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WOULD-BE CONQUERORS: SCOTTISH HISTORICAL APPROACHES TO ARTHUR, WILLIAM I, AND EDWARD I OF ENGLAND, 1380-1600

By

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ABSTRACT

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Six Scottish historians writing during a critical period (1385 - 1596) in Scottish history, a period marked by political unrest, struggles for power, and a growth of nationalism, are examined in order to determine why they wrote history. John Fordun, Andrew Wyntoun, John Mair (also known as John Major), Hector Boece, George Buchanan, and John Leslie wrote because they each felt a sense of mission, a need to change the present by educating their readers about the past. Fordun, the first to write a complete history of Scotland, is reacting directly against Edward I's action in gathering up and at times destroying valuable information. Wyntoun wants to ensure Scotland's place in world history. Putting Scotland's history on an equal footing with England's is one of Mair's primary goals. Boece wants to inspire Scotland's leaders to unite and not simply further their individual power struggles. Buchanan strives to strengthen the monarchy and ensure that Scotland does not return to either Catholicism or the rule of Mary Queen of Scots, which makes him directly opposed to Leslie who hopes to accomplish just that.

The reason for writing history is uncovered by a close examination of these six historians' presentations of the reigns of Arthur, William the Conqueror, and Edward I. They each deal with these three English kings who had hopes of dominating Scotland, and they select their materials and mold their histories to fit their particular aims. Fordun

discusses the nature of kingship. National independence is foremost in Wyntoun's discussion. Peace and the union of the crowns govern Mair's writing. Boece stresses strong leadership and the need for a united focus. Buchanan searches for moral reformation as well as political unity. Finally, the reform of the religious life and the end to factionalism are Leslie's main focuses.

In spite of their different specific aims, these Scottish historians were united by their desire to change Scotland's future by explaining its past. The passion and vision which they convey through their histories lives on.

To my son

Eric Scott Purpus

and the memory of my father

Eugene Robert Purpus

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

In this dissertation I will examine the histories written by six Scottish historians from approximately 1385 until 1596. I will look at each of these historians in turn to analyze their views on the task and role of the historian, their treatment of Arthur, William I, and Edward I in their works, and finally their views on the uses of history. Through this analysis I hope to demonstrate that while each of these historians has written a unique work from his own particular reference point, nevertheless they share a common reason for writing their histories.

This dissertation begins with a brief overview of the medieval view of history in an effort to understand how the subject was treated in the Middle Ages and to set the stage for a detailed examination in future chapters of the six major Scottish historians from the Middle Ages and Renaissance. In the twelfth century both England and France saw a large increase in Latin historical writing as well as verse histories and fiction in the vernaculars.[1] This trend reached Scotland a bit later, but beginning with John Fordun and Andrew Wyntoun in the fourteenth century there is a rise in the number of both Latin and vernacular histories which either deal exclusively with Scotland or which focus on Scotland in relationship to the rest of the world. The reasons for the appearance of these histories at this time probably lies in Scotland's political relationships, especially those with

[1] Jean Blacker, *Faces of Time* (Austin: U Texas P, 1994) xi.

England. The reasons will be examined more closely when the social and political functions of these histories is discussed in chapter III of this dissertation.

Medieval historians were writing what they believed to be true. Likewise, their readers for the most part accepted what they read as factual. Medieval historians report factual history, but their definition of history allows the inclusion of what must have happened or what probably was said. The scope of what was believed to be true differed from present day beliefs, and the historians' additions and choices of sources sometimes do not conform to modern requirements for factual histories.[2] The most obvious difference may be seen in the way in which medieval historians use dialogue. They put words into the mouths of historical characters either indicating what they probably said or could have said. Dialogue can also be used by the historian to express his own perspective. The use of created dialogue dates back at least as far as Thucydides, and the practice was not abandoned until relatively recently.[3] In spite of the differences between medieval and modern concepts of history, the use of the term historian for the medieval writers serves to underscore their desire to portray their works as factual.[4] It is the historians' attitude toward their craft and their presentation of historical figures which defines them as

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[2] Ruth Morse, *Truth and Convention in the Middle Ages: Rhetoric, Representation, and Reality* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1991). See especially pages 89-101.

[3] Ernest Breisach, *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval, and Modern*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: U Chicago P, 1994) 17.

[4] F. J. Levy, *Tudor Historical Thought* (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1967), finds that the "chief criterion for historical truth was moral utility. If a ruler, or even an ordinary citizen, could learn how to behave from a story, then it was in some sense history. The result of this view was that criticism, or even doubt, became difficult, largely because it was irrelevant" (14).

historians, without any distinctions between them as chroniclers, romancers, etc.[5]

The Middle Ages did not have the same concept of specific genres which modern readers use,[6] leading to further complications in our efforts to uncover medieval history. Modern readers make clear distinctions between romance and history, between fiction and fact, but this was not the case in the Middle Ages.[7] As Paul Strohm states,"a *romaunce* might indeed be explicitly historical" ("Storie" 355). Furthermore, fiction is composed within history, such as the use of created dialogue, and these creations thus add historical evidence of their own.[8] History was not an academic discipline, and the medieval sense of the past was found in legends, chronicles, and myths, all of which contained history for the Middle Ages.[9] It is an inescapable fact that medieval historians viewed a wide variety of materials as sources for their histories. I will examine the issue of source selection in chapter I with specific examples for each of the historians covered in this dissertation.

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[5] Blacker 3. See also Roger Ray, "Medieval Historiography through the Twelfth Century: Problems and Progress of Research," *Viator* 5 (1974): 33-59.

[6] A discussion of genre in the Middle Ages may be found in Mark Amsler, "Literary Theory and the Genres of Middle English Literature," *Genre* 13 (1980): 389-96 and Paul Strohm's articles, "Some Generic Distinctions in the *Canterbury Tales*," *Modern Philology* 68 (1971): 321-28; "The Origin and Meaning of Middle English *Romaunce*," *Genre* 10 (1977): 1-28; and "Storie, Spelle, Geste, Romaunce, Tragedie: Generic Distinctions in the Middle English Troy Narratives," *Speculum* 46 (1971): 348-59.

[7] Ray notes that "the medieval notion of history was quite suitable to a wide range of forms, including both the chronicle and poetry" (37).

[8] Paul Strohm, *Hochon's Arrow: The Social Imagination of the Fourteenth-Century Texts*, (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1992) notes that "fictionality should not be considered an embarrassment to a text's ultimate historicity" (4).

[9] Elizabeth Pochoda, *Arthurian Propaganda: "Le Morte Darthur" as an Historical Ideal of Life* (Chapel Hill, NC: U North Carolina P, 1971) 30.

It is important to remember that no matter what period is studied, there is always a difference between the past and the history written about that past. History, by necessity, must represent what historians claim the past to have been. Their representations will never give everything that happened, especially since much of the past has left no surviving traces.[10] Selection then becomes an inevitable tool, and each of the historians reveals differing ideas about the suitability of the materials he chooses. One of the main reasons that these Scottish historians wrote their histories was to present materials which they felt had been neglected, overlooked, distorted, or slighted by various English historians.

Each of the Scottish historians to be considered in this dissertation was writing after the major political event known as the Great Cause, whereby the succession to the throne of Scotland was arbitrated by Edward I. The relationship between the king of Scots and the king of England was a subject of heated political debates during the Middle Ages. As Scotland emerged from relative isolation near the end of the eleventh century, particularly because of the marriage of King Malcolm III to Edward the Confessor's great-niece Margaret in approximately 1070, the relationships between these two nations became closer and at times much more problematic.[11] Political, ecclesiastical, economic, and social issues were all at stake. Intermarriages involving both the royal family and many baronial houses resulted in an aristocracy whose members frequently held lands on

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[10] For a fuller discussion of this topic see James Wilkinson, "A Choice of Fictions: Historians, Memory, and Evidence" *PMLA* 111 (1996): 80-92.

