precedent, lending both credibility and divine right to Edward's actions.

The Scots, however, were not content to allow Edward to utilize distant legend to establish political hegemony; the Scottish representatives sent to the papal curia responded in kind. Katherine Terrell wrote of this first Scottish response to English demands for superiority on a legendary basis,

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<sup>20</sup> Katherine H. Terrell. "Subversive Histories: Strategies of Identity in Scottish Historiography." In *Cultural Diversity in the British Middle Ages: Archipelago, Island, England*. ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 154.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 154-156.

“Faced with this weight of authority, Scottish historiographers seeking to (re)script the past were left with a limited range of options: they could directly challenge the English version, or they could exploit the gaps and ambiguities of English historical accounts, anchoring their narratives in the interstices of English history.”<sup>22</sup>

They chose the latter. Led in their efforts in 1300-1301 by Scottish lawyer and churchman Baldred Bisset, these representatives used the framework of Geoffrey of Monmouth and the Brutus legend to serve their own claims. Bisset, in his letters to Pope Boniface VIII, “Instructions,” and “Pleading,”<sup>23</sup> claimed that the Scots were descended not from the inhabitants conquered by Brutus and ruled by Albanactus (those people, he said, were the Picts), but from the Scoti, who got their name from Scota, an Egyptian princess who sailed to Ireland and founded a new tribe there. Though this legend had been known in Scotland before, it was Bisset who first codified the legend, thus answering the historiography war in kind and inaugurating centuries of Scottish historiographic tradition based on this rival origin myth and the idea of the Scots as a separate people. Terrell’s aforementioned article continues, analyzing this origin myth and its larger connotations, as well as highlighting Scottish literary counter-actions against English aggression,

“In a strategy that would be used repeatedly by Scottish chroniclers to emphasize the Anglo-Scottish divide, Bisset stresses the ruptured lineage of the English monarchy. This fracturing of the English past, in contrast with the

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.

<sup>23</sup> R. James Goldstein, “Bisset, Baldred (c. 1260-1311?)” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

relative stability of the Scottish monarchy, guarantees the efficacy of the Scottish origin myth.”<sup>24</sup>

When viewed in tandem with the counter-legend of *Scota*, emphasis on the broken English line of succession adds credibility to the stable Scottish succession. With the case made for Scottish origin and separate identity, Bisset and the delegation passed the metaphorical torch on to John of Fordun, who would further expound upon and delineate this origin myth, working it into a universal history concerning the people of Scotland and exhibiting definite political ideas in his portrayals of Robert Bruce and the Scottish people as well as Edward I and his English subjects.

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 159.

## Chapter 4: English Chronicle Sources

Although the Scottish sources are the primary focus of this thesis, it is necessary to analyse the English chronicle sources first because the *Polychronicon* was the first work chronologically. Many of the other sources are based, at least in part, upon the methodology of the *Polychronicon*, and therefore, Higden's universal chronicle will be discussed first. In addition to Higden's *Polychronicon*, this chapter will also cover John of Trevisa's translation in brief before moving on to the Middle English prose *Brut Chronicle*.

Ranulf Higden, from Chester, was a monk at St. Werburgh in Chester. The date of his birth is uncertain, and little is known of Higden other than the information contained in the manuscripts of his work, the *Polychronicon*. Edward III summoned Higden in 1352 to a court appearance, and the monk died in 1364, having been a monk for sixty years. Although he wrote other works, according to John Taylor, "His reputation rests almost entirely upon the *Polychronicon*."<sup>25</sup>

The *Polychronicon* is a universal chronicle, divided into seven books, to mirror the seven ages of the world. Beginning with Biblical history and proceeding to Higden's own time, each universal chronicle discussed in this paper would be inspired, in part, by Higden's organization and topical coverage in the *Polychronicon*. The *Polychronicon* sets the history of Britain and in particular, England, into a framework of the entire scope of world history. Although Higden is certainly interested in political history of England and English origins, he focuses much of his narrative around legal and ecclesiastical matters.

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<sup>25</sup> John Taylor. "Higden, Ranulf (d. 1364)." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

Higden wrote his chronicle in Latin, tying his work to scholarly pursuit and the church. Taylor observes, “That work offered to the educated and learned audience of fourteenth-century England a clear and original picture of world history based upon medieval tradition, but with a new interest in antiquity, and with the early history of Britain related as part of the whole.”<sup>26</sup> The use of Latin as well as the Biblical and classical source material and the focus on complex ecclesiastical and legal matters ensures the *Polychronicon*’s place in medieval discourse as a credible source, usable for legal and academic evidence.

Higden devotes only a very small part of his narrative to the beginnings of the Anglo-Scottish wars in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century, simply dismissing Scottish claims to sovereign rights over Scotland. Higden’s Edward is simply one link in the line of rightful, powerful English monarchs. The *Polychronicon* does not seek to make him the center of the narrative or to set him into a Christ-figure role, as the Scottish sources did with Robert Bruce. The section covering the Great Cause opens with Scottish unrest, and the King of England begins to judge the case. Notably, instead of discussing the actual proceedings of the Great Cause, Higden jumps immediately to producing documentary evidence of English overlordship of Scotland,

“Item ibidem anno Domini nongentesimo vicesimo sexto rex Angliae Adelstanus devicit regem Scotiae Constantinum, et iterum sub se permisit regnare.”<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid. See also John Taylor, *The Universal Chronicle of Ranulf Higden* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966).

<sup>27</sup> Higden, Ranulf. *Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden Monachi Cestrensis*. ed. Joseph Rawson Lumby (London: Longman & Co, 1882), 274. Trevisa- “Also pere it was i-founde þat þe 3ere of oure Lord nyne hondred and sixe and twenty Athelstane kyng of Engelond overcome Constantyn kyng of Scotland, and suffrede hym eft to reigne under him,” (275).

This entire section, interpolated into the discussion of the Scottish throne, highlights Edward's position as overlord, and points out that his demands for Scottish fealty and seizure of the throne were matters of course in the defense of his royal rights. Listing each time, since Brunanburh, when the Scots were subjected to English power, Higden makes the case for Edward's position as de-facto ruler of Scotland. Higden cleverly includes not only legal and feudal subjugations of the Scots, but also ecclesiastical censure whenever the Scots sought to establish their independent rights. Higden's Edward is not trying to conquer a foreign nation, but rather is simply exercising his God-given rights as king of the England and therefore overlord of the Scots.

The *Polychronicon* portrays the king of the English as just, wise, godly, and powerful. Higden includes information that sets the church and the Scots at odds. Because he includes this identification of the English mission of superiority and control over Scotland with the Church, Higden points out that God in the form of Holy Church is on the English side. However, he is much less concerned with presenting Edward as a character than he is with presenting legal precedent for English right in Scotland. For this reason Higden's Edward is not really a memorable character, but simply a powerful ruler of England in a line of feudal superiors of the Scots. Unlike in the *Brut Chronicle*, Edward is not eulogized upon his death; only the barest details of when and where he died are present in the *Polychronicon's* narrative.

Robert Bruce is largely unimportant in the *Polychronicon* narrative. Far from heaping insults upon Robert Bruce, Higden only mentions the king of Scots briefly, relegating him to a very minor role instead of making moral judgments at length concerning his character. Robert the Bruce first enters the narrative as complaining to

the Pope about Edward's cruelty to Scotland, but the only part of the chronicle that deals with Robert in detail discusses his coronation.

“Robertus le Bruz usurpavit regnum Scotiae, et circa Pascha occidit Johannem le Comyn in ecclesia fratrum Minorum de Deynfrez pro eo quod noluit sibi in dicta factione consentire; sed rex Angliae superveniens ipsum Robertum fugere compulit, et interfectores dicti Johannis suspendit.”<sup>28</sup>

Robert Bruce is not the legitimate king of Scotland, according to Higden, and he ends the discussion of John Comyn's murder by calling the coronation of Bruce treason.

Later, during the coverage of the reign of Edward II, Robert Bruce is mentioned again, this time as an enemy not only of England, but of the Church. “Quo quidem anno duo cardinales Angliam venientes excommunicaverunt Robertum de Bruz cum fautoribus suis, ac Scotiam sub interdicto posuerunt.”<sup>29</sup> Just as the will of God and the English are seen as one, this mention of the excommunication of the King of Scots and the removal of Scotland from the fold of Christendom by the English churchmen underscores the intertwined nature of Church and England in Higden's view.

Although he is mentioned in the two above passages, Bruce is largely an unimportant character in the *Polychronicon*. One reason that Bruce is seen in the *Polychronicon* as unimportant stems from the opening discussion of Edward's rights as feudal superior over Scotland. Because Edward declared John Balliol to be King of Scots, any assertion of Bruce's claim to that title would undermine Edward's judgment.

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 294. Trevisa- “Robert le Bru3 toke wrongfulliche þe kingdom of Scotland; and aboute Esterne he slow3 John le Comyn at Dunfrees, in þe cherche of Frere Menoures, for he wolde not assente to hym in þat tresoun. But þe kyng of Engeland come and chased þis Robert, and heng þe sleers of þis John,” (295).

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 308. Trevisa- þat 3ere two cardynales come into Engeland, and cursed Robert le Bru3 and his fautoures, and enterdited Scotland,” (309).

Even though John Balliol betrayed Edward in Higden's narrative, Edward's judgment stands, thus nullifying any claim that Robert Bruce had to the throne of Scotland. Due to this acceptance of the Balliol line, the chronicle writer reveals his views on the kingship of Scots quite explicitly. John Balliol's son, Edward Balliol, called "verus rex Scotiae," is mentioned as King of Scots sometime later, in direct defiance to Robert Bruce's coronation, victories, and subsequent reign. Describing an English-backed invasion under Edward III, Higden states,

"Edwardus le Baylol, filius Johannis le Bayllol, quondam regis Scotiae, cum modica manu Anglorum, id est duobus vix milibus, intravit Scotiam ut regnum recuperaret, circa vincula sancti Petri, et occidit sexaginta millia Scotorum apud Gledesmore."<sup>30</sup>

This passage is remarkable not only for the clearly inflated numbers of Scottish deaths, but primarily for the fact that Edward Balliol is called the king of Scots. Higden here completely denies even the existence of the Bruce dynasty, instead continuing to support the English-backed Balliol dynasty.

A description of the spread of the *Polychronicon's* influence in Britain would be incomplete without mentioning the translated edition of John of Trevisa. Trevisa was born sometime around 1342, and came from a Cornish family. He was a fellow at Exeter College, Oxford from 1362-1369, and served as a magister at Queen's College until 1379. He was a vicar of Berkely, also serving as a canon of Westbury-on-Trim. Trevisa died in 1402. He is primarily known due to his translation of the *Polychronicon*,

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 328. Trevisa- "Edward le Balliol, þat was somtyme kyng of Scotlond, entred into Scotlond for to recovere his kyngdome wip litel strengþe of Englysshe men, unneþe two þowsand, and slou3 sixty þowsand of Scottes at Gledesmore," (329).

which he completed in 1387.<sup>31</sup> There are 14 manuscripts preserved of the Trevisa version, as well as at least one Caxton printed edition. His translation is quite faithful to Higden's original, and does not add very much extraneous information. He adds nothing to the accounts of the Great Cause and the Early Scottish Wars of Independence, and his Middle English translation definitely encapsulates the meaning of the Latin original. The fact that a Middle English version became available only 20 years after Higden's death helped to ensure the spread and popularity of the *Polychronicon* not only with the clergy, but with literate English speakers throughout Britain. Both the translation and the original Latin version were immensely popular throughout the Middle Ages, used for both legal matters and education until into the sixteenth century.

The *Brut Chronicle*, very different in coverage style of subject matter than Higden's work, nonetheless espoused a similar view of the superiority of the English monarchy and the legitimacy of Edward's direct rule in Scotland. Unique among these six chronicles, the *Brut Chronicle* has no known author. Hailing from a tradition of chronicles detailing the Classical founding myth of Britain dating back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the *Brut Chronicle* was written down in the early part of the 14<sup>th</sup> century first in Anglo-Norman French and relatively quickly translated into Middle English, shortly before Trevisa's translation of the *Polychronicon*. The *Brut Chronicle* became wildly popular due to the wide audience that read Middle English as well as the narrative-based nature of the prose accounts. As has been mentioned in previous sections of this paper, the use of vernacular ensured access to the *Brut Chronicle* for the majority of

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<sup>31</sup> For more information, see A.B. Emden, *A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to A.D. 1500: Volume III: P to Z* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

the literate people of England. The *Brut* was used both as a popular history and as an educational tool. Caxton printed an edition of the *Brut*, which he entitled *The Chronicles of England*, in the latter portion of the fifteenth century, a move that helped to ensure the popularity of the *Chronicles* for years to follow.