[11] E. L. G. Stones, Introduction, *Anglo-Scottish Relations 1174-1328: Some Selected Documents*, ed. and trans. by E. L. G. Stones (London: Nelson, 1965) xiii-xliv.

both sides of the border. Scottish power moved south until David I (1124-53) was able to control Northumberland, Cumberland, and Westmoreland. This control did not continue after his reign, but the Scottish claims to power in this region caused political disputes until the claims were finally abandoned in 1237. The Scottish church was also trying to determine where its loyalties lay, as it did not have an archbishop of its own. The see of York attempted to claim authority over the church of Scotland, and in fact the papacy supported York's claim during the first half of the twelfth century. However, later, when the Scottish church was officially designated as a *filia specialis* of the Holy See, the papacy no longer supported York's claim. The change in the relationship between the church of Scotland and the papacy became vitally important during the hearing of the Great Cause, an adjudication in Edward I's court between claimants to the Scottish throne caused by Alexander III's premature death in 1286 and the subsequent death of his granddaughter, the Maid of Norway, in 1290.

The debate at the end of the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries over the Scottish succession, as well as the question of Scotland's independence from England, caused historians and politicians to search for historical evidence in order to decide the issue of Scotland's sovereignty. As Stones notes, the Middle Ages regarded the past as a "witness to unchanging inherent rights and obligations. Thus the records of the past could, if studied with sufficient care, provide a definite answer to any question of title, and one which was perpetually valid" (xix). Therefore, the role of historians and historical

documents became a very practical and political issue.[12] One of the main issues debated in the question of sovereignty was whether Scotland's king was in fact a vassal to the king of England. It is here that the history of Arthur becomes relevant, especially after Edward I uses Arthur's reign to support and indeed validate England's claim to an interest in the Scottish throne. In reply to the Bull of Pope Boniface VIII (1299) in which the pope insists that Edward I stop his war against Scotland because Scotland is "a land in which the pope says that the right belongs to himself" (Stones 81), Edward states in a "Letter sent to the court of Rome concerning the king's rights in the realm of Scotland" (1301) that

> Arthur, king of the Britons, a prince most renowned, subjected to himself a rebellious Scotland, destroyed almost the whole nation, and afterwards installed as king of Scotland one Angusel[13] by name. Afterwards, when King Arthur held a most famous feast at Caerleon, there were present there all the kings subject to him, and among them Angusel, king of Scotland, who manifested the service due for the realm of Scotland by bearing the sword of King Arthur before him; and in

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[12] R. James Goldstein, *The Matter of Scotland: Historical Narrative in Medieval Scotland* (Lincoln: U Nebraska P, 1993), notes that "historical writing played a constitutive role in the development of national consciousness in medieval Scotland and constituted a distinct literary tradition. Although a considerable body of historical writing survives from the Scottish Middle Ages, the effects of centuries of England's cultural and political hegemony have ensured that many important writers continue to suffer undue neglect" (6).

[13] R. S. Loomis, "Scotland and the Arthurian Legend," *Proceedings of the Scottish Antiquarian Society* 89 (1955-6): 1-21, notes that Angusel was "king of Albania, that is Scotland between Lothian and Moray" and that he was restored to his kingdom by Arthur (7).

succession all the kings of Scotland have been subject to all the kings of the Britons. (Stones 98)[14]

These claims concerning the homage owed by the Scottish kings to the English were raised frequently thereafter, even through the reign of Henry VIII. The issue of homage changed radically with the union of the crowns under James I, and eventually with the formal union of the parliaments in the eighteenth century Scotland lost its independence. However, Scotland's drive for independence has existed in various stages of activity down to the present. The issues which began with Edward I and his efforts to gather historical documents to be used as proof in political issues caused several Scottish historians to evaluate the existing histories and write their own. Scotland needed to have its own history told.

In this dissertation I examine six Scottish historians. I look at the works of John Fordun, Andrew Wyntoun, John Mair (also known as John Major), Hector Boece, George Buchanan, and John Leslie. Chapter I examines the backgrounds of each of these historians, looking at their choice of sources, their reasons for writing, and the historical

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[14]R. S. Loomis, "Edward I, Arthurian Enthusiast," *Speculum* 28: 114-27; *Studies in Medieval Literature: A Memorial Collection of Essays* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1970): 275-88, notes that while Edward I did use Arthur for political reasons, that "sentiment too was involved, and that in his cult of Arthur Edward was influenced by a vogue not exclusively English but shared by most of the aristocracies of Christendom in his day" (275). Michael Prestwich, *The Three Edwards: War and State in England 1272-1377* (London: Routledge, 1980), finds that Edward participated completely in the chivalric culture of the age, including appearing in tournaments. "He was a devotee of Arthurian legend, and had the reputed grave of Arthur and Guinevere at Glastonbury excavated. He held round-tables for his knights, and at one of his feasts a squire appeared disguised as the Loathly Damzel, a figure in Arthurian legend. Yet some of the king's actions were hardly in accord with chivalrous concepts" (37).

methods they used. I show just how each of these men viewed his role as historian. No matter how the field of historical theory may have changed over the centuries, and no matter how these histories would be viewed today, the men writing them saw them as history. It is important then to learn just how they viewed the task of an historian and what this term meant to each of these writers.

Chapter II focuses on the treatment of Arthur by each of these historians, detailing what information they give, what their probable sources were, what their attitudes are toward Arthur, and in what context the Arthurian material is found. I have chosen to focus on Arthur for this chapter in order to compare the treatment by the Scottish historians to their English counterparts in an attempt to discover more about why each of these historians wrote. The issue of selection and treatment of materials arises, and no two of these historians chose the same perspective for Arthur. An analysis of the treatment of Arthur will serve as a backdrop to the more recent portions of these histories as I continue to search for the purpose behind them.

Chapter III discusses the various users and uses of history, namely the social and political functions of these histories. Analysis of each of these historians will reveal information about the intended audience, the historical/political context at the time of writing, comparisons of the treatment of Arthur with modern kings, and the purposes which their histories were designed to serve. Specifically, I compare the treatment of Arthur and his period with the treatment of first William the Conqueror and then Edward I. These three kings were selected as they were all major non-Scottish kings who played a prominent part in both English and Scottish history. Further, William the Conqueror, like

Arthur, was a bastard who had to fight for the right to the crown. Edward I became king easily enough, but he is the monarch who first uses Arthur as a defense for his right to rule Scotland. He is also heavily involved in historical records, and in fact provides the motivation for the first of the Scottish historians, namely Fordun.

The conclusion provides a summary of the tasks of the historian, the views on Arthur, and the uses of history as seen by these six historians. I then argue that in spite of their different approaches, they each had the same overriding purpose for writing their history and that the fundamental reason for each of them was the same. They share a conviction that history must teach and inspire its readers to learn from the past in order to change the present and future. While this conviction on the part of these Scottish historians is not the only possible reason for the writing of history nor even unique to them, it does provide insight into just why these histories were written at this particular moment in Scotland's history, and why the Scottish historians felt so strongly that they had to write histories independent of those already in existence.

CHAPTER I

The Task and Role of the Historian

This chapter considers the background, sources, reasons for writing, and historical methods of six Scottish historians. John Fordun (ca. 1320 - ca. 1385), Andrew Wyntoun (ca. 1350 - ca. 1420), John Mair (ca. 1467 - 1550), Hector Boece (1465? - 1536), George Buchanan (1506 - 1582), and John Leslie (1526 - 1596) all wrote works designed to give the history of Scotland a fitting position within the field of historical writing. The goal of this chapter is to determine how each of these historians viewed his task and his role as historian.

John Fordun

The first of the Scottish historians to be considered is John of Fordun (ca. 1320 - ca. 1385). He was a cleric, possibly born in Fordun in Angus, and he wrote the first complete history of Scotland, his *Chronica gentis Scotorum* (ca. 1385), at about the same time that Barbour was writing the *Bruce*.[15] Very little is known about Fordun, except

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[15] Anne M. McKim, "'Gret Price Off Chewalry': Barbour's Debt to Fordun," *Studies in Scottish Literature* 24 (1989):7-29, discusses the possible relationship between these two authors, noting that Fordun was a priest in the Cathedral of Aberdeen where Barbour was archdeacon from 1357-95. Also, as Roger Mason, "Kingship, Tyranny and the Right to Resist in Fifteenth Century Scotland," *Scottish Historical Review* 66 (1987): 125-51,

what information he gives within his preface to the work. He traveled around Britain and Ireland, searching for historical documents, talking with historians and chroniclers until he was able to write his own history. He is the first writer to compile a complete history of Scotland. Before his work was written, Scottish history consisted only of short chronicles or lists of kings.[16] His work covers the period from the origins of Scotland to the death of David I in 1153. He had little evidence to draw upon, especially for the distant past, and had to use fragmentary scraps, such as the story of Gaythelos and Scota, as well as Geoffrey of Monmouth, classical historians, Bede, and monastic chronicles compiled in Scotland.[17] Fordun wrote his history in order to defend the nation of Scotland,[18] as demonstrated by his uncovering the origins of the Scots, which he felt Edward I was

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notes, the *Chronica Gentis Scotorum* was "designed to vindicate Scotland's historic and continuing independence. In this respect, it is a celebration of Scottish freedom not dissimilar to that found in John Barbour's *Bruce*. Contemporaries as they were, Fordun and Barbour were inspired by the same intensely patriotic motives." Barbour had one man as a focus for his work. Fordun's hero is "the Scottish royal line as a whole, a line stretching back into the mists of prehistory and by virtue of its very antiquity and continuity, proving once and for all that the kingdom of the Scots was and always had been a free and independent realm" (144-45).

[16] Most of the early lists of kings as well as many of the chronicles may be found printed in *Chronicles of the Picts, Chronicles of the Scots, and Other Early Memorials of Scottish History*, ed. W. F. Skene (Edinburgh: T. Constable, 1867). See also A. O. Anderson, *Early Sources of Scottish History* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1922) and A. O. Anderson, *Scottish Annals from English Chroniclers A.D. 500 to 1286* (London: David Nutt, 1908).

[17] Bruce Webster, *Scotland from the Eleventh Century to 1603* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1975) 18.

[18] Hans Utz, "Traces of Nationalism in Fordun's 'Chronicle'," *Scottish Studies* (Frankfurt-am-Main) 4 (1984): 139-49. Utz argues that Fordun's history "was to provide the 'gens Scotorum', the people of the Scots, with a history all its own, the pre-requisite of national identity" (139).

trying to suppress, and by his emphasis on the ancient liberty of the Scots.[19] It was Edward I's removal or destruction of Scottish records which sent Fordun "on an expedition into the meadows of Britain and the shrines of Ireland, through cities and towns, universities and colleges, churches and monasteries, speaking with historians and visiting chroniclers," examining their books and annals, until he satisfied himself through persistent investigation.[20]

Fordun's work consists of five books, as well as a series of annals which he probably intended to work into further chapters, but he died before he could complete the task. He had read Higden's *Polychronicon* and was familiar also with William of Malmesbury. In addition, he used the St. Andrews Register, which has since been lost. A list of its contents does survive, however, in B.L. Harleian MS. 4628, and it apparently consisted of 121 folios. Some of the documents which were to be found in this register included *Nomina regum Scotie et Pictorum*; *Genealogia regum Angliæ ab Henrico 2do., ascendendo ad Noah per matrem*; *Historia originis Scotorum ex Egypto ad Hispaniam, in Hiberniam, breviter inde in Britanniam; Et genealogia sancte Margarete uxoris Malcolmi;* and *Historia*.[21] Fordun also makes use of Giraldus Cambrensis as well as the

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[19] Webster 44-45.

[20] "in prato Britanniae et in oraculis Hiberniae, per civitates et oppida, per universitates et collegia, per ecclesias et coenobia, inter historicos conversans et inter chronographos perendinans, libros eorum annales contrectans et cum eis sapienter conferens et disputans, ac tabulis sive dipticiis quae sibi placuit intitulans, tali fatigabili investigatione" (Johannis de Fordun, xlix-l). Translation from Goldstein (*Matter* 107).

[21] William F. Skene, Preface, *Johannis de Fordun Chronica gentis Scotorum* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1871) xxxvi.

chronicle of Henry of Huntingdon.

Fordun's history was later expanded by Walter Bower (1385 - 1449), author of the huge *Scotichronicon*. Bower saw a need for a formal history written in Latin which would complete and continue Fordun. The *Scotichronicon* is an extensive history of Scotland, following Fordun closely for the first five books, but then expanding the briefer 'gesta annalia' into a history on the same scale as the rest by using material from other sources. Further, Bower adds non-Scottish history from the *Speculum Historiale* of Vincent of Beauvais, a widely-read universal history . He increased the length of his narrative by a great deal of moralizing as well as by the addition of details which are not found in Fordun or any other obvious source.[22] Bower's work will not be discussed here since the materials on Arthur, William the Conqueror, and Edward I come directly from Fordun.

Fordun wrote his *Chronica gentis Scotorum*, probably for a clerical audience, and various manuscripts survive containing his history. It is important to differentiate between Fordun's work, consisting of five books and part of a sixth written between 1384 and 1385, and the continuation of his work, including the addition of eleven books, written by someone born in 1385 and compiled between 1441 and 1447. According to William F. Skene's Preface to the Latin edition of Fordun, six of the extant manuscripts contain all sixteen books of the *Scotichronicon*. Another eight manuscripts have this same text in abridged or altered forms. Three manuscripts contain only the first five books. Three more manuscripts consist of parts transcribed from other manuscripts. It is these last two categories which seem to represent Fordun's original history most closely (xv-xxxi).

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[22] Webster 49.

However, the number of manuscripts which still survive attests to the popularity of Fordun's work.

Fordun wrote his history of Scotland so that he could counter the information about Scotland contained in or omitted from the histories already in existence.[23] After all, from at least one political perspective, Scotland has a longer history as an independent and unconquered country than any other nation in Europe. Fordun felt that this history deserved to be told. He also tried to counteract the effects of Edward I's seizure and removal of valuable historical documents.[24] His history is designed to emphasize the ancient liberty of the Scots, and Fordun plans to do for Scotland what Higden had done for England. His emphasis on Scottish liberty is present from the beginning of the work. When Gaythelos and his people leave Spain and sail to an island, they attack the inhabitants, gaining victory. Gaythelos stresses the importance of taking the island, exhorting his sons to "accept the gift the gods offer you, and go without delay to the island prepared for you, where you shall be able to live noble and free" (14).[25] Hyber, Gaythelos's son, leads his people upon the death of his father, taking them to the island,

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[23] Goldstein notes that when Fordun began his history "there had been no previous attempt to chronicle in detail the entire history of the Scottish nation. Although Fordun died before completing the task, his unfinished work nonetheless stands as one of the greatest achievements of historical writing in medieval Scotland" (*Matter* 104).