The *Brut* is also considered a universal chronicle, even though it does not cover the entire history of the world, being focused only on Britain. Taking much of its structure from Geoffrey of Monmouth's history, the *Brut Chronicle* is divided into sections based around the royal succession from Brutus onward until the chronicler's own ruler, careful to place emphasis on the kings of England as overlords of the entire island. These sections are further divided into chapters detailing important events that occurred during the reign of each monarch. Just as the *Polychronicon* is concerned with sweeping events and legal questions, the *Brut Chronicle* is concerned with personalities and how they interact with events.

The *Brut Chronicle* survives in at least 168 manuscripts, most of which are in Middle English.<sup>32</sup> The *Polychronicon*, though more popular in the Middle Ages, was not printed, so the preeminent position between the two must be given to the *Brut Chronicle* (at least in the beginning of the Early Modern period). There are certainly variations between the different manuscripts, ranging for mild spelling differences to inclusions or exclusions of specific instances. This paper is primarily concerned with the 1425 *Brut Chronicle* found in the Special Collections Library at Penn State University (PS-V-MED-3). Though certain parts of the Penn State *Brut* are unique to only a small subset of

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<sup>32</sup> Robert A. Albano, *Middle English Historiography* (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 37.

preserved manuscripts, the portion dealing with the reign of Edward I and the Scottish Wars are representative of the preserved *Brut Chronicles* as a whole.

The narrative-based nature of the *Brut Chronicle* not only sets it apart from the *Polychronicon*, but also ties the chronicle to the human need to identify with personalities and characters as well as the importance of a good story to the human psyche. One such group of stories, the Arthurian legends, became known as “the Matter of Britain.” Robert Albano writes, “One of the reasons for the lasting popularity of the *Brut* is its inclusion of the King Arthur legend.”<sup>33</sup> These stories meld with the stories of the other kings, lending Arthur’s own popularity to the line of legendary monarchs from which he hailed. It is this narrative quality that both ensured the *Brut*’s popularity and set it apart as almost a national chronicle representing the people of England. Chris Given-Wilson called the *Brut Chronicle* “the closest thing which medieval England produced to a national chronicle.”<sup>34</sup> England is the entire focus of the work, and all of the political propaganda contained within its pages is designed to ensure English prerogative in the British Isles and the good of the English people.

Like the *Polychronicon*, the section concerning the Anglo-Scottish wars of 1296-1307 is primarily interested in establishing and maintaining the right of English kings to rule as overlords in Scotland. However, unlike Higden’s work, the *Brut* does not concern itself centrally with church matters, and often does not take events in continental Europe into account; it is very much a history of England for the people of England. Edward is the central character, and his reign is a series of successes and glorious conquests. He is held up as a role-model, and as the quintessential English

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<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> Given-Wilson, “Official and Semi-Official History in the Later Middle Ages,” 11.

warrior-king. Edward's dealings with Scotland are seen in a purely pro-English light, and Edward is consistently shown as victorious in every undertaking.

Unlike in the *Polychronicon*, Edward's death is not simply a dynastic transition to yet another king who is rightful ruler in Scotland, but is a time to reflect upon Edward. He dies only after he had been victorious in Scotland (the chronicler does not mention the English defeat at Loudon Hill), and is the first to know of his impending death. Therefore, King Edward ensures the succession of his son himself, extracting oaths that Edward of Caernarvon would be crowned upon his death. Most importantly, when Edward I died, he "then toke the sacramentes of holy Chirch as a goode cristen man schuld and died in verry repentaunce."<sup>35</sup> He is given death within the grace of the Church, therefore uniting his acts during his kingship in the mind of the reader with God's will. This death at once ensures legitimate succession and prepares the reader for perhaps the most important part of the estimation of Edward's character—the prophecy of Merlin concerning his life.

One of the interesting techniques employed throughout the royal narrative of the *Brut Chronicle* is the application of prophecy. Throughout the narrative, important, formative events are rounded out with back-formed prophecies, usually attributed to Merlin. Edward is described as a "dragon," and the chronicle prophecies concerning the king, "þat he shuld be medeset with mercy and with sternes, and he schuld keep Englond from colde and from hete."<sup>36</sup> Because this is in the form of a prophecy, Edward becomes a quasi-mythical figure, and begins to take on the role of saviour/Christ-figure, as Bruce does in the Scottish sources. He has theoretical power

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<sup>35</sup> *Brut Chronicle*. PS-V-MED-3. (PSU Special Collections Library. University Park, PA).

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

over the elements via his saviour status, and the author designs many of the details of the prophecy to be proven by his actions during his reign. The appellation of dragon to Edward I is particularly noteworthy. The dragon is a strong animal, a creature of fierceness and often depicted on heraldic devices. Edward I, because he is paralleled with the strength of the dragon, takes on these same characteristics. This connection between the dragon and King Edward also points to a more human aspect of the king's positive portrayal, describing his physical strength and knightly prowess. "And yet þis Merlyn tolde þat þis dragonn schuld be holde þe best body of al þe world, and he saide sothe ffor the goode king Edward was þe worthiest knyght of al þe world in his tyme."<sup>37</sup> Edward is not only the best in Britain, but in the entire world, and tied as it is with his strength of character, success, and godliness, this physical prowess allows Edward to become a paragon of Christianity and chivalry. These prophetic references could have further propagandistic implications for the character of Edward I. By linking Edward with Merlin and Wales, the *Brut* chronicler is connecting Edward I with the lineage of Uther Pendragon and therefore, with King Arthur. This adds yet more prestige and fame to Edward and to the Kings of England. Indeed, this connection with Merlin is especially clear in PS-V-MED-3, where a codex detailing the Prophecies of Merlin is a part of the same manuscript as the *Brut Chronicle*, with successive quire signatures and the same number of lines per page as the final page of the *Brut Chronicle* codex.

Like most of the other chronicles, the *Brut Chronicle* does not mention that there were three Robert Bruces involved in the Anglo-Scottish struggles. Each man was important in his own right: the 5<sup>th</sup> earl of Annandale, Bruce the Pretender, died in 1295,

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

and it was his right to the throne that the Bruce family relied on. His son, Robert Bruce, was important in the struggles between Balliol and Edward, and the maintenance of the Bruce claim to the throne. Finally, Robert Bruce, King of Scots, the grandson of Robert the Pretender, was the man who killed his opponent and actually became the king, pressing his right to the throne based upon his grandfather's relations to David of Huntingdon. Though the Scottish sources may have had some sort of propagandistic purposes to bolster Robert I's claim to the throne by compressing these men into one figure, it is likely that the *Brut* chronicler compressed them for clarity and ease of understanding. The main sections where Bruce is mentioned are during his coronation and the events leading up to it, and the Scottish defeat at Methven. He is also prominent at Bannockburn and the later coverage of the Anglo-Scottish wars. Throughout the narrative, Robert Bruce is often intertwined with the Scots as a whole, and together they become the negative opposite of England, the bad to England's good.

Nearly every time he is mentioned, Robert the Bruce is called a "fals traitour."<sup>38</sup> Treason was considered one of the most negative and immoral crimes, and to be called a traitor was to be outside of both God's will and man's grace. Nowhere does this appellation of traitor become more central than in the narrative relating the murder of John Comyn. While each of the Scottish sources is careful to treat John Comyn as a traitor to Scotland, the *Brut* has quite a different angle to the story. According to the chronicler, any service of Scotland against King Edward was treason, therefore turning Bruce and his supporters into traitors. On the other hand, John Comyn is held up as exemplary. Robert Albano writes, "The chronicler desired to portray Comyn as the

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

positive role model whose virtue goes unnoticed by the people of Scotland.”<sup>39</sup> Comyn, a negative, hated figure across the board in Scottish sources, is the only member of the Scottish nobility who, in the face of Bruce’s claims for kingship, remains constant to his oath to Edward I. John Comyn is called a gentle knight, and when confronted with the choice to either support Bruce’s bid for kingship or to honor the oath of fealty to Edward, Comyn says, “Certes sirs, for me ne for myne for to have as mekil help as a botonn ffor þe othe þat I have made to King Edward of Englund, I schal hold it whiles my lyffe mai last.”<sup>40</sup> In response to this, rather than remembering his own oath to Edward I, the *Brut*’s Robert I instead brutally murders Comyn, thus sealing his fate in God’s eyes as wicked. After his death, the chronicler is not content with making Comyn simply a loyal knight—he creates a martyr. While relating Comyn’s death, the chronicler states, “And yit into þis day þe blode is sene þer. And no man may wasch it away with water.”<sup>41</sup> This kind of scene is often present when discussing holy individuals, and although John Comyn was not in reality a martyr, this kind of portrayal helps to cement the English side with the service and will of God.

The coverage of Comyn’s death may serve a further purpose—to question the legitimacy of the Bruce dynasty. Because it was founded by one whom the chronicler portrays as an oath-breaker and murderer, the rightful rule of Scotland by Bruce’s dynasty may be questionable. In this way, this scene could serve much the same purpose as Higden’s mention of Edward Balliol as the true king of Scots. Both scenes throw doubt on Robert Bruce’s right to rule in Scotland. Immediately following the death

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<sup>39</sup> Albano, *Middle English Historiography*, 60.

<sup>40</sup> *Brut Chronicle*.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

of Comyn and his subsequent coronation and defeat at Methven, Bruce flees Scotland for Norway; banishment and rejection by his own people become a punishment for his falseness and murder of John Comyn. The *Brut* removes all of the hardships of Robert Bruce when fleeing from his enemies in the Highlands by simply editing history and having the king spend 8 years away from his people in Norway. This Bruce is a coward and unpopular, returning only to exploit the weakness of Edward II at the Battle of Bannockburn.

Bannockburn is not necessarily a key event to the *Brut* chronicler, and consequently is attributed not to Robert Bruce's successful campaigning against the English occupation and invasion forces, but rather to an exploitation of the greater problems plaguing England at the time. Thus, Scottish victory becomes tied up with the follies of Edward II rather than the success of the Scots themselves. This connection allows the chronicler to retain the viewpoint that God is on the English side. In the final section covering Bruce, the *Brut Chronicle* mentions the same anathema from the Church mentioned in the *Polychronicon*. Here, however, the curse from the Church has much more background, and is more directly connected to the evil and treachery of Robert the Bruce. Set against Christianity in general and England in particular, the Scots become monstrous and inhuman. The chronicler resolves the apparent contradiction of Scottish success and God's disapproval of the Scottish cause by, "portray[ing] them as heathens who not only break the commandment of the Pope himself but who even proceed to slay priests and other religious officials throughout all the realm of Scotland."<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Albano, *Middle English Historiography*, 64.

The Merlin prophecy portrayed Edward I positively as a dragon; in contrast, it depicts Robert I as a fox. Just as the dragon is an animal firmly connected to strength and fierceness in battle, the fox is known for slyness and treachery. This reverberates back to remind the reader of Bruce's conduct with Comyn as well as his betrayal of his oath to Edward and to England to be a faithful servant of whom the English believed to be the rightful overlord of Scotland. Equally important to the depiction of Robert Bruce as a fox, this fox is also nurtured and cared for by the dragon. This intensifies the force behind the condemnation of Bruce as a traitor. Not only is the king of Scots a wily and untrustworthy fellow, but by being placed in the father-son nurturing dynamic with Edward I, he also violates a close bond.

In the *Polychronicon*, Edward I is emphasized as rightful overlord of Scotland, with legal questions of English superiority in the forefront of the narrative. The character of Robert Bruce is downplayed and barely mentioned, while the king of England is not necessarily stressed as extraordinary, but simply as a link in the chain of rightful lords of the whole of Britain. This preoccupation with legal questions is not consistent in the English sources, though, and the more story-based and secular approach of the *Brut Chronicle* stresses the interaction of personalities rather than the broader scale of legal and ecclesiastical questions. In the *Brut Chronicle*, throughout the narrative covering Edward I's dealings with Scotland and Bruce's treachery to Edward, the depictions of the English king are uniformly positive, and those of the Scottish king, entirely negative. There is an emphasis in the *Brut* on loyalty and chivalry, and especially on the opposite, treason. There are some very important, broad-ranging commonalities between the two sources, though. Both maintain absolute assertions of England's superiority and the

right of the English crown to receive fealty from the Scottish king, and to remove the Scottish king when he refused to accept the role of feudal vassal. Edward's right to conquer and directly control Scotland is never questioned, and is defended vigorously in each chronicle. Just as the Scottish sources use the assertion of God's will to defend their cause along nationalistic lines, so do the English sources defend their own cause: the conquest of Scotland. There are some key differences between the English sources and their Scottish counterparts, though. Unlike the heroic, dynamic, and one-of-a-kind Robert Bruce of Scottish chronicles, Edward I is one monarch in a line of undisputed Plantagenet kings; there is no Great Cause to shake the very foundations of Scottish nationality. The lack of surviving chronicle portrayals of Edward I in the fabric of popular English history is a testament to this fact. Unlike the way the Scots clung to Bruce and created a hero of epic proportions, the English had no such pretensions for Edward I. He was a good king and a hero, but he was followed and preceded (both indirectly) by kings of similar proportions, and therefore does not protrude from the historical narrative in the view of posterity like Bruce does. Now that the English chronicle sources have been discussed, this paper will move to the Scottish sources and to literary and historiographical creation of the heroic, dynamic Robert Bruce.

## Chapter 5: Scottish Chronicle Sources

As the wars between Scotland and England raged on and the nationalist debate became more heated in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century, Scottish historian-poets delivered a powerful answer to the English sources arguing for English dominance over Scotland. The first piece of Scottish historical writing available to scholars is *The Brus*, by John Barbour, a long poem detailing the early wars of independence. After Barbour, and following firmly in his footsteps, Andrew of Wyntoun created a vernacular, verse universal chronicle, utilizing much of Barbour's work to color his own. Together, these two sources make up what is perhaps the most important historiographical influence on modern Scottish understandings of Robert the Bruce.

The first, and arguably the most important, formative work for the nationalist understanding of King Robert the Bruce is John Barbour's epic poem, *The Brus*, which sets the stage for the dichotomy between good and evil played out in the figures of Robert the Bruce and Edward I. Barbour was born sometime around 1325 or 1330, and lived until circa 1395. In 1356, John Barbour became the archdeacon of Aberdeen, and subsequently studied at Oxford.<sup>43</sup> In 1375, he completed his verse masterpiece for his royal patron, Robert II of Scotland. This royal patronage certainly determined much of the thrust of Barbour's emphasis on Bruce's right to be king, his chivalrous attitude, and the ultimate good and patriotism of the Brucean agenda and dynasty.

The *Bruce* is an epic poem detailing Robert the Bruce's part in the early Wars of Independence, in essence creating a national hero. The poem purports to be the true story of Robert Bruce and James Douglas, another hero of the Wars of Independence.

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<sup>43</sup> Duncan, A.A.M. "Barbour, John (c. 1330-1395)." Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

Opening with Alexander III's tragic death and the Great Cause, Barbour rapidly moves to the English occupation and an ideological discussion of the concept of freedom. These opening passages set the tone for the entire work, creating a focus on the heroism of James Douglas and Robert Bruce. The poem provides particular details for the Battle of Methven and Bruce's struggles with popular support during his early reign, focusing on the heroic nature of his thankless patriotic struggle. The poetic narrative then centers on the Battle of Bannockburn as a crucial turning point both in Scottish war fortunes and in Scottish nationalist morale, devoting Book 12 and over half of Book 13 to the battle itself. The poem concludes with Robert Bruce's later years as king, over 13000 lines of verse in total. The manuscript editions from the 15<sup>th</sup> century are not divided into books, but rather into many small chapters; Pinkerton divided his edition into 20 books, a formula which McDiarmid and Stevenson's 1980-1986 edition follows.<sup>44</sup>

John Barbour, unlike his near contemporary John of Fordun, wrote his epic literary chronicle in the vernacular spoken around Aberdeen and throughout much of the Kingdom of Scots—Early Scots. The chosen language is centrally important, because, unlike the Anglo-French and Latin of English high society, “members of Scotland's ruling classes granted the dominant vernacular the authority to perform nearly all the functions of written language in that society.”<sup>45</sup> James Goldstein further states, “Barbour's use of the vernacular ensured that Scottish nationalism would be familiar to a large textual community, since access to that discourse was now available to every Inglis-speaking

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<sup>44</sup> Innes, C. “Preface” in *The Brus: from a collation of the Cambridge and Edinburgh manuscripts* (Aberdeen: William Bennett, 1856), xxx. This paper uses McDiarmid and Stevenson's edition of *The Brus*.

<sup>45</sup> Goldstein, *The Matter of Scotland*, 134.

Scot who came within hearing distance.”<sup>46</sup> The importance of vernacular literature in influencing national public opinion was absolutely crucial, as in Trevisa’s translation of the *Polychronicon* and the *Brut Chronicle*.

One problem with Barbour’s *Brus* has been the difficulty in ascertaining textual accuracy in modern editions of the original. The poem is preserved only in two manuscripts, both dating from the fifteenth century rather than from Barbour’s own time, one in Edinburgh and one at Cambridge.<sup>47</sup> Robert Albano interprets the lack of preserved manuscripts from Barbour’s own time as proof-positive that his epic was not very popular during his own lifetime, growing in importance throughout the further Anglo-Scottish struggles of the fifteenth century.<sup>48</sup> One boon to researchers and editors has been the accuracy of the copies of sections of Barbour’s work found in Wyntoun’s chronicle, allowing a more accurate transcription of what Barbour may have originally written.

In any medieval text, assignment of genre becomes difficult, as the strictly delineated modern ideas of genre did not exist in the Middle Ages. John Barbour calls his poem a romance of chivalry.<sup>49</sup> Although it is certainly literature, written for his royal patron Robert II with particular political purposes, this poem can also be considered a verse history and a valid historical source in many respects. One reason is because Barbour seeks to portray specific events rather than common stories and tropes.

Although the heroic and romantic character of Robert Bruce is central to the narrative,

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Albano, *Middle English Historiography*, 135. See Appendix B: Manuscript List for call numbers and locations of preserved manuscripts.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. It is similar in this matter to what is commonly understood to be a “chanson de geste,” such as “The Song of Roland.”

the poem itself hinges primarily on historical events, purporting to provide a true account of and explain those historical events. This assertion of truth is centrally historiographical; the expressed point of any history is to be authoritative, to give a truthful account. Although all history is written from a definite bias, the fact that history validates itself through this claim of truthfulness sets it apart from other genres.

Because the interplay between heroism and historical narrative so informs the poem, it is no wonder that John Barbour places the namesake of the poem in the role of chivalric hero. Barbour's portrayal of Robert Bruce is extremely positive; the king is a romance hero, a paragon of chivalry. He is loyal, brave, courteous, and has adventures of an epic nature, "Bruce is...a symbolic figure that represents the ideal to which, Barbour feels, all Scots should aspire."<sup>50</sup> In order to give an even more central role to King Robert I, John Barbour makes three generations of Robert Bruces into a single heroic figure, the king becoming Pretender as well as the first reigning monarch of the Bruce dynasty. E.L.G. Stones writes that Robert Bruce the pretender "was often confused" with King Robert I.<sup>51</sup> Although Barbour certainly could have been one of those confused, the intentional use of Robert Bruce as a single heroic figure seems to make sense within the overall thrust of his portrayal of the king. Though this compression certainly adds to the overall heroic nature of Robert Bruce, Barbour's desire to bolster the legitimacy of his patron's dynasty by tying King Robert Bruce more closely to David of Huntingdon may also have been a factor in the decision to make the

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 150.

<sup>51</sup> Stones, E.L.G. and Grant G. Simpson. *Edward I and the Throne of Scotland 1290-1296: An edition of the record sources for the Great Cause*, vol 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 5.

three men into one character.<sup>52</sup> A similar compression of the three historical Robert Bruces into one figure occurs throughout each of the other chronicles.

One important aspect of Barbour's presentation of Robert the Bruce is the connection of Bruce as superhero on the one hand and on the other, Bruce as a regular human. When this humanistic portrayal is connected with the emphasis Barbour places on Bruce's near-perfection, Robert Albano draws parallels between Bruce and Christ.

He writes,

“...Barbour continuously strives to unveil a humanistic side to his character, a man who can feel pity and compassion. As already suggested, Barbour, at times, describes Bruce in the guise of a Christ- figure; and this mixture of divine and human characteristics contributes to this allegorical dimension of the work.”<sup>53</sup>

This association of Bruce with Christ further adds to the clearly delineated understanding of good and evil along nationalistic lines found throughout Barbour's work. The fact that Bruce is consistently portrayed as the savior of Scotland, suffering before becoming victorious in her cause, further points toward the idea that Barbour equates his portrayal of Robert Bruce with Christ. Bruce parallels Christ's humility, wisdom, and position as heavenly leader throughout the narrative. Although this is certainly a kind of portrayal often given to leaders throughout medieval literature, Barbour's Robert Bruce is at the very least considered a godly savior, and possibly considered a type of Christ.

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<sup>52</sup> See Appendix A for a chart clarifying royal succession and the connection of the Bruce dynasty to the earlier Kings of Scots.

<sup>53</sup> Albano, *Middle English Historiography*, 150-51.

Another common tactic of Barbour is classical and historical allusion. Frequently throughout the narrative, he uses familiar stories from antiquity and mythology, along with common medieval romantic tropes, in order to place Robert Bruce in particular and the Scots in general into a heroic framework. One particularly important allusion is the comparison of Robert Bruce and his followers with the Jewish Maccabees of the first century B.C. James Goldstein writes, “The Scots, like the Hebrews under siege in Jerusalem, were hemmed in by a mightier foe.”<sup>54</sup> Utilizing the importance and easy recall of classical and Biblical myths to the medieval literary mind, Barbour sets up these parallels to explain how Bruce is like Biblical figures and classical Greek heroes, and to anchor the character of Robert Bruce in the very serious tradition of classical epic. Barbour’s heroic, chivalric portrayal of Bruce calls to mind the “nine worthies”: Alexander the Great, Hector, Julius Caesar, Joshua, David, Judas Macchabeus, Arthur, Charlemagne, and Godfrey of Boullion.<sup>55</sup>

Barbour melds politics with heroic actions, and even provides a sort of defense of Bruce’s murder of Comyn, further increasing the heroic portrayal of the King and the dichotomy between loyalty and treason rather than simply glossing over the incident.<sup>56</sup> Barbour opens the dialogue between the two men with a proposal by John Comyn to make Bruce king:

“3e sall ger mak 3ow yaroff king,

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<sup>54</sup> Goldstein, *The Matter of Scotland*, 145.

<sup>55</sup> Margaret Drabble and Jenny Stringer, “Worthies of the World, The Nine” in *The Concise Oxford Companion to English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

<sup>56</sup> For detailed information on the events and coverage of Comyn’s murder, see Grant, Alexander. “The Death of John Comyn: What was going on?” *Scottish Historical Review* 86.2 (2007): 176-224.

And I sall be in 3our helping  
 With-yi 3e giff me all ye land  
 Yat 3e haiff now in-till 3our hand.  
 And gyff yat 3e will nocht do sua  
 Na swylk a state apon 3ow ta,  
 All hale my land sall 3ouris be  
 And lat me ta ye state on me  
 And bring yis land out off thyrlage,,<sup>57</sup>

Directly after this agreement between the two men, the poem seems to digress into a discussion of treason, but when Barbour writes, "For ye Cwmyrn raid off to ye king/ Off Ingland & tald all yis cas/" (Book 1, 562-563), the appellation of "traitor" is firmly affixed to John Comyn. In other medieval romance and historical texts, treason is the ultimate evil. This same accusation, leveled by Barbour against John Comyn and the Scots barons supporting Edward's annexation of Scotland, is thrown with equal fervour by English historiographers at Robert Bruce himself. Even though this association with treason certainly is meant to tie him to the "evil side" in Barbour's eyes, Comyn's treason does not excuse Bruce's rash murder at the altar:

"He mysdyd thar gretly but wer  
 That gave na gyrrh to the awter,  
 Tharfor sa hard myscheiff him fell  
 That lk herd never in romanys tell  
 Off man sa hard frayit as wes he

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<sup>57</sup> Barbour, John. *Barbour's Bruce (1980-1986)*. English Poetry Full-Text Database (Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 1992), Book I, lines 491-499.

That efterwart com to sic bounte” (Book II, 43-48).

This helps to present a more balanced picture of Robert Bruce, but does not serve to dispel the very strong pro-Bruce bias visible throughout the rest of the piece.

Robert is crowned, and his focus on patriotism and chivalric deeds becomes visible in his speech before the Battle of Methven:

“3e ar ilkan wycht and worthy

And full of gret chewalry,

And wate rycht weill quhat honour is.

Wyrk yhe yen apon swylyk wys

Yat 3our honour be sawyt ay.

And a thing will I to 3ow say,

Yat he yat [deis] for his cuntre

Sall herbryit in-till hewyn be” (Book II, 337-344).

Bruce is focused on death in battle for Scotland, on honor, and on chivalry. In the context of the poem, Robert the Bruce is giving here what could almost be termed a sermon, with a very strong correlation between the Scottish cause and Christianity. Bruce’s speech here equates death for Scotland with both heroism and saintliness when he mentions the swift entrance into heaven. The papacy and bishops made this same correlation between death and instantaneous salvation throughout the medieval period in the context of the Crusading movement. John Barbour could possibly be making a case that the Scottish Wars of Independence led by Bruce have the same blessing and status from God as the church-blessed Crusades.

Integral to Barbour’s presentation of Bruce is his emphasis on the suffering and

hardships the king underwent for his country. The king is shown to be an unwavering patriot, dedicated to his people to his own detriment. After his decision to take the throne and free Scotland at all costs, Robert Bruce sets himself on a path of scorned, downtrodden heroism. Bruce has such hardship that he has less than sixty men with him; he is even hunted like an animal with hounds,

“And quhen ye Gallowais wüst suthli

Yat he wes with sa few meng 3e

Yai maid a prewe assemble

Off wele twa hunder men & ma,

& slewth-hundis with yaim gan ta,

For yai thocht him for to suppris

And giff he fled on ony wys

To folow him with ye hundis swa

Yat he suld nocht eschaip yaim fra” (Book VI, lines 32-40).