[24] Edward I not only seized documents, but also "ordered the monks to engage in a critical *reading* of their chronicles to separate what was pertinent to his political project from what was irrelevant. . .The king, in other words, had evidently assigned a specific meaning to the chronicle texts in advance of their actual reading: only those passages that established his 'right' in Scotland must be selected" (Goldstein, *Matter* 59).

[25] Fordun is cited by page number from Skene's translation.

later named Hibernia after him. Fordun stresses that the Scots began in a place even better than the Britons did, and he proves this by quoting Bede:

> Hibernia is the largest island of all, next to Britain, and is situated to the west of it. But as it is shorter than Britain towards the north, so, on the other hand, stretching out far beyond its confines to the south, it reaches as far as opposite the north of Spain, although a great sea lies between them. But this island much excels Britain, both in being broader and in the wholesomeness and serenity of its climate. (15)

Thus, Fordun begins his work with a clear emphasis on the independence of the Scottish people and their advantages over the Britons. The political implications of this emphasis will be explored later.

The way in which Fordun uses his sources may be seen from the opening of his work where he gives an account of Greece and Egypt, because "we gather from various writings of old chroniclers that the nation of the Scots, one of most ancient descent, sprang from the Greeks, and from the Egyptians who survived the overthrow of their fellow-countrymen and king in the Red Sea" (1). Fordun is thus able to begin his history of Scotland with an accounting of the origins of the world, of the Biblical division of the continents between Noah's three sons, and the division of the time from the beginning of the world to the birth of Christ into five ages. While this introductory material is short, it does serve to set the history of Scotland firmly into ancient traditions. Once again, Fordun's efforts to prove Scotland's pre-eminence are evident from the beginning of his work. As he describes Europe, and comes to the details surrounding the largest of Europe's islands, he says that "its northern portion, in like manner, being inhabited by

Scots from an early period, was called Scotia; and it is now, by the help of God, the chief kingdom of the island" (5).

Fordun makes use of specific authorities by name, demonstrating his desire to authenticate his information and inform his readers of his sources. Isidore is his source for the origins of the earth, while for Europe he uses Ptolemy. Fordun demonstrates clearly how he pulls together information from a variety of sources in his efforts to discover the true history in his description of the origin of the Scots. First, he uses one chronicle which tells how all Egypt was overrun by Ethiopians and how Gaythelos was sent to aid the Pharaoh. Then, he reads in *The Legend of St. Brandan* that a certain Gaythelos was the son of a Greek warrior, and that further he had married the daughter of the Egyptian Pharaoh. Her name was Scota, from whom the Scots derived their name. Finally, Fordun uses yet another chronicler who tells how Gaythelos was unwilling to reign by right of succession and so left his country with a band of followers, arriving in Egypt and eventually marrying the Pharaoh's only daughter Scota. Fordun dates these events in chapter 10, as "three hundred and thirty years before the taking of Troy, seven hundred and sixty years before the building of Rome, in the year 1510 B.C." (8), placing the origin of the Scots considerably earlier than the origin of the Britons.[26] Fordun is able to weave information from these three sources into a coherent account. When Fordun's sources disagree, he presents the data from them and then uses a variety of approaches.

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[26] Goldstein notes that "Scottish clerics evidently developed the Scota legend in the early medieval period to help unify the kingdom during the ascendancy of the house of Kenneth mac Alpin, and to counter the Anglocentric interpretation of history introduced by Bede" (*Matter* 118).

Sometimes he merely leaves it to the reader to decide which account or information to follow. Other times, he concludes with remarks such as "such is Geoffrey's account" (19). And finally, he lets the test of time prove the validity of an idea, as is seen when he says "and this, as common belief asserts to this day, proved true" (24) Whenever possible, Fordun tries to find a way to reconcile discrepancies, as may be seen when Fordun notes that "divers ancient histories of the nation teach" that Scotia was inhabited by two nations "whilst, however, some maintain" that the Scots reigned for many years before the Picts arrived. Fordun continues by saying "but even in this, even if they had arrived in the island simultaneously, do histories by no means so much disagree" (28) since in fact the Picts did not have kings, but rather judges, for at least two hundred years. Fordun deals very clearly with the problems of discrepancies among historical sources when he says:

> Verily, they do differ. But histories do not hold consistent language, either one way or the other; for, frequently, in the very same work, various passages are intermingled with others of contrary import, so that clauses incompatible with each other are sometimes inserted even in the same chapter. Although, however, discrepancies of this sort are very often found in chronicles, they should by no means be imputed to their skillful, nay, holy authors, who have taken care to write their histories in strict conformity with truth, and with an unswerving regard for their original authorities; but, rather, to transcribers of a rival nation, by whose envy, lest the power of adjoining kingdoms should be strengthened, certain chronicles are entirely perverted, corrupted, violated, and, very often, indiscreetly so changed that the assertion of one chapter seems to annul the purport of the

> next. But, in truth, whatever variations of this sort, in the definition of the boundaries of Britannia, may be found in histories, through the fault of transcribers, the common opinion of modern time is that the whole of Albion was called Britannia, from Brutus, who only colonized its southern regions. (33-34)

This passage is very important in discovering Fordun's views of historical writing. It demonstrates his views on the accuracy of his sources, and also reflects one of his prime reasons for writing his own history of Scotland. He finds that the history of Scotland has been perverted by transcribers of a "rival nation," and he corrects those errors. He attempts to discern the truth, what existed in the chronicles before the transcribers changed it. Another important point to notice from this passage is Fordun's belief in the need for the historian to have a strict regard for truth. Fordun himself writes his account of Scotland using the highest degree of accuracy possible, and he endeavors not to make the errors of past transcribers. He tells his readers that he is writing the truth in as far as he is able to find it, and he does not hesitate to let his readers know when he cannot find his way through the discrepancies within his various sources.

In fact, Fordun does run into further difficulties with his sources, and this is most evident in his accounts of the early history of Scotland.[27] The early history, before 850, as

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[27] Information concerning these early sources is uncertain. Marjorie Ogilvie Anderson, "The Lists of the Kings," *Scottish Historical Review* 28 (1949): 108-18, concludes that "most of our lists of kings of the Scots, including all the certain kings of the Scots earlier than Kenneth Alpin's son, are clearly derived from one common ancestor" (108). Anderson then discusses these early kings and our sources of information concerning them, including Fordun and Wyntoun's probable sources in detail in *Kings and Kingship in Early Scotland* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1973). John L. Roberts, *Lost Kingdoms: Celtic Scotland and the Middle Ages* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1997), notes further that the information on the Picts and their kings is very difficult to locate. "Our

presented by the ancient authorities, tells of a Pictish monarchy in the eastern and northern districts of Scotland, and a colony of Scots from Ireland forming in the sixth century the small kingdom of Dalriada in the west. The Scottish clergy were expelled from the Pictish territories in 717. Alpin, the last king of Dalriada, tried to mount the Pictish throne in 726, but Dalriada was conquered by the Picts in 736, and was ruled for a century by princes partly of Pictish race. The final union of both kingdoms under a king of the Scottish race occurred in the year 850. However, later chroniclers disagree with the most ancient histories, and it is the later chroniclers whom Fordun uses in his effort to give a complete history of Scotland from the earliest times, just as Higden had done for England. He therefore runs into difficulties with the lists of kings, difficulties which he is unable to solve. It is not known precisely what sources Fordun knew or how he selected the ones he did use, but his frequent complaints about the lack of sources would seem to indicate that he did not have a lot of choice. Not only were sources for medieval Scottish history scarce, but they were not comprehensive or straightforward to use. More often than not they have been placed directly into a reconstruction of the past.[28] But these sources are

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knowledge of the Picts is fragmentary in the extreme. They left no written records apart from a king-list in Latin, known rather grandly as the Pictish Chronicle, of which only very late copies survive, dating from the tenth century at the earliest" (5).