This is only one aspect of his suffering, and the fact that Barbour relates individual stories instead of a gloss points to the importance of Bruce’s suffering for his country to the narrative. This ultimate sacrifice, as portrayed by Barbour, adds to the pathos felt by the reader, identifying Bruce with the common literary trope of unappreciated hero.

The same heroic Bruce appears in the Battle of Bannockburn, this time in victory instead of defeat. As in the description of Methven, Robert the Bruce gives rousing speeches before the battle, but not before killing the English baron Henry de Bohun with only his light hunting axe. These speeches are much longer and more involved, showing his place as a bearer of wisdom in addition to his place as king and servant of

his people. The Bannockburn speech show Bruce praising his men as well as openly communicating with them, presenting a view of power that is not autocratic and dictatorial like Edward, but rather mirrors the kind of language in the 1320 *Declaration of Arbroath*, the language of an understanding of the human right to individual freedom.

Edward I, according to Barbour, is the polar opposite of Robert Bruce. He is a wicked king who grasps at any chance of political power and superiority over Scotland. He is more than just an enemy in *The Brus*, he is the face of evil itself in the poem. To Barbour, there can be no ambiguity between the figures and their constituent nations: the Scots are good and the English are evil. Edward finds his importance in the narrative when viewed in contrast with Bruce; the English king serves as a way to more fully understand and adulate Robert the Bruce.

After the introduction and the description of Alexander III's death and the subsequent crisis, Edward I comes onto the scene, "wykkyt and cowatous" (Book I, 195), Edward's first-mentioned and primary characteristic is his greed to possess that which is not rightfully his, Scotland (as he has done with Wales and Ireland). Barbour describes him as having the agenda of Scottish conquest from the beginning of the Great Cause:

"Haid 3e tane keip how at yat king  
 Always for-owtyn soiournyng  
 Trawayllyt for to wyn sen3hory  
 And throw his mycht till occupy  
 Landis yat war till him marcheand  
 As Walis was and als Ireland" (Book I, 95-100).

This passage equates Edward's previous conquest of Wales and his strengthening of English prerogative in Ireland with his control of the puppet king Balliol and his subsequent seizure of direct royal control over Scotland. It is this greed which sets up in the character of Edward I an opposite of Barbour's selfless patriot, Robert Bruce, who acts not for personal gain, but for the good of his people.

Edward shows up in Barbour's chronicle not only as a greedy, grasping megalomaniac, but also exhibits characteristics in direct contrast to Robert Bruce and Christ. Through his pride, he acts as the negative of Barbour's portrayal of Bruce, as Satan is the opposite of Christ in Christian theology. Edward is described as having "mekill prid" (Book I, 408). Pride, the archetypal sin through which Lucifer fell, is attributed to Edward (and his son) throughout the poem, a commonality that each of the Scottish sources mentioned in this study shares. Edward is not only proud; he is also merciless and cruel both to captured Scottish soldiers and Scottish women. After the Bruce flees into the Highlands following his defeat and lack of popular support, Edward captures his supporters, treating them with cruelty, according to Barbour.

"Yat gert draw all ye men and hing,  
 And put ye ladyis in presoune  
 Sum in-till castell sum in dongeoun.  
 It wes gret pite for till her  
 Ye folk be troublt on yis maner" (Book IV, 54-58).

With these punishments, Edward takes on a monstrous character. He is unfeeling, cruel, and fixed upon his purpose of complete Scottish domination.

Following in the historiographical footsteps of Barbour, Andrew of Wyntoun echoes these portrayals of Edward and Bruce in his *Orygynal Cronykil of Scotland*. In the opening years of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Andrew of Wyntoun added this less well-known verse history to the canon of Scottish literature, creating a universal verse chronicle that crossed genres between history and literature.<sup>58</sup> Andrew was the prior of St. Serf's in Lochleven, also serving as a canon regular at St. Andrew's from at least 1393 until his death in 1421. His chronicle includes much biblical material as well as theology, attempting to explain the history of Scotland from creation until 1420, when the chronicle concludes (in the final redaction). Wyntoun himself states that he did not write the portion of the chronicle from 1325-1390, saying that he received it and simply incorporated it into his larger body of work.<sup>59</sup>

The *Orygynal Cronykil* seems to be much more in touch with world events than Barbour's work; indeed, the history of Scotland proper does not even begin until the sixth book out of nine. After this introduction of Scotland, Wyntoun focuses on events concerning Scotland and England for the remainder of the chronicle. During his portrayals, in book eight, of the events of the Wars of Independence, Wyntoun simply copies large swaths of material from Barbour, in essence telling a similar story but expanding it and adding legal credentials to Bruce and attempting to remove them from Edward.

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<sup>58</sup> Given-Wilson, Chris. *Chronicles: The Writing of History in Medieval England* (London: Hambledon and London, 2004).

<sup>59</sup> C. Edington. "Wyntoun, Andrew (c. 1350-c. 1422)" *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

Like his predecessor, Andrew of Wyntoun wrote his chronicle in the popular dialect at the time, Early Scots which ensured a broader audience and larger level of exposure for nationalist ideas and portrayals of Bruce and Edward. Wyntoun's use of vernacular Scots determined that his (in essence, a continuation of Barbour's) nationalism would spread to the common people.<sup>60</sup> In addition to using Scots instead of Latin for history-writing, Wyntoun also used much of Barbour's chronicle word-for-word. The *Orygynal Cronykil* is heavily indebted to Barbour's *Brus*, largely mirroring Barbour's characters and heroic ethos. In contrast with Barbour though, Wyntoun provides much more context than Barbour for his history of Scotland, setting the Scots as a separate people group within the general framework of known human history. His primary source of inspiration, however, was the Englishman Ranulph Higden. Wyntoun crafts his chronicle very much like the English *Polychronicon*, written in the mid-thirteenth century. Each Scottish universal chronicle after Higden's *Polychronicon* is an answer to Higden's work, and *The Orygynal Cronykil* is no exception. Although the portrayals of Bruce and Edward found in Wyntoun may bear resemblances to Barbour's portrayals, the structure and mission of Wyntoun's work are direct answers in the historiographical conversation to the *Polychronicon*.

The *Orygynal Cronykil of Scotland* is a difficult text, with significant differences between the manuscripts in which it is preserved.<sup>61</sup> Robert Albano writes of the task of creating a new, comprehensive edition of the text,

“Three of the manuscripts represent three stages of development, but Wyntoun's own alterations and his directly borrowing from other sources as well as scribal

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<sup>60</sup> Goldstein makes this point about Barbour--I have here inferred the same for Wyntoun.

<sup>61</sup> Albano, *Middle English Historiography*, 182.

alterations and fifteenth-century scribal insertions of additional textual material (Amours xlv-1) make it a gargantuan, if not impossible, task for the modern critic or editor to decipher what exactly constitutes Wyntoun's intentions or original material."<sup>62</sup>

Though there are usable versions, any detailed study of Wyntoun's original intentions requires hands-on use of the manuscripts and a comparative study among them.

Wyntoun's work survives in nine manuscripts, showing the popularity of the work in the late middle ages and early modern period.<sup>63</sup>

Andrew of Wyntoun's coverage of Robert Bruce is quite similar to Barbour, and he even borrows large sections of *The Brus* to help describe Robert Bruce. Like his predecessor, Andrew of Wyntoun's depiction of the King of Scots is quite positive. One of Wyntoun's primary innovations is perhaps by default, for Wyntoun includes the story of Scottish Independence and Robert Bruce into a universal chronicle framework. By first establishing the narrative of the creation of the world as well as biblical and classical history, Wyntoun expertly crafts the history of Scotland within the larger historical picture. Wyntoun's relation of biblical events and ancient times was generally accepted across the nationalistic divide. This correlation of universally "true" events with loaded nationalistic accounts lends the credibility of the former to the latter. This framework lends further credibility to Wyntoun's coverage of Robert Bruce, adding as well to his legitimacy as King of Scots. Bruce, instead of being a single, heroic king, is, according to Wyntoun, one figure (though certainly one who is larger than life) in the line of legitimate Kings of Scots. Wyntoun adds to his credibility by tying his story to the

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Edington, "Wyntoun, Andrew."

religious and political structure of the medieval world through using the Bible as a source and focusing not only on Scotland itself, but on the history of the entire world (as the *Polychronicon* does).

Wyntoun has very little negative to say about Bruce, even glossing over his treachery during the Battle of Falkirk,

“Bot Robert þe Bruss þan wiþ a slycht,  
That þare wes þan with King Edward,  
Set he oure king wes eftirwart,”<sup>64</sup>

Though Wyntoun does mention the fact that Robert the Bruce was with King Edward I at Falkirk, he quickly shifts the focus from Robert's treachery to his position as saviour of the Scots as king. He elaborates on many other Scottish barons' treachery and hatred of William Wallace, particularly that of the Comyns, instead of focusing on Bruce's own rivalry with Wallace. Thus, Wyntoun does include even negative events, but is careful to put a positive, pro-Bruce spin on the coverage of those events.

While Wyntoun's Bruce is much the same as that of Barbour, the prior of St. Serf's depicts Edward I much more thoroughly. Barbour uses tropes common to romance such as action, dialogue, and deeds to show how dishonest and evil Edward is. Wyntoun in addition defers to the methodology of his other main source of inspiration, the *Polychronicon*. Like the extensive, researched justification of the right of the English crown (and therefore Edward) to rule in Scotland presented in Higden's work, the *Orygynal Cronykil* contains extensive research and defense to prove that Edward made the wrong decision and also did not have the right to rule over the Scots.

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<sup>64</sup> Wyntoun, Andrew. *The Original Chronicle* (1903-1908). English Poetry Full-Text Database (Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 1992), Chapter 147, lines 2204-2206.

The Great Cause is covered in close detail, most likely to show that Balliol was not the true king, and to establish the right of the Bruce (and therefore Stewart) line to rule Scotland.

In a single instance that is covered in Wyntoun, Bower, and Fordun, Robert Bruce finds out for himself just how untrustworthy a “friend” Edward I can be. When Bruce asks Edward about the status of the Scottish throne after the removal of Balliol, Edward replies by stating,

"Haue we nocht ellis to do now

Bot wyn a kinrik to gif 3ow?"

Robert þe Bruss kend weill þan

The falset of þat wickit man" (Chapter 144, lines 1890-1892).

Edward is both false and wicked, and Bruce now knows it. Wyntoun uses this knowledge to propel Bruce toward winning the kingship for himself rather than relying upon “the scraps from Longshanks’ table,” as Mel Gibson’s *Braveheart* put it.

One interesting note on Wyntoun’s portrayal of Edward is the use of the term “langschankis.”<sup>65</sup> Edward I had famously long legs, a physical trait that added to the contemporary perception that the king was intimidating and forceful. However, Wyntoun uses this trait in a more negative way against Edward. Robert Albano writes about Wyntoun’s use of the nickname “langschankis,”

“This scarecrow portrayal of Edward I serves not only to affect the reader’s evaluation of the English King but also functions to provide a visual humor of sorts; for Wyntoun on several occasions throughout his narrative carefully

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<sup>65</sup> Modern “Longshanks”

attempts to illustrate the scarecrow figure becoming angry whenever his plans or intentions are thwarted by the Scots.”<sup>66</sup>

While Wyntoun certainly ties Edward inextricably to treachery and evil, in this manner, it seems, he also hopes to belittle the English king and make him sometimes a joke rather than a serious figure.

Edward’s sack of Berwick is covered in great detail by Andrew of Wyntoun. Edward is shown here to be tricky and deceitful, for he resorted to pretending to be the Scottish army, and so defeated Berwick. The siege describes Edward in two separate ways, both of which add significantly to his overall portrait throughout the chronicle. First, Edward’s actions during the siege show him to be both deceitful and crafty as well as a good military mind. When he found that he was unable to defeat the Scots at Berwick by force, he had his army withdraw and pretend to be the Scottish army under Balliol, thus tricking the Scots of the town to open the gates. While his deceit is certainly victorious, Wyntoun does not hold Edward’s conduct up as knightly. Instead, the inclusion of the details about Edward’s plan show him as an unfair fighter. The end result of the siege, however, is much more indicative of how Wyntoun views Edward:

“And þare þe Inglismen slew doune  
 All þe Scottis folkis in þe tovne,  
 Off all conditioun, nane sparand,  
 That þai within þe tovne þan fand,  
 Als wele lerit as seculare;  
 Thare wes na persone þai wald spaire

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<sup>66</sup> Albano, *Middle English Historiography*, 185.

Off nane estait na of nane age;  
 Thai sparit noþer man nor page,  
 Noþer auld na 3oung, madinis na wiffis,  
 Bot all þai gert þare loss þar liffis” (Chapter 144, lines 1765-1774).

Edward does not act like a conquering Christian king here, he acts like a pagan. In this way, Wyntoun continues Barbour’s connection of Edward and the English to the evil side, attributing merciless slaughter to the king of England.

Having discussed the views, implications, and texts of the verse chronicles by Barbour and Wyntoun, we will now turn our focus to two connected works that modern historians can more readily recognize as in the same vein as modern historical writing. Writing around the same time as John Barbour, John of Fordun produced two works crucial to Scottish nationalism, one finished and one unfinished. A little more than half a century later and two decades after Andrew of Wyntoun, Walter Bower combined the finished and unfinished works of John of Fordun, expanding them and creating what is in essence an entirely new work, the *Scotichronicon*.

Similar in ideological and nationalistic views to Barbour and Wyntoun, John of Fordun produced a very different yet also very important kind of nationalistic historical writing. Like both Barbour and Wyntoun, Fordun was also a cleric; one manuscript copy of the *Scotichronicon* says he was a chantry priest at the cathedral of Aberdeen (BL Royal MS 13 E.x.).<sup>67</sup> As will be later elaborated on, Fordun’s chronicle was long thought to be the work of Walter Bower, who in reality copied and expanded what Fordun had written a half-century before him. Fordun researched extensively, traveling

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<sup>67</sup> Goldstein, *The Matter of Scotland*, 106.

throughout the British Isles in order to obtain historical material for his chronicle. As he created his chronicle, Fordun used many different kinds of sources to lend a much more scholarly<sup>68</sup> bent to his work.

John of Fordun's *Chronica Gentis Scotorum*, although not a universal chronicle like *The Orygynal Cronykil*, the *Polychronicon*, and the *Brut Chronicle*, did nonetheless adopt a broad view of history. Fordun is concerned solely with Scotland's history. Beginning with the Egyptian origin myth of the Scottish people, Fordun carries on through classical antiquity and medieval history until he reaches 1153, where the *Chronica Gentis Scotorum* concludes. However, John of Fordun's *Gesta Annalia* continues from 1153 until Fordun's own time, covering salient points of Scottish history in short, often unconnected sketches arranged into chronological order. The *Gesta Annalia* seems to pay particular attention to the formative events during the Wars of Independence.

One central point that sets *Chronica Gentis Scotorum* and *Gesta Annalia* apart from the Scottish verse chronicles is the language in which they are written. Fordun wrote his chronicle in Latin, seeking to create a scholarly work rather than a widely-read popular work. Fordun's choice of Latin also ensured a readership more varied in time and space, pointing towards his broader focus. Fordun's work is a scholarly answer to the claims made by Geoffrey of Monmouth in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, codifying the curial defense put forth by Baldred Bisset in 1301. Fordun, like Bisset, did not deny or refuse to accept the authenticity of English historical source material. Instead, he sought to exploit the shortcomings and manipulate the presentation of historical fact put forth by

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<sup>68</sup> This refers to what modern academics call "scholarly."

Geoffrey of Monmouth. Fordun could have been using this same tactic to bolster Scottish claims to liberty through solid scholarship and research along with a willingness to use English sources for his own purposes and create a dialogue with the earlier English history.

As outlined previously in Chapter 3, the origin myth debate was clearly central to the justification of both nations' programs of foreign policy with the other nation. James Goldstein calls John of Fordun's *Chronica Gentis Scotorum* the "Genealogy of Scotland," and it is in this context that Fordun finds his foremost importance in Scottish nationalism.<sup>69</sup> Based on Baldred Bisset's work concerning Scottish mythical origins, Fordun's story opens with a discussion of Scottish Classical origins and the Classical world. Fordun cleverly ties the Scots to an even older classical tradition than the legend of Troy, and one that is even more solid in the medieval mind. His mythical princess, Scota, is not only part of the classical world, but also the Biblical, for it is her father who is the famous Pharaoh of the Book of Exodus. This connection with ancient royalty further ensures the royalty of the Scottish monarchy later, and by extension, the royal rights of the Bruce dynasty. This synthesis of classical and biblical is a common theme in universal chronicles and medieval histories, and Fordun uses it to his advantage to defend the notion that the Scottish are a separate people with rights to freedom and a separate identity, as well as the fact that the Scottish monarchy has ancient royal blood. Although the origin myth idea is not necessarily integral to the discussion of Robert the Bruce and Edward I, it is crucial to understand how the medieval Scottish nationalist

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<sup>69</sup> Goldstein, *The Matter of Scotland*, 104.

community understood its origins and descent when discussing a central figure like Robert Bruce.

However much the *Chronica Gentis Scotorum* affected Scottish nationalism, Fordun's *Gesta Annalia* falls much more neatly within the scope of this paper. Although, as an unfinished work, the *Gesta Annalia* had very limited influence on public opinion or the dialogue of nationalism, Fordun's *Annalia* become important when viewed in light of the later compilation and expansion by Walter Bower. Fordun's *Annalia* (preserved in six manuscripts, detailed in Appendix B) were the core upon which Bower built—it is in this influence that Fordun's work finds its primary importance for this paper.

Fordun's Bruce is similar to that of Barbour, with some changes and different emphases. Both Fordun's and Barbour's works seem to echo common nationalist feelings and a shared nationalist vocabulary when discussing Bruce. Although they are written in different languages, there is a common understanding of types when discussing Robert Bruce. While Fordun's Robert Bruce is also chivalrous, the rightful king, and plays the role of Christ-figure/savior, Fordun's work was written for a very different purpose with a different audience in mind. Fordun, like Wyntoun, was much more focused on legal questions and rights than Barbour, beginning his coverage of the king not on action or dialogue, but on quantifiable measures of Robert Bruce's right to rule.

Fordun creates a pedigree of Robert Bruce, strengthening his right to rule by describing his connections to the throne and his ancestors. This emphasis on evidence is in direct opposition to the presentation of Edward's right to rule in Scotland found in Higden's *Polychronicon*. The fact that Robert Bruce can be traced to the previous line

of kings of Scots allows him to have a legitimacy in the Scots' eyes in addition to rebutting English claims of sovereignty over the Scots. Robert Bruce, according to Fordun, becomes an absolutely central figure who, through his own pedigree and connections to the kings of old, allows the entire realm of Scotland to claim the right to self-rule.

Even more than Barbour's or Wyntoun's presentation of the character of Robert Bruce, Fordun's Bruce seems to occupy a saint's place throughout the narrative. Although he is certainly presented as rightful king, knight, and hero, the character of Robert Bruce, according to Fordun, is much more centrally Christian and saintly than that shown in either of the verse chronicles. Bruce constantly plays the Christ-figure/savior role in the *Gesta Annalia*. When Robert the Bruce first takes his place in the narrative, before he is king, he is immediately both identified with Christ as a savior, and with the common people of Scotland:

“misericors Deus, Scotorum miseriis, continuis clamoribus compassus et doloribus, more solito, paternae pietatis suscitavit eis salvatorem et propugnatorem, unum, scilicet, de suis confratribus, Robertum de Bruyse nomine, qui, eos in lacu miseriae prostratos, et omni spe salutis et auxilio destitutos, videns, dolore cordis contactus, intrinsecus, tanquam alter Machabaeus, manum mittens ad fortia, pro fratribus liberandis, innumeros et importabiles diei aestus, et frigoris, et famis, in terra et in mari, subiit labores,

non inimicorum tantum, sed etiam falsorum fratrum insidias, et taedia, inedias, et pericula laetanter amplectendo.”<sup>70</sup>

In this passage, Fordun portrays Bruce’s struggles as one with the struggles of his people. Bruce is selfless and loyal in all hardships to his people, almost a living martyr to the cause of Scotland’s freedom. Bruce Webster says of Robert Bruce, “Fordun also claims that Robert I was produced by a merciful God to free the Scots from the miserable slavery to which they were being subjected by the English after the collapse of Scottish resistance in 1304.”<sup>71</sup> One interesting phrase to note, “alter Machabaeus,” is passed over in Skene’s translation. However, the description of Robert as “another Macabaeus” draws an interesting parallel with Barbour’s similar description of Bruce. Both authors use this Biblical parallel to strengthen the heroism of Bruce as well as his association with good.

Alone among the Scottish sources, Fordun’s more negative portrayal of Bruce at Falkirk seems out of place with the rest of the king’s saintly characteristics throughout the *Gesta Annalia*. Fordun, like Wyntoun, mentions Bruce’s place at Falkirk, but he provides particular detail, rather than glossing over the fact that Bruce betrayed Wallace by fighting for Edward. Fordun, in fact, wholly attributes the victory of the English over

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<sup>70</sup> Fordun, John. *Chronica Gentis Scotorum and Gesta Annalia*. vol 1. ed. W.F. Skene and F.J.H. Skene (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1871), 337. “But God, in His mercy, as is the wont of his fatherly goodness, had compassion on the woes, the ceaseless crying and sorroy, of the Scots; so He raised up a saviour and champion unto them—one of their own fellows, to wit, named Robert of Bruce. This man, seeing them stretched in the slough of woe, and reft of all hope of salvation and help, was inwardly touched with sorrow of heart; and, putting forth his hand unto force, underwent the countless and unbearable toils of the heat of day, of cold and hunger, by land and sea, gladly welcoming weariness, fasting, dangers, and the snares not only of foes, but also of false friends, for the sake of freeing his brethren” (vol. 2, 330).

<sup>71</sup> Webster, Bruce. “John of Fordun and the Independent Identity of the Scots.” In *Medieval Europeans*. Ed. Alfred P. Smyth. (London: MacMillan Press LTD, 1998), 99.

Wallace's troops to Bruce's strategy of flanking the Scots and attacking them from the rear. According to Wyntoun, however, this maneuver is attributed to another traitorous nobleman. Like Wyntoun, Fordun is careful to mention that Bruce was later the King of Scots, but, while he does not condemn Bruce to the same degree as the Comyns, he does not gloss over the fact that Bruce was at one point a traitor to the Scottish cause. One explanation for this negative portrayal of Bruce could be the unpublished and cursory nature of Fordun's *Gesta Annalia*. Because Fordun had most likely intended to synthesize the *Annalia* into a more complete history like *Chronica Gentis Scotorum*, this negative picture of Bruce could be only a bare assertion of his source material, without the finalizing propagandistic spin later present in Bower. Indeed, this portrayal does seem negative, but what is most interesting about Fordun's Falkirk coverage is how Walter Bower later manipulated Fordun's account to again create a universally positive portrayal of Bruce.

The turning point of Bruce's campaign as king against English aggression, Bannockburn, is heavily emphasized in each of the Scottish sources, including Fordun. At Bannockburn, Bruce continues to occupy the position of both saint and king,

"Cui rex Robertus cum paucis occurrens, non in multitudine populi sed in Domino Deo spem ponens, cum antedicto rege Angliae bellum commisit, et ipsum cum suis, auxiliante ipso cujus est victoriam dare, in fugam convertit, in die natalis beati Johannis Baptistae, anno Domini MCCCXIII,"<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Fordun, *Chronica Gentis Scotorum*, 347. "But King Robert, putting his trust, not in a host of people, but in the Lord God, came, with a few men, against the aforesaid king of England, on the blessed John the Baptist's day, in the year 1314, and fought against him, and put him and his to flight, through the help of Him to whom it belongeth to give the victory" (vol. 2, 339).

In strict contrast directly before this, Edward II is mentioned as the opposite, as putting trust not in God, but in the strength of man. This misplaced trust earns the English king defeat, but the reliance of Robert the Bruce on God's provision allows the Scots to triumph. Although the victory is directly attributed to God's strength, it is indirectly attributed to Robert's godliness. This passage also ties the will of God firmly once again on the side of the Scots.

John of Fordun's portrayal of Edward is similar in many respects to that of Wyntoun and Barbour- highly negative. Fordun emphasizes Edward's lack of trustworthiness and his tyrannical rule. However, unlike in both Wyntoun's and Barbour's chronicles, John of Fordun does not elaborate upon Edward's use of the Great Cause to create a puppet dynasty subservient to the English crown. One of the most telling and invective passages on Edward I comes in the summary of his life at the English King's death:

"Hic in principio militiae suae bella movens, Anglicos diris flagellis verberavit, et suis nequitiis totum orbem perturbavit, et crudelitate commovit, passagium terrae sanctae suo dolo impedivit, Walliam invasit, et Scotos cum regno sibi fraudulenter subegit, Johannem de Balliol ipsius regem cum suo filio carceri mancipavit, ecclesias stravit, praelatos vinculavit, et carcerali squalore quosdam extinxit, populum occidit, et alia infinita mala perpetravit."<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 344. "The same king stirred up war as soon as he had become a knight, and lashed the English with awful scourgings; he troubled the whole world by his wickedness, and roused it by his cruelty; by his wiles, he hindered the passage to the Holy Land; he invaded Wales; he treacherously subdued unto him the Scots and their kingdom; John of Balliol, the king thereof, and his son, he cast into prison; he overthrew churches, fettered prelates, and to some he put an end in filthy dungeons; he slew the people, and committed other misdeeds without end" (vol. 2, 336).