[28] See Lister M. Matheson, "A Great Divide: Historical Principles in Early and Middle Scots Literature," *Celtic Connections,* ed. David Lampe, *Acta* 16 (Binghamton: The Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1993 [for 1989]): 73-97, for a discussion of the effects of the scarcity of reliable sources on the writing of medieval histories. When few sources were available, the result was two-fold, producing both "an unusual respect for the written word and a willingness to accept hearsay evidence" and a "tendency to be all-inclusive, to include all that one could find, no matter how reliable the source" (82).

not direct accounts of the history of Scotland. Each one has a particular approach which needs to be understood.[29] Fordun may not have had access to the earliest sources, which have been uncovered by later historians. Conversely, he would probably have known sources which are now lost. He also would have lacked any tools for deciding which of the conflicting sources was most accurate. In all likelihood, Fordun was forced to use one or more of the later listings of kings, where names had been duplicated to fill in obvious gaps.

In addition to the question of sources, it appears that Fordun always applies the word Scotia to Scotland, resulting in the assimilation into his history of events which sometimes belong to Ireland. This means that he has an early settlement for the Scots in Scotland which should be in Ireland. While Fordun's early accounts have difficulties with sources and accuracy, according to Skene, his work beginning with the reign of Kenneth mac Alpin is very accurate and has served as an authoritative account for more modern historians. In spite of his difficulties with sources, Fordun's efforts to be a reliable and accurate historian are consistent throughout his work, and he tries hard to reconcile various disparate accounts.

Therefore, it is possible to conclude that Fordun made every effort to write what he felt to be a true and accurate history of Scotland. He felt the need for an honest accounting of Scottish history, which he found to be lacking in any existing histories. He places the Scots firmly within the ancient traditions, beginning his work with the account of the founding of Scotland designed to balance the founding of Britain by Brutus. He

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[29] For the problematic nature of these narrative sources, see Webster 57.

stresses the longevity of the Scottish nation and its continued tradition of freedom and independence from outside forces. He cites his sources freely, and often, and when he comes upon discrepancies or differences among his sources, he does his best to acknowledge the difficulties and guide his readers through them. If he can find no solution, then he leaves the final determination to his readers, after presenting all his available information. He continually reaffirms his own efforts to record the truth, and stresses that the responsibility for reporting historical truth belongs not only to him, but to his sources as well. While errors, either deliberate or accidental, may exist in transcriptions, the original historians were acting in good faith, recording the past as truthfully as he himself is doing.

Andrew Wyntoun

Andrew Wyntoun (ca.1350 - ca.1420) wrote the *Orygynal Cronykil of Scotland* (ca. 1420), a verse chronicle tracing the history of Scotland from its origins to 1408. Very little is known about Wyntoun. His own preface lets the reader know that he was a canon of the Augustinian priory of St. Andrews, and that he became prior of St. Serf's Inch around 1393. Wyntoun's work differs from Fordun's, not only because it is a verse chronicle written in the vernacular, but also because Wyntoun attempted to write a world history, fitting Scotland's history into a larger chronology. However, especially from 1286 on, his *Cronykil* becomes a description of the Scottish wars against the English. Wyntoun specifically cites Barbour's *Bruce* as his reason for dealing lightly with the reign of Robert

I, since his readers could get that information directly from Barbour. From then on, he writes a full and exciting account of the wars of the fourteenth century, always stressing the achievements of the Scots and glorifying their struggle against the English.

Wyntoun begins with the origins of the world, hence the use of *Orygynal* in his title, and continues with various geographical and historical materials using such diverse sources as Homer, Virgil, Ovid, Dares, Horatius, Guido, Barbour, and the Bible. His readers learn of Noah and the flood, Daedalus, the foundation of Rome, Samson and Delilah, Amazon women, the Spartans and Leonidas, and much more. Wyntoun puts events in chronological perspective so that his readers discover that event A took place at the same time as event B. Wyntoun, unlike Fordun, was not able to travel widely searching for sources, and in fact, he complains about his scanty sources. Furthermore, many of those that he did find are not recognizable to us now. Many medieval chroniclers simply copied their Latin authorities, but Wyntoun was not content with just copying. He is also a translator, and sometimes he abridges his sources, while at other times he expands upon them.

Wyntoun uses the *Origo Mundi* of Honorius of Autun for his descriptions of Asia, Africa, and Europe, which are in book I of the *Cronykil*, and at the end of his descriptions Wyntoun tells his readers that

> Qwhat I haf mysdon in my spel
>
> Ymago Mundi can weil tel. (I: 1413-14)[30]

Wyntoun never hesitates to refer his readers to his original sources, and he reminds them

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[30] Wyntoun is cited by book and line numbers.

in his prologue that he may not be the most skillful of writers, but that he has been asked to write this work by Sir John Wemyss of Leuchars,[31] so he will do his best:

> Suppose this treatise simpilly
>
> I maid at the instance of a larde
>
> That has my seruice in his warde,
>
> Schir Iohne of Wemys be rycht name. (I: 54-57)

Wyntoun also used the St. Andrews Register, and his other sources include Martinus Polonus, Geoffrey of Monmouth, Aelred of Rievaulx, Henry of Huntingdon, and Barbour's *Brute*, a work which is now lost.

Wyntoun, like Fordun, saw a real need to have Scottish history told and for Wyntoun, it was necessary not only to give Scottish history, but to set it into the framework of world history so that Scotland could be seen in the context of the rest of the world. Wyntoun is doing this to justify and glorify Scotland, but he in no way sees that as undermining his honesty as a historian. Rather, once his history has been written, Scotland's true place in the course of events will be recognized. Wyntoun organizes his work into nine books. He opens with creation and it is not until the second book that there is any extensive mention of Scottish history, although the genealogy of ancient Scottish kings beginning with the section from Noah to Gedil-Glays "that had weddit Scota ȝynge,/ Pharoaos douchtir of Egipte kynge" appears in the first book (I: 1439-40). Descriptions of Scottish geography do appear early in the work in the section on

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[31] Details concerning Sir John Wemyss may be found in Sir William Fraser, *Memorials of the Family of Wemyss of Wemyss*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh, 1888) I: 47-55.

European geography, and there is reference to the language of the Picts and Scots as well, but only in passing within a more general discussion (I: 1375-82). Because Wyntoun chooses the approach of a world chronology, he ends up with the genealogy of Scottish kings done in parts, fitting it into the overall chronology.