Here, we see Edward described as a cruel tyrant, dishonest, treacherous, violent, unjust, and even a hindrance to the Christian faith. This entirely negative portrayal follows the close association of the English with evil that Barbour uses in his poem. One quite interesting portion of the above passage is the phrase detailing how the English king “hindered the passage to the Holy Land.” In reality, Edward I was himself a Crusader, and strongly supported the Crusading movement. This phrase upon his death in a Scottish source suggests a desire to reshape the portrayal of Edward I after his death in an entirely negative light.

Edward is shown to be both a liar and unchivalrous in *Gesta Annalia*. His dishonesty is established early on, directly after Balliol is made king. The king promises the Pretender Robert Bruce the throne, but Edward I is, “*verbis blandis plena, et omni fallacia.*”<sup>74</sup> During the description of the English siege of Stirling Castle, Fordun highlights Edward’s treacherous nature, “*Sed ipse rex, obtento castro, fide mentitur, conditione violata, Willhelmum Olifant, custodem ipsius, vinctum Londoniis carcei mancipavit, et per multa tempora tenuit mancipatum.*”<sup>75</sup> The way that Fordun understands treachery is similar in essence to the understanding of treachery found in medieval chivalry in general and in Barbour’s *Brus* in particular.

Fordun gives a skeletal account of the Wars of Independence; due to a royal request for a comprehensive, Latin history of Scotland, Fordun’s *Annalia* were later re-worked by Walter Bower. Bower, writing around half a century after Fordun, expanded these portrayals, placing further emphasis on Bruce’s right to rule and Edward’s trickery

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid, 323. “full of smooth words and all manner of falsehood” (vol. 2, 317).

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 336. “But when he had got the castle, the king belied his troth and broke through the conditions: for William Oliphant, the warden thereof, he threw bound into prison in London, and kept him a long time in thrall” (vol. 2, 319).

and dishonest nature. Bower, writing in the mid 15<sup>th</sup> century, produced a massive scholarly work combining the *Chronica Gentis Scotorum* and the *Gesta Annalia*, expanding the two and adding entirely new sections most likely penned by Bower himself. Walter Bower, like John Barbour, had a royal patron, and was contracted to create a comprehensive history of the Scottish nation.

Walter Bower, born ca. 1385, served as an Augustinian canon in the priory of St. Andrews from 1400 until he became abbot of Inchcolm in 1418. He served as abbot for slightly more than 30 years until his death in 1449. Although the abbacy of Inchcolm was not necessarily one of the more influential ecclesiastical appointments, Walter Bower was an important player in Scottish politics, “ranked as one of the ecclesiastical magnates of Scotland, and after the return of James I from captivity in England in 1424 he was presumably a regular attender at the king’s councils and parliaments.”<sup>76</sup> He also served the royal government in administrative functions. Bower wrote the *Scotichronicon* between 1441 and 1445, expanding Fordun’s work at the request of Sir David Stewart, son of Robert II of Scotland, from five books to sixteen. He died in 1449, on the 24 of December.

Walter Bower’s chronicle was perhaps the most popular in his own day of the Scottish chronicles mentioned here, with many manuscripts preserved, showing that the work was highly circulated. The scope of the work in itself is huge, and scribes and copyists incorporated all of Bower’s notes and marginalia from his working copy into the *Scotichronicon* in the years after his death. In 1444, Bower was working on a shorter, more manageable version. There are quite a few surviving manuscripts of the

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<sup>76</sup> Watt, D.E.R. “Bower, Walter (1385-1449)” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

*Scotichronicon* from the fifteenth century, and D.E.R. Watt published an excellent, scholarly edition with English translation and commentary.

The *Scotichronicon* is organized in the same way as Fordun's original, and Bower was careful to state when he interpolated his own opinion into the work he was expanding. The *Scotichronicon* begins with the origin legend of the Scots, and adopts a broad perspective of history. Like the work it was based upon, the *Scotichronicon* is written in Latin and meant primarily for scholarly and legal consumption. The *Scotichronicon* is a complete answer to the nationalist call for a codified, defensible, and authoritative (at least in Scottish eyes) historiographical account of the Wars of Independence. Walter Bower includes letters and polemics in their original format throughout the text of his chronicle to support Scottish identity and Bruce's kingship as well as denigrate the rights and character of Edward I.

Bower's portrayal of Robert Bruce is even more securely fixated on his rightful position as King of Scots than that of Fordun. Dedicating a great majority of his chronicle narrative to a defense of Robert Bruce's royalty, Bower seeks to create a Bruce that is both royal and heroic, melding the two qualities into a seamless character. In contrast to the action-based, romantic hero-Bruce of Barbour and Wyntoun and the narrated saintliness of Fordun's Bruce, Bower's primary method of delivering Robert Bruce's character to the reader is through recorded speeches. Bower gives his work a strong feeling of authenticity through this emphasis on direct, recorded speech, which works hand in hand with the inclusion of primary source documents into the text itself of the *Scotichronicon*. Robert is constantly described as being descended of the best and

as having good character. Even when he has not yet realized his own potential and identified himself with Scottish patriotism, he is still described positively.

Although Bower certainly describes Bruce as sometimes a saint, his emphasis on speech and the dynamic character of the King emphasizes the humanity of Bruce rather than his position as a Christ-figure. Bruce's change from a flawed but still good nobleman to the heroic and patriotic King of Scots presents to the reader a character readily identifiable. Although Fordun's picture of Bruce as savior certainly comes through in the *Scotichronicon*, Bower's Bruce is most definitely a very human hero, a warrior-king and a man with flaws rather than a heavenly saint.

After focusing a significant amount of text to the Scottish succession and the rights of Bruce and Balliol, Bower also addresses the Battle of Falkirk. Bower's Falkirk, a central portion of Bruce's character development, is much different than that of Barbour, Wyntoun, or Fordun. Instead of being driven by action and battle-sequence, as in Wyntoun's chronicle, Bower uses his trademark tactic of speech and thought dialogue to open Robert Bruce's character to the reader. Although he is on the "wrong" side at Falkirk, Bower has Bruce interacting directly with Wallace. When Bruce questioned Wallace as to why he fought against such strength as England and the Scottish nobles, Wallace spoke,

"Ad quem fertur Willelmum huiusmodi dedisse responsum: 'Tua, O Roberte, Roberte, inhercia et effeminate ignavia me stimulant ad tui juris patrie liberacionem. Sed et nun semivir de cubilibus ad aciem, de umbra ad solem progressurus, cuius corpus dedicatum mollibus assuetum pondus prelii pro patrie

proprie liberacione lorice onus segniter assumens, me sic presumentem quin forte et insipientem effecit, et ad hec intentanda sibe capescenda coegit.”<sup>77</sup>

This “awakens Robert from a deep sleep”<sup>78</sup> and changes his opinions to wholly favor the Scottish cause. Bower also refers to Wallace as Bruce’s faithful friend, attributing his transformation to heroic king from shifty nobleman to Wallace. After this brief interpolation, Bower continues the same story as Fordun, with Bruce taking the Scots from the rear, instrumental in Wallace’s defeat.

During the section detailing his coronation, the *Scotichronicon* highlights Robert I’s devotion and strength of character—

“Rem grandem certe inceptit rex onera importabilia propriis humeris imponens, nam contra potentissimum regem Anglie et omnes eius complices et fautores Anglos non solum manum erexit, sed etiam contra omnes et singulos de regno Scocie, exceptis paucissimis sibi benevolis”<sup>79</sup>

This emphasis on the unappreciated hero echoes Barbour’s heroic, tragic portrayal of the king. Bower continues to outline Bruce’s tribulations, stringing the unconnected stories in the *Gesta Annalia* together into a tale of Bruce’s patriotic struggle against one

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<sup>77</sup> Bower, Walter. *Scotichronicon*. vol. 6. ed. D.E.R. Watt (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1987), 94. “It is said that William replied like this to him: Robert, Robert, it is your inactivity and womanish cowardice that spur me to set authority free in your native land. But it is an effeminate man even now, ready as he is to advance from bed to battle, from the shadow into the sunlight, with a pampered body accustomed to a soft life feebly taking up the weight of battle for the liberation of his own country, the burden of the breastplate—it is he who has made me so presumptuous perhaps even foolish, and has compelled me to attempt or seize these tasks” (95).

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 316. “It was indeed a mighty undertaking that the king began, taking unbearable burdens upon his shoulders, for not only did he raise his hand against the mighty king of England and all his confederates and flatterers, but he also devoted himself to a struggle against one and all in the kingdom of Scotland, with the exception of a very few well disposed to him” (317).

and all for the good of his country. Bower's portrayal of Bruce stresses his perseverance, his heroism, and his patriotism.

Bannockburn, as it does in each of the other sources, provides Bower with a chance to tie Bruce with the side of good and humility. Building on the passage by Fordun on Bannockburn, Bower expands and adds many layers of detail to the battle description to increase the centrality and monumentality of the victory. He gives background information, corroborating tales, and even cites English chronicles to further add to his credibility. One such quote, interpolated in the section about the Battle of Bannockburn, comes from what Bower says is inscribed in the burgh of Stirling, "Continet hoc in se pontem castrum Strivelense. Hic armis Bruti, hic stant Scoti cruce tuti."<sup>80</sup> This inscription, whether or not it is fictional, shows the common association of each chronicle portrayal of the Scots with Christ and of the English with the world. Bower uses this here not only as a general, sweeping identification of the nationalist cause with Christ, but as a way to explain the victory at Bannockburn through faith.

Walter Bower's portrayal of Edward I as evil and greedy does not originate with him, and the English king is not necessarily an absolutely central character throughout the entire narrative. He is most important in the Great Cause discussions, and often shows his true colors through "misjudgment" and an obvious desire to increase his own power at the expense of the Scots. As in the other sources, he is obsessed with conquering Scotland and subjugating the Scots entirely.

As is common to each of the nationalistic chroniclers in Scotland, Walter Bower presents Edward as enemy and evil throughout the entirety of the section dealing with

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 356. "This contains in itself the bridge and castle of Stirling. Here stand the British, saved by their arms; here the Scots, saved by the cross," (357).

the Great Cause and the early Wars of Independence. Edward, described as “Eadwardus tirannus” throughout the chronicle, loses nearly any redeeming qualities he had in Fordun’s history. In an interesting passage comparing three men: Edward I, John Menteith, and William Wallace, Bower describes Edward as a vain tyrant— “Quidam enim nomen suum: ambiciose magnificent ad ostentacionem, sicut Eadwardus tirannus.”<sup>81</sup> This representation of vanity and pride is like the overweening pride of Edward found in Barbour and Wyntoun. As it did in those chronicles, it ties Edward with evil and Satan in the minds of readers.

Like Fordun, Bower again describes Edward as deceitful and untrustworthy. Because he fears that Bruce will refuse to swear allegiance to England if he judges his right to the kingship as more convincing, Edward summons Balliol and has him made king. Edward’s final decision has nothing to do with feudal right according to Bower, but indeed has everything to do with Edward’s desire to be the feudal superior of the king of Scots. Edward further shows his deceitful nature when Bower presents the argument before the Pope concerning feudal right over Scotland. “Has vero suggestionis perverse literas rex Eadwardus Anglie...domino pape Bonifacio cum duobus militibus suis nunciis transmisit.”<sup>82</sup> This passage goes on to discuss how Edward misrepresented the situation to the papacy, hoping to secure ecclesiastical support for his actions in Scotland. Walter Bower includes the primary sources for the debate in Rome between Edward’s lawyers and the delegation under Baldred Bisset concerning

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 314. “Some ostentatiously make their name great for show, like the tyrant Edward,” (315).

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 128. “King Edward of the English sent this letter with its wrong-headed misrepresentation along with two of his knights to the lord pope Boniface,” (129).

English right in Scotland, presenting the case as Baldred Bisset presented it, further cementing the separateness of the Scots and their right to liberty in the readers' minds.

Each of the Scottish sources agree in their overall portrayals of Robert Bruce and Edward I, though they use different methods and highlight different stories in order to prove their points. Barbour creates a romance hero set in a specific historical narrative, while Wyntoun builds upon this narrative, setting it in a greater historical context.

Wyntoun's Edward I differs from the evil stock-villain of Barbour by the deepening of his character, though he is still entirely evil. Likewise, Fordun's *Gesta Annalia* has Bruce set as a saviour character, whose heroic actions and words lead the Scottish to a patriotic and glorious victory. Fordun also portrays Edward negatively, and Walter Bower builds upon the framework set up by Fordun, creating a dynamic inner dialogue and speech-driven action through which the reader can readily identify with the King of Scots. Robert Bruce is a hero in each, a patriot and the central voice of Scotland as a nation. His struggle to become king is, for each author, one and the same as the struggle to maintain Scotland's rights as a separate nation. Each author was writing in a time when the Bruce line's right to rule in Scotland was in question, for the war started by William Wallace's insurrection and carried to victory and fruition by Robert Bruce continued on and off throughout the late middle ages. Each chronicle also portrays Edward I in a similar manner, while still using different methods. Edward is always evil, he is always greedy and in the wrong. The English are enemies of God, just as the Scots are His servants. This correlation of faith is notable, because each chronicler mentioned above was an educated member of the clergy, and each used his Biblical and ecclesiastical knowledge to the service of the Scottish nationalist cause and the

detriment of the English crown. All of these Scottish sources' opinions are drawn across nationalistic lines, with clear associations with the current ruling Bruce/Stewart line. Each seeks to assert the legitimacy of Bruce and the illegitimacy of Edward I's claims to sovereignty. They are very pro-Bruce and anti-Edward, connecting the nation of Scotland with the king and Christ, and the nation of England and her most terrifying king with evil itself. The most significant fact of these portrayals of Bruce is that the Scottish people clung to him, creating a national hero and subsequently "worshipping" him through legend, song, and story. There are many medieval, early-modern, and modern incarnations of this depiction of Bruce as a hero; the final chapter will now discuss a few of the modern depictions and adaptations of the chronicle source-material.

## Chapter 6: Modern Perceptions of Medieval Portrayals

These chronicle portrayals undoubtedly had significant effects during the late middle ages, influencing the nationalist and unionist arguments of Scotland and England for hundreds of years. Indeed, many aspects of these portrayals have persisted even to the present day, especially in folk and popular history. In most cases, the modern, popular understanding of Robert Bruce has come straight from the Scottish historiographical sources mentioned. The English chronicle portrayals of Edward in his dealings with Scotland, however, have not survived, due largely to academic study highlighting his other achievements. Consequently, this section will focus on Robert Bruce, discussing four different popular history outlets—historical fiction, action film, cartoon, and song.

There are many different modern reinterpretations of Robert the Bruce in historical fiction, from Jane Porter's 19<sup>th</sup> century novel, *Scottish Chiefs*, to the recent *Rebel King* series. The *Rebel King* books, by Charles Randolph Bruce and Carolyn Hale Bruce, tell the story of Robert Bruce throughout the early Wars of Independence. The ideas of chronicle representations are never far from these modern interpretations of Robert Bruce; the phrase "Chronicles of Robert de Brus" is even on the front cover. From the idea of Bruce being a central, heroic figure, to the unequivocally sympathetic and pro-Bruce picture painted by the authors, the series mirrors the heroic Bruce present particularly in Barbour's epic verse chronicle. Barbour is even credited as a source by the authors on their website.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Bruce, Charles Randolph and Carolyn Hale. "A Chat with Carolyn and Charles Randolph Bruce" The *Rebel King* book series website. [www.rebelking.com](http://www.rebelking.com).

The first book in the series covers the early years, from the time of Balliol's removal from the throne and direct English occupation to Bruce's flight into the Highlands following his coronation. One pivotal scene, discussed in detail by each of the Scottish chronicles, is the death of Comyn, taken from a specifically pro-Bruce bias. John Comyn is a traitor to Bruce, who says after he reveals the letter of correspondence to King Edward, "Ye lied, and ye betrayed me! Aye, and Scotland!"<sup>84</sup> This correlation between Bruce's agenda and the good of Scotland and her people is found throughout each of the Scottish chronicles. Further, it is Comyn who is the aggressor, for he drew his blade first. Any condemnation for murder is removed from Bruce because it was Sir Roger Kirkpatrick, rather than Bruce himself, who dealt the final deathblow to John Comyn in the book, who would have survived otherwise. This demonization of Comyn and patriotic picture of Robert Bruce follows precisely the portrayal of the scene throughout the Scottish chronicles, turning the nationalist sympathies from the Comyn clan and their claims to the throne, to the legitimization of the Bruce agenda.

Just as the Scottish sources emphasized the importance of Bruce's hardships and struggles, so even the title of the second book, *The Har'ships*, keeps Bruce's period of struggle in the Highlands in the forefront of the readers' minds. The book centers around these hardships, recounting assassination attempts on Bruce as well as his relative lack of support among the Scottish nobles. Like Barbour's *Brus*, *The Har'ships* seeks to impute a heroic nature to these struggles, finding in Bruce an unappreciated, patriotic hero. The third book, *Bannok Burn*, centers on the tremendous Scottish victory against the forces of Edward II at Bannockburn. The same chivalric character present

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<sup>84</sup> Bruce, Charles and Carolyn. "Excerpt Book One" [www.rebelking.com](http://www.rebelking.com).

in Barbour and Wyntoun forges the Scottish victory through his leadership. However, the *Rebel King* books do not focus on the saintly, savior aspect so central to Fordun and Bower, although many of Fordun's and Bower's Bruce character traits are present in the books.

Although certainly a direct modern survival of the nationalist historiographers' portrayal of Robert Bruce, the *Rebel King* books are not very well known outside of American and Scottish nationalist circles. The Hollywood film *Braveheart* is an example of Scottish popular history that has become important in mainstream circles, at once in Scotland and throughout the world. As one of the most important popular formative events in the modern Scottish independence debate, it is no wonder that I have chosen to discuss Mel Gibson's award-winning film about William Wallace, *Braveheart*. *Braveheart's* narrative is taken loosely from Blind Harry's 15<sup>th</sup> century epic poem *The Wallace*, and is centered on William Wallace rather than Robert Bruce. However, Bruce is still a prominent character, and many of the movie's themes echo the themes found throughout the aforementioned chronicles.

Bruce, as he appears in *Braveheart*, is not quite the entirely good figure that the Scottish chronicles portray. Just as in Bower's *Scotichronicon*, Robert Bruce fights against Wallace at Falkirk, and has a similar moment of revelation due to the events of the battle. Just as in Fordun and Bower, Bruce actually fights alongside the English, and is the key to defeating the beleaguered Scots. When William Wallace finds Bruce's identity, the former is stricken by his betrayal, while the latter states "I will never be on

the wrong side again.”<sup>85</sup> The movie uses Bruce’s shifting political ideals and inability to act as a man driven solely by immutable, black and white principles in order to emphasize Wallace’s determination and to throw blame on the rich and powerful. The chronicles, however, have a different agenda, and consequently use Bruce’s shifting of loyalty in order to illustrate his own development from nobleman to king.

This ambiguity attached to Robert Bruce’s character in *Braveheart* helps to make him a sympathetic character, rather than the treacherous, unredeemable Bruce in the English *Brut Chronicle*. Lin Anderson writes of Bruce in *Braveheart*, “The Bruce character in the film represents the majority of us; indecisive, trying to go the way of most gain while still trying to do what is best.”<sup>86</sup> This portrayal of Bruce allows him to be a more dynamic character, shining forth as a patriot at both the beginning voice-over and the battle scene at the end of the film.

At the end of the movie, however, Robert Bruce does indeed choose to do what is best, although the tale of his hardships in the Highlands is not told in the movie. Robert Bruce is depicted as the hero of Scottish patriotism that comes through in Barbour’s *Brus*, even giving a speech just before he is shown charging the English at Bannockburn. Robert Bruce, now shown as King of Scots mounted before his army, raises his voice before the battle, “You have bled with Wallace, now bleed with me!”<sup>87</sup> Though the speech’s text itself is a cinematic fabrication, it has a similar effect of inspiration and encouragement on the Scottish troops as the longer speeches included

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<sup>85</sup> *Braveheart*. dir. Mel Gibson. 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox and Paramount Pictures present an Icon Entertainment production (Los Angeles, California: Fox Studios and Paramount Pictures, 1995).

<sup>86</sup> Anderson, Lin. *Braveheart: From Hollywood to Holyrood* (Edinburgh: Luath Press Ltd., 2004), 66.

<sup>87</sup> *Braveheart*. dir. Mel Gibson.

in the chronicles. The inclusion of this heroic moment closes the film with a strong pro-Bruce sentiment and ensures that Robert Bruce is intertwined in viewers' minds with Scottish patriotism, although often pictured as devious and double-minded about Scottish freedom in the film. The initial and final position of Bruce in the film ensures that he is pictured as the savior of Scotland, inspired by Wallace, but who carried out the final victory that won the freedom of Scotland himself.

*Braveheart's* Edward I comes straight from the pages of the Scottish chronicles, complete with evil single-mindedness. The opening scene, narrated by Robert Bruce, completes the satanic portrayal of King Edward presented by Barbour and Wyntoun by calling him a "pagan king." Throughout the film, he is referred to as "Longshanks," just as he is in Wyntoun's chronicle. However, this term is used as a form of revilement rather than to present the slightly comical image of Edward in Wyntoun. *Braveheart's* Edward is entirely focused on domination and on subjugating the Scots to his will. He is ruthless, evil, cruel, and barbaric in his application of English overlordship to Scotland. This modern picture of Edward I is quite similar in content to the Scottish chronicles, though much of *Braveheart's* narrative and influence came from Blind Harry's *The Wallace*, written in the fifteenth century.

Anything but the pro-Scottish propaganda film that *Braveheart* has proven to be, Disney's *So Dear to My Heart* also uses a popular understanding of Scottish history to prove a point. In a short cartoon segment in *So Dear to My Heart*, the story of Robert the Bruce is used to illustrate perseverance, or "stick-to-it-ivity," as the film calls it. This didactic use in itself seems to echo much of the narrative found in Barbour's *Brus*, Wyntoun's *Orygynal Cronykil*, Fordun's *Annalia*, and Bower's *Scotichronicon*. In both

the cartoon and indeed in the source material, Bruce is more than a hero—he is a role model whose strength of character should be emulated.

Opening with a call to remember Robert Bruce, the cartoon is a discussion centering on Bruce's perseverance in the face of his adversities, or "har'ships," as Charles and Carolyn Bruce called them. Central to the tale is the folk story of Bruce and the spider, a story fabricated after the Middle Ages. Although Barbour does not relate how Bruce was encouraged to try once more to gain victory by seeing a spider building a web in a difficult place, much of the imagery and subject matter in this animated segment is consonant with the heroic Bruce emphasized by Barbour and the later Scottish chroniclers. From the beginning, Robert Bruce's right to rule is not questioned, nor is his inherent goodness and the rightness of his cause. The segment mentions the defeat at Methven and his subsequent flight into the Highlands. After being encouraged by the spider, Bruce returns to a heroic victory as King of Scots.

Although the primary focus of the clip is on perseverance, much of the imagery focuses on portraying Robert the Bruce as a warrior-king and heroic knight. Likewise, Barbour's *Brus* has this same focus. Like *The Brus*, the clip from *So Dear to my Heart* is not a comprehensive history, but is primarily interested in using historical events to explain and exhibit the character strengths of Robert Bruce. Historicity is not the aim of the cartoon segment, so historical events and places are not mentioned; the didactic nature of the cartoon in the greater narrative of the film as a whole is clearly laced throughout the entirety of the Robert Bruce "stick-to-it-ivity" segment.

These character strengths become evident after Bruce's decision and subsequent victory and expulsion of the enemy from Scotland. Though not explicitly

stated as such, this portrayal gives the savior's role to Robert Bruce. Shown as a mighty knight on horseback, Bruce leads his army to attack a castle. When Bruce is victorious, he stands atop the tallest tower as the heavens open behind him and rays of light surround him, almost as if they were a halo. Though far from any medieval identification of Robert Bruce as a Christian saint, the imagery calls to mind this saintly, Christ-figure identification, echoing the same kind of portrayal found in the Scottish chronicles.

Edward is not directly mentioned, referred to only as "the enemy," likewise, the English are not mentioned. The English attacks against Robert Bruce are viewed as a grasping, shadowy hand, bearing down upon the castle at Stirling. This depiction is much like that of Barbour, where Edward and the English are viewed as pure evil. The grasping, greedy Edward I is common to each of the Scottish sources, and his attacks against Bruce are one and the same as his attacks against Scotland. Just as at Bannockburn in the chronicles, the English are defeated due to Robert's strength of character and perseverance.

The dialogue in the Disney clip is song, partly due to its didactic aim. Song is certainly an important preservative element of cultural tradition, and although this paper does not discuss traditional ballads about Robert Bruce, a modern ballad in the same folk tradition will be analyzed. Albannach, a modern Scottish band, uses bagpipes, drums, and vocals to create a neo-traditional imagination of the ancient Scottish spirit. Though most of their music is instrumental, the band does sing traditional ballads and original songs. One such original song, "The Rebel King," (lyrics written by Davey Morrison, a bodhran-player in the band) is a portrayal of the epic/heroic folk figure of

Robert the Bruce, in essence a summary of the chivalric, Christ-figure Bruce found in Barbour's chronicle.