Wyntoun's organization effectively puts the history of Scotland in the middle of other well-known events. For example, in book II Wyntoun begins with Ninius, King of Babylon, followed by the stories of Abraham and Isaac, the inhabitants of Rhodes, back to Joseph and then Moses in Egypt, before getting to the story of the origin of the Scots. Once the origin of the Scots has been told, including their coming out of Ireland to Scotland, Wyntoun returns to world history by narrating the events surrounding the King of Persia. Again, in book IV Wyntoun begins with the founding of Rome by Romulus and Remus. He then moves on to discuss Cyrus and Darius in Babylon, before discussing the Scots and the Picts. Next come discussions of Alexander the Great followed by Hannibal and the Carthaginians' attack on Rome, in the middle of which Wyntoun goes back to discuss the Picts in Scotland. More world history follows, until book VI again takes up the matter of the war between the Scots and the Picts for one chapter before returning to Charlemagne. However, beginning with book VI, the emphasis becomes more and more focused on Scotland and England, with very little if any world history given in the last books. This would seem to indicate that the reason for the early emphasis on the world chronology was to ensure that early Scottish history was firmly set in the distant past, bringing authenticity to the longevity of the Scottish nation and its independence from England. The political motivation behind this desire to document Scottish early history

will be discussed below.

Wyntoun transcribes and translates his various sources, giving full and generous credit to them. Sometimes his references are general, such as "accordand cronyclis sais" (I: 30). Other times Wyntoun will give a precise source, mentioning the author or work by name. When his sources differ, Wyntoun comments by saying:

Awtouris seyr in thar storice

Opponyonys haldis on syndry wyse (I: 1489-90),

indicating that there is some divergence in the sources he is using.

Wyntoun carefully acknowledges his authorities, and in fact the impression which Wyntoun leaves with his readers is that he is a faithful and ardent historian, solid, thoroughly capable, and shrewd. Further, he is scrupulous in his own pursuit of accuracy, showing few lapses, and yet he is a charitable critic of the historical errors of the authors he followed.[32] For example, when Wyntoun finds problems reconciling some of his sources, he says that

I fynd ay sum discrepans,

That I am nocht of sufficians

For to ger thame all accord;

Bot sympilly for to record. (II: 901-904)

He then leaves it to his readers to cope with the problem. He does not criticize the sources or find that some must be inaccurate. He concludes only that he himself does not

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[32] F. J. Amours, Introduction, *The Original Chronicle of Andrew Wyntoun*, 6 vols. (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1903-14) xl.

have sufficient knowledge or information to reconcile the discrepancies. When Wyntoun finds difficulties with the accounts of the genealogies of the Scottish kings, he finally decides the problem is too hard to decide, and after explaining the difficulties he concludes

> Giff othir, of mare sufficians,
>
> Can fynde bettyr accordance,
>
> This buk at likyn thai may mende. (IV: 1147-49)

He does not seem to doubt the accuracy of the historical accounts, but nevertheless he cannot resolve the discrepancies.[33]

Wyntoun has difficulties again with the early history of Scotland, especially with the time spent in Ireland and the exact moment when the Scots actually arrived in Scotland. He narrates first what he finds in Barbour's *Brute*, a work referred to by Fordun as well, but which no longer exists. Then, Wyntoun follows this account with the statement that "other auctouris seyr" (II: 791) give different facts and that these authors actually "tretis part of this mater" (II: 791). The differences are presented before Wyntoun goes on to say:

> I will nocht thir opinionis all
>
> Contrare, for thai may weill fall;
>
> Bot it is doutwise be the dait

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[33] See W. A. Craigie, "Wyntoun's 'Original Chronicle,'" *The Scottish Review* 30 (1897): 33-54, for a detailed discussion of Wyntoun's efforts to resolve the insurmountable problems he found in the lists of kings. Craigie notes that the problem began "long before the days of either Fordun or Wyntoun, [when] it had been contrived that the Scottish monarchy should begin some centuries before Christ, so as to out-distance the claims of England" (35).

That cronyclaris befor me wrait,

And vthir incedentis seire

According part to this mater.

Bot quhether it be, or vthir wayis

Than all thir autouris befor me sayis,

For certane ȝe sall vnderstand

That out of Spanȝe in till Irland

The Scottis come, that to this day

Has it and Scotland haldin ay. (II: 831-41)

This is another technique for dealing with discrepancies. Wyntoun finds variations within his sources for early Scottish history, but he also discovers that overall, the story is the same. Whatever the reader makes of the individual variations which Wyntoun presents, the overall effect is still the same, and this is what Wyntoun urges his readers to focus on.

The effort which Wyntoun makes to account for discrepancies again demonstrates that he takes his job as historian seriously, determined to present true accounts in as far as he is able. Wyntoun cites his sources and uses the names of his authorities whenever he can in order to prove his 'soothfastness.' The authenticity of Wyntoun's work would not be doubted by his readers, since everything Wyntoun does demonstrates his desire to search for the truth among the historical records, and place the history of Scotland within the context of a wider history.

Wyntoun, no doubt intended his history to be read by other clerics. However, unlike his fellow cleric, Fordun, Wyntoun writes the *Orygynal Cronykil of Scotland* in the

vernacular, and so it is possible that he intended it to be read by a lay audience as well. The fact that he has chosen to write in verse may also indicate that he intended for his work to be recited by bards, thus reaching a potentially larger audience.[34] His history consists of about thirty thousand lines. In spite of this length, it has survived in at least nine manuscripts, attesting to its popularity.[35]

Therefore, it may be concluded that Wyntoun set out to write a complete history of the world, focusing on Scotland, in an effort to place Scottish history within an overall context and justify Scotland's right to a prominent place in world history.[36] Furthermore, as the history progresses, it is obvious that Wyntoun is really concerned with the relationship between England and Scotland, and he wishes to be sure that early Scottish history is set forth as clearly and completely as early English history. While Wyntoun intends to glorify Scotland in his world history, he also works diligently at presenting a true and honest accounting of his information. The truth of Scottish history will result in a

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[34] R. James Goldstein, "'For he wald vsurpe na fame': Andrew of Wyntoun's Use of the Modesty *Topos* and Literary Culture in Early Fifteenth-century Scotland," *Scottish Literary Journal* 14 (1987): 5-18, discusses the reading of Wyntoun saying that "Wyntoun's chronicle would not have been restricted to those able to read Scots. It is salutary to remember that in the Middle Ages, even such long works as the *Orygynale Cronykil* were often read aloud, as Andrew indicates in his occasional addresses to a listening, as well as a reading, public" (5).

[35] Craigie notes that "while the *Legends* exist in only one copy, and the *Bruce* in two, there are at least eight of Wyntoun which have a respectable antiquity (15th and 16th centuries), besides several later transcripts. This is an almost unique supply of material for fixing the text of an old Scottish work" (34). Goldstein notes that "the popularity of his [Wyntoun's] *Orygynale Cronykil of Scotland* is well attested to by its survival in nine manuscripts" ("'For he wald vsurpe na fame'," 5).

[36] See Grace G. Wilson, "Andrew of Wyntoun: More Than Just 'That Dreich Clerk,'" *Scotia* 10 (1986): 1-14 for a discussion of Wyntoun as historian.

proper evaluation of Scotland. When Wyntoun runs into discrepancies which he cannot resolve, he lets his readers know this. He has written his account in much the same spirit as Fordun wrote his. Wyntoun's history is considerably longer and of wider scope than Fordun's, but the aims and purposes are very similar.

John Mair

John Mair (ca.1467 - 1550) was born near Berwick and studied at Cambridge and Paris, where he received the degree of Doctor of Theology in 1505. He remained in Paris for twelve or thirteen years after graduation, becoming one of the most famous professors of theology, as well as logic and philosophy, of his time. Mair was in Paris during the height of the French Renaissance, a period of an intense revival of learning. This was a period when "France was both on political and educational grounds the natural resort of the Scottish student ambitious of carrying his studies to the highest point and sure of a hospitable reception from a nation which had never forgotten the ancient bonds that united Scotland and France." [37] In 1518 Mair finally returned to Scotland, at the urging of Gavin Douglas, among others. He became principal regent of the College and Paedagogium of Glasgow [i.e., the University of Glasgow] as well as canon of the Chapel Royal at Stirling and vicar of Dunlop, proving that he must have taken orders, although he devotes himself to the educational side of his ministerial duties. He lectured on scholastic logic and theology at Glasgow and St. Andrews from 1518 to 1525, when he returned to Paris.

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[37] Æneas J. G. Mackay, "Life of the Author," *A History of Greater Britain as well England as Scotland*, by John Major, Archibald Constable, trans. (Edinburgh: University P, 1892) xl.

Mair taught and published in Paris before returning to St. Andrews in 1531 to resume his lectures on theology. However, the productive years of his academic life had ended with his return to Scotland. This was possibly the result of an enfeebled old age, but also in part because of the political climate in Scotland which was "not favourable to the calm production or revision of philosophical or theological commentaries. The time for contemplation had passed, the time for action had come. Major was not a man of action."[38]

John Mair's *Historia Majoris Britanniae tam Angliae quam Scotiae* (1521), written in Latin and probably intended primarily for clerics, presents an interrelated history of Scotland and England with surprisingly little nationalistic bias. He clearly demonstrates a critical and impartial spirit in his analysis of the histories of both Scotland and England. He was a theologian writing history and by the time he published his *History of Greater Britain*, he had become an advocate of the union between Scotland and England, assuming that geographical units should be treated as historical units. He continually emphasized his point that there could be no chance of a permanent peace between two neighboring nations of such spirit as the Scots and English, except in the union of the crowns by way of intermarriage. Mair's history also omitted many of the fables and even rejected the story that the Scottish kings were descended from Scota. Instead, Mair follows the information in Bede, stating that Britain was originally inhabited by Britons who had had their origin in Armorica in Gaul. Mair says that this is evident from the fact that the early Britons "speak the primitive tongue, and the Britons of Armorica in Gaul understand this

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[38] Mackay cvi.

tongue" (17). Then, the Picts "invaded the island, and made of it two kingdoms--of the Picts, namely, and the Britons. Following the Pictish invasion came that of the Irish Scots" (17). Throughout all of this analysis, based primarily on languages, Mair maintains that in fact, everyone born on the island, whether descended from other foreign origins or not, are Britons. "I say, therefore, that all men born in Britain are Britons, seeing that on any other reasoning Britons could not be distinguished from other races; since it is possible to pass from England to Wales, and from Scotland by way of England to Wales, dryshod, there would otherwise be no distinction of races" (18). Therefore, Mair has set up right from the beginning a basis for his belief in the union of the crowns, and he has made no reference to either the Scottish or English origin stories, stories which would give credence to separate identities, causing divisiveness.

Had Mair's *History* become more widely known, European historiography might have been radically changed. He was the first Renaissance historian in Scotland and his history demonstrates the critical spirit of the Renaissance. For example, he distrusts the evidence from English chronicles for their prejudice against Scots and demonstrates doubt about much of the remoter past as it appeared in Fordun.[39] However, even though the sixteenth century saw the beginnings of critical scholarship such as that demonstrated by Mair, it also contained much of the fantastic, and Mair did not make much headway against the more popular conceptions of history as written by Boece and later Buchanan.

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[39] Webster comments that Mair's "approach to history had a good deal of the critical spirit of the Renaissance about it. His *Historia Maioris Britanniae*, published in Paris in 1521, rightly distrusted the evidence of the English chronicles which he thought were often prejudiced against the Scots; and he showed a very reasonable scepticism about much of the remoter past as it appeared in Fordun" (19).

After all, the stories of descent from Trojans or Greeks were points of national honor.[40]

Mair uses a variety of sources, both historical and theological, which he is careful to acknowledge. He obviously respects and has confidence in John Scotus Erigena, John Duns Scotus, and especially Bede. He also uses Ninian as well as early chroniclers. He refers to Geoffrey of Monmouth and he is highly critical of Caxton, whom he seems at times to credit with having written the works which he printed.[41] Mair had also read Robert Gaguin's *Compendium super Francorum Gestis*, which is written in much the same spirit as Mair's history and may indeed have been a model for him.[42] Mair uses many more sources, but in each case he attempts to evaluate the accuracy of the source and to establish the truth when accounts differ.

Mair opens his work by saying that:

> in few words, and in the manner almost of the theologians, I am about to write an account of Britain, by far the most famous of islands, and one which, in the opinion

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[40] A full discussion of these issues surrounding the beginnings of critical scholarship may be found in Webster, pp. 18-19.

[41] Archibald Constable, Editor's Preface, *A History of Greater Britain as Well England as Scotland* by John Major, ed. Archibald Constable (Edinburgh: U Edinburgh P, 1892) xvii-xxvii, notes that it is not strange that Mair has nothing to say about the invention of printing or Caxton as a printer, since the importance of printing was not fully recognized. However, Mair's dislike of Caxton seems to stem from the fact that he credited him with being the author of the works which he printed. Mair's using the terms "Anglus Chronographus" and "historicus Anglus" indicate that Caxton "was believed by him to be the original writer of that work, and not merely the printer, and perhaps the editor of Trevisa's translation of the old *Chronicle of Brut*" (xxiii). See Lister M. Matheson, "Printer and Scribe: Caxton, the *Polychronicon*, and the *Brut*," *Speculum* 60 (1985): 593-614 for a complete analysis of Caxton's printing of Trevisa and the prose *Brut*.

[42] Mackay lxxv.

> of illustrious writers, may be reckoned even by itself as a second world. I shall treat first of the reason of its name, then in general terms of the kingdoms of which it is composed, and last of all I shall deal at length with those kingdoms and their special history. (1)

Mair dedicates his work to James the Fifth, King of Scots, offering "the homage that is due to his King" (Preface cccciii). In his preface Mair addresses three areas of his history which had been criticized, namely that he should seek a patron for his work, that a theologian should write history, and that his style is more suited to a theologian than an historian. In answering these criticisms Mair is able to articulate his reasons for writing history as well as his views on the nature of history. He does not want to be a chronicler, but rather he sees history as a source of practical lessons.

Mair discusses the precedents involved in dedicating an historical work to a patron, in his case James V, saying that his critics claim that any such dedication puts the historian in the position of a flatterer rather than a teller of truths. Further, these critics note that none of the ancient historians, such as Sallust and Livy, dedicated their works, and Mair admits that he has "never read any dedication made by them, whether because they observed no such use, or because these have come to be lost in lapse of time, as has befallen so many other things" (cxxxiii-cxxxiv). Here, Mair seems to recognize that materials have been lost over time, and as an historian he may not have all the sources he needs. Also, dedications may not have been appropriate for these historians. Sallust, for instance, lived and wrote before the time of the Roman emperors. Mair is dedicating his work to his own king, as an expression of his natural and just homage. However, Mair

does note that almost all of the poets, who wrote histories as well, have dedicated their poems to princes, and that theologians such as Jerome, Augustine, and even England's own Bede, had dedications. Indeed, Mair states that "almost all the rest of the ecclesiastical historians" had dedications. He is obviously indicating his admiration for these historians, especially Bede, whom he will cite frequently as a source, as well as his intentions of following their examples.