The song begins with a simple discussion of Bruce's struggle for Scotland, and though no details are mentioned, the song obviously gives Bruce the unappreciated hero stance early in the song. The chorus seeks to tie him with Wallace, thus exploiting *Braveheart's* high level of popularity among fans of Albannach. The musical form of the song brings to mind the oral culture of medieval Scotland, just as Barbour's use of phrases directed toward oral presentation does. The song is meant to be seen as a continuation of the chronicle tradition of truthful historical transmission. Barbour himself discusses this same vein of historical telling when he validates his chronicle as the true story of Bruce and Douglas.

Edward I has no place in the song's narrative, and indeed the English are only mentioned once. Describing the English, the song says "At Bannockburn, 'gainst cruel England's might/"<sup>88</sup> England is mighty and cruel, and the Scottish people are said to be oppressed by fear and bound by chains. England is personified as a slaveholder and associated with evil and captivity. England (and therefore Edward, as the progenitor of English aggression against the Scottish throne) again plays the entirely negative role in the song, providing a stock enemy with which the heroic Bruce, along with the patriots of Scotland, can contend.

Perhaps the portion of the song's narrative most appropriate to this paper is the final verse, discussing the transmission of Robert Bruce's legend through generations of Scottish patriots. "The times have changed, King Robert is gone/ but his memory we

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<sup>88</sup> Albannach, "Rebel King" *Eye of the Storm* (distributed by Albannach, 2007).

hold dear./”<sup>89</sup> Much of this memory is determined by the propagandistic portrayals of Robert Bruce found in the Scottish chronicle sources, preserved and continued in works like this song.

With as much popular exposure as Robert the Bruce has had since his death, it is surprising at first glance that Edward I does not hold a place of importance anywhere near that of his Scottish enemy. However, one primary reason for this has been the relative success the English had as opponents of the Scots during their many wars. Indeed, the English were ultimately successful in attaining direct control over the Scots, and never had to wage a defensive war against a stronger enemy. Unlike Robert Bruce, Edward I has not been a rallying point, only one monarch in a succession of powerful monarchs. The English chronicles themselves do not even emphasize Edward I. Consequently, Edward is remembered for his legal achievements and place in the development of parliament. Because Edward’s primary source of transmission has been the traditional academy rather than public history venues and folk transmission, there has not really been a developed popular notion of Edward’s place in English history. Edward is remembered in a negative light by nationalist sources, but English tradition blends most of the monarchs together in a tradition of sovereign power, with the exception not really of good kings, but of bad ones.

As is evident in each of the four popular history sources mentioned, these chronicle accounts had strong and recurring effects on the popular conception of who Bruce was and the intertwined nature of his character and kingship with patriotism for Scotland. Bruce, like Wallace before him, became a rallying point for Scottish

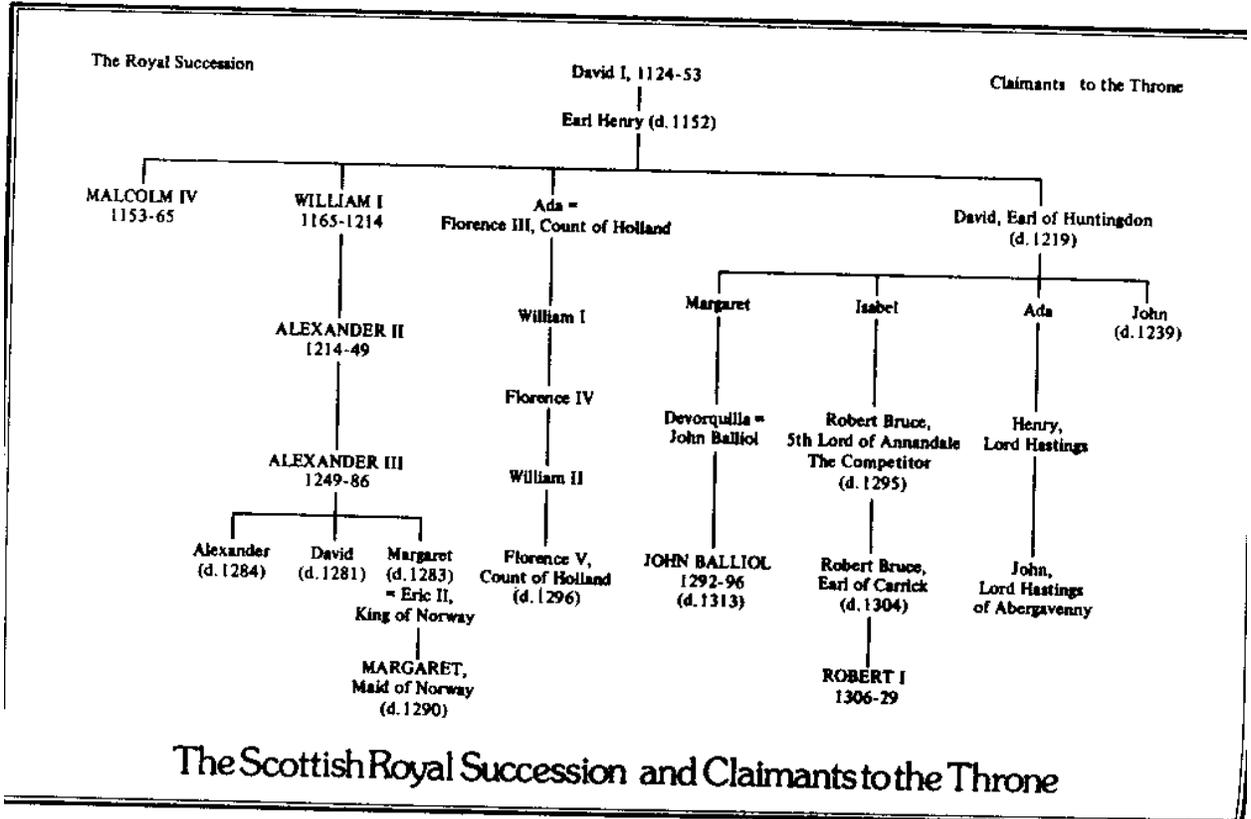
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<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

nationalists and has long been considered the savior of Scotland for his maintenance of the Scottish crown, his crucial victory at Bannockburn, and the issue of The Declaration of Arbroath. These pivotal events are known by nationalists partially through the lens of the Scottish chroniclers. The portrayals of Robert Bruce and Edward I are almost entirely determined by nationalistic biases rather than by actual events, and have become a primary basis of popular historical accounts of Bruce to the present day.

Appendix A: The Great Cause

As one of the central issues of contention between Scotland and England, it is essential to understand the Scottish succession and how the different Great Cause claimants were related to the former ruling house of the Kings of Scots. What follows is a diagram of these complex relations, marking in detail the principle claimants and the genealogical relationship of Robert I of Scotland to the former ruling dynasty.



\*This chart is taken in entirety from the front matter of Ronald McNair Scott, *Robert the Bruce, King of Scots*. New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers Inc., 1982.

## Appendix B: Manuscript List

The following manuscript list will allow further researchers to locate and utilize the primary source manuscripts central to this thesis.

### *The Brus:*

Cambridge, St. John's College, MS. G.23

Edinburgh, NLS. MS. Adv. 19.2.2 (1)

### *The Orygynal Cronykil of Scotland:*

London, BL. Cott. Nero MS. D.xi

Fife, Wemyss MS. 1929

### *Chronica Gentis Scotorum and Gesta Annalia:*

Cambridge, Trinity Coll. MS. 0.9.9

Dublin, Trinity Coll. MS. 498 (1),(2)

Edinburgh, Columba House MS. (1)

London, BL. MS. Add. 37223

London, BL. Cott. Vitell. MS. E.xi

London, BL. MS. Harley 4764 (1)

### *The Scotichronicon:*

Cambridge, Corpus Christi Coll. MS. 171

Donibristle MS.

Edinburgh, NLS. MS. Adv. 35.1.7 (abbreviated version)

Edinburgh, SRO MS. GD45/26/48

London, BL. MS. Harley 712

London, BL. MS. Royal 13 E.x

The *Polychronicon*:

See “Appendix 1: List of Latin Manuscripts of the *Polychronicon*” in Taylor, John. *The Universal Chronicle of Ranulf Higden*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966.

The *Brut Chronicle*:

See Matheson, Lister M. *The Prose Brut: The Development of an English Chronicle* for a complete discussion of the *Brut Chronicle* manuscripts.

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### **Education**

1. Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, PA.

M.A. in Public History  
Concentrations: Archival Studies and Editing/Publishing  
Graduation: Summer 2012

2. The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA

Major: Medieval Studies  
Minor: History  
Degree: B.A., with highest distinction  
Honors in: Medieval Studies, 2008-2010  
Graduation: May 15, 2010

Honors Thesis:

“‘Pat Fals Traitour’ and ‘Eadweardus Tyrannus’: Robert I of Scotland and Edward I of England in the Imaginations of Late Medieval Chroniclers”

Oxford Study Abroad Programme, Trinity College Oxford, January 2008-April 2008  
Completed tutorial coursework in Medieval Britain and Anglo-Celtic Political Relationships under Dr. M.C. Hurst (St. John’s College) and Dr. Hugh Doherty (Jesus College), respectively. I also took a seminar in Reformation Theology and History under Rev. Dr. Charlotte Methuen (Keble College).

### **Professional Activities**

**Eberly Family Special Collections Library, Penn State University, August 2009-May 2010**

Position: Special Collections Volunteer (unofficial)

Duties: Cataloguing, organization, research

Summary: I wrote MARC format catalogue entries for four Medieval Latin manuscripts. I also organized the Robert Proctor Papers and prepared a complete finding aid. I completed a research request for a graduate student on a 17<sup>th</sup> century Anglican prayer book.

### **Penn State Medieval Society, January 2009-May 2010**

Position: Treasurer

Duties: Financial management, event planning

Summary: I served as the treasurer for 3 semesters and was in charge of the Medieval Manuscript Exhibition in April 2009 and April 2010 at the Special Collections Library. I helped with many other functions of the society, including assistance in planning for and execution of most major events during my time as treasurer.

### **Papers/Research Presented**

Schwab, Edward T. (March 2010). "Royal Policy of Parliamentary Usage Under Edward I." Paper presented at the Penn State University Undergraduate Medieval Conference, University Park, PA.

Liberal Arts Week Undergraduate Research Panel: I presented my thesis research to interested undergraduates on a panel dedicated to emphasizing research opportunities for new students in the Liberal Arts.

### **Academic Scholarships and Honors**

Penn State University Dean's List, Fall 2008-Spring 2010

McCourtney Liberal Arts Scholarship 2009-2010

Phi Eta Sigma National Honors Society

Phi Kappa Phi Honors Society- Formally inducted April 11, 2010

Department of History Undergraduate Marshal, Commencement 2010

### **Research Interests**

During my time as an undergraduate medievalist, I focused my studies on Anglo-Celtic politics and propaganda, British institutional history, palaeography and manuscript studies, and medieval English and Germanic literature. In the fall of 2010, I will begin my postgraduate studies at Duquesne University to receive a Master of Arts in Public History, focusing on editing and publishing and archival studies. I plan to conduct

research on the portrayal of European medieval history in United States museums and archives. I am very focused on outreach, and hope to increase popular interest in public history institutions. I eventually want to pursue a doctorate in the United Kingdom in Medieval Studies, Scottish Studies, or Medieval Literature and Language.

## **Work Experience**

### **Classic Real Estate of Chester County, June 2009-August 2009**

Position: Office Assistant

Duties: Word processing, customer service, groundskeeping, photography

Summary: I spent the summer performing many different kinds of jobs for Vernon MacIntyre; the constant fluctuation of duties provided a dynamic work environment and bolstered many diverse skills, including quick problem-solving, working with databases, and customer service.

### **Amelia's Grocery Outlet, Coatesville Store, June 2008-Present**

Position: Stockperson, Cashier

Duties: Organization, customer service, cash register operation, stocking

Summary: During my time at Amelia's, I operated in many different capacities, from organization and shelf-stocking, to ordering products, to operating the cash register. The store has a very customer-centered policy, and during my time at Amelia's I was often able to assist customers and address many different customer needs.

### **Subway Restaurants, Downingtown Franchise, June 2007-June 2008**

Position: Sandwich Artist

Duties: food preparation, cash register operation, customer service, custodial services

Summary: I worked primarily in food preparation, serving customers swiftly and accurately. I also completed many various responsibilities throughout the restaurant.

### **The Deck Guy, Coatesville Franchise, June 2005-August 2006**

Position: Deck Stainer

Duties: staining, repair, navigation, customer service

Summary: During my two summers at The Deck Guy, I not only learned how to stain and repair decks, I also worked as a crew leader and translator for the Mexican workers who did not speak English.

### **Skills**

Languages: Spanish, Classical and Medieval Latin, Middle English, experience with Anglo-Saxon and Icelandic.

Software: Mac OS X, Windows XP, Microsoft Office, training in research methods and information systems

**References Available Upon Request**