Mair also notes that his critics are against the dedication of a work to a particular person because "he who seeks for a patron must put on the mask of a flatterer rather than that of a historian, whose first law it is to write the truth" (cxxxiii). In order to avoid any charges of flattery, however, Mair says that he has "left untouched, to be dealt with by other hands, matters of most recent date" (cxxxiv). Possibly this is an indication that an historian needs to be able to distance himself from the materials he writes about, and that it is not appropriate for him to comment or write about current events. Earlier historians, such as Fordun and Wyntoun, had held similar views. There is also the assumption that the historian's first duty is to write the truth. Mair will use all of his analytical powers to determine the validity and accuracy of his sources. The new Renaissance spirit of learning which he absorbed in France will enable him to write a history very different from the earlier ones written by Fordun and Wyntoun.[43]

The second objection to Mair's history, namely that of criticizing a theologian for writing history, Mair deals with by saying that "if it is the special province of a theologian to lay down definitions in regard to faith, and religion, and morals, I will not believe that I

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[43] Levy discusses fully the changes in historical thinking at this time.

transgress when I narrate not only what has come to pass, or by whose counsel such and such matters were carried, but if I also make distinct definition whether these matters were carried rightly or wrongly" (cxxxiv). Mair feels that he is providing a real service in writing his history so that his readers may "learn not only the thing that was done, but also how it ought to have been done, and that you may by this means and at the cost of little reading come to know what the experience of centuries, if were granted to you to live so long, could scarcely teach" (cxxxiv-cxxxv). This view of history as moral theology not only is used as justification for a theologian writing history, but it also will require that Mair do more than merely presenting his sources. He will have to analyze the information in his sources to determine if the decisions were right or wrong. In addition he will have to find a way to justify the information which he presents. Mair's views on history are very consistent with the methods he uses for examining and analyzing his materials, as will be demonstrated later.

Mair then concludes his preface by addressing the criticisms dealing with his style, which his critics state should have been more cultivated. However, Mair says that if

> one should give what would be almost a Latin turn to the names of our own people and places, scarcely would we that were born in Scotland understand what was meant. And in as much as our princes have ever aimed rather to act nobly than to speak elegantly, so with those who have given themselves to the pursuit of knowledge it is of more moment to understand aright, and clearly to lay down the truth of any matter, than to use elegant and highly-coloured language. (cxxxv)

He then cites the examples of his predecessors, namely Erigena, Duns Scotus, Bede,

Alcuin, and "a hundred more, who, when they first learned Greek and Latin, chose rather so to write that they needed not an interpreter than with a curious research of language" (cxxxv). Clearly, Mair is indicating that the purpose of his history is to convey truth, so that his readers may understand what happened in the past, and hopefully avoid such mistakes in the future. He is more interested in the pursuit of knowledge than in achieving a "more cultivated style." It is true, however, that what Mair terms his use of an inelegant or unfashionable Latin style did not help his popularity, anymore than did his omission of the Scota story.

In answering these three objections to his history and the way in which it was written, Mair clearly lays out his own guidelines. He determines that his history must deal with truth, and that he has a responsibility to give his readers accounts of what actually happened. He finds that he must write his history in a clear, straightforward language which his readers will be able to understand, and which will not obscure the truth he is narrating. Finally, he decides that he has a responsibility to comment upon the events of the past so that he does more than the chronicler who recounts events only. Mair feels a moral commitment to his readers to explain how things "ought to have been done." In this way his history is designed to guide his readers so that they might learn from the mistakes of the past in a way which otherwise would not have been possible.

After addressing the three objections which had been made about his history, Mair begins with an accounting of the origin of the name Britain, and in so doing he begins not only his history but also his evaluation of his sources. From the moment he commences his history, Mair demonstrates his desire for the truth and his ability to evaluate his

sources. He begins by noting that "our ancestors call Britain by the name of Albion" (1). He gives Caxton's account of the origin of this name, saying "of the origin of this name Caxton, the English chronicler, gives the following visionary account" (1) and then evaluates the "visionary" account. Mair concludes that Caxton's account seems "to me partly fabulous--he found a handle for his fiction in the story of the children of Aegyptus and Danae--partly ridiculous, and partly to have some connection with historical fact" (2).

Mair lets his readers know immediately why he finds this account fabulous and ridiculous. He evaluates the information for his readers beginning with the fact that he does not believe that one woman could have thirty-three daughters, "for where shall you find three-and-thirty-daughters born of one woman," each of whom would slay her husband, and then when set adrift would not perish. "How shall you believe that these slew every one her husband; and that, set adrift, without so much as an oar, on a boundless ocean, they did not utterly perish?" Mair also discounts the statement that "a demon, whether succubus or incubus, should have been able to convey from foreign shores any seed that should still retain its potency, when the ocean lay between" (2-3). He concludes that the name of Albion can be more accurately accounted for by other writers who attribute the name to the white headlands of the island.

However, Mair then goes on to say that "what Caxton says of Brutus, on the other hand, has a historical foundation; for it is the opinion of most writers that Britain takes its name from Brutus" (3). Mair then gives statements by Geoffrey of Monmouth as well as Caxton to substantiate his account of the naming of Britain, but in the end, he concludes that the truth of the name is probably best explained by Bede. Bede says that the name

came from "an Aremoric tribe of Gauls, which first of all inhabited the southern part of the island; for which reason the island was called Britain by that Gallic tribe, and not contrariwise" (4).[44] Thus, Mair has presented all the evidence which he can gather concerning an event, namely the origin of the island's name. Further, he has evaluated the evidence insofar as he is able, and then finally he gives his own conclusions, saying "let this then suffice as to the name of the island. I follow the opinion of the Venerable Bede, among British historians chief" (4). This opening chapter, along with the arguments in the preface, sets the tone for the entire history, and Mair lets his readers know that he will present all the evidence he can concerning historical events, and that this evidence will be carefully evaluated.

Mair begins his work in the same tradition as earlier historians, giving the accounting of the name, followed by descriptions of the island along with geographical details. He uses these opening chapters not only to tell about the nature of the island and its geographic boundaries, but also to relate current information, such as the universities of England, admitting that Cambridge where he himself studied is inferior slightly to Oxford. He also praises the art of music in England, finding that it is "first in all Europe. For though in France or in Scotland you may meet with some musicians of such absolute accomplishment as in England, yet 'tis not in such numbers" (27). Mair is demonstrates clearly his impartiality and ability to evaluate evidence honestly, without undue partiality

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[44] "In historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum apud venerabilem Bedam, lectorem latissiimum, invenimus, Quod ab Aremorica Galliarum gente, Insulæ inditum est, quare a gente illa Gallica Insula Britanniæ dicta est, & non e contrario" (*Historia Majoris Britanniæ*, 3).

to either his own school or country. Mair goes on to give a general overview of Scotland, including its resources as well as its culture. He is quick to point out that he will not be a party to the mutual recriminations which abound between the English and the Scots. He says that he has read

> in histories written by Englishmen that the Scots are the worst of traitors, and that this stain is with them inborn. Not otherwise, if we are to believe those writers, did the Scots overthrow the kingdom and the warlike nation of the Picts. The Scots, on the other hand, call the English the chief of traitors, and, denying that their weapon is a brave man's sword, affirm that all their victories are won by guile and craft. (40)

The sensible man, according to Mair, will not let the love of his own country or the hatred of his enemy cloud his thinking, and instead will set his mind "upon right reason, and regulate his opinion accordingly" (40). Mair goes on to answer other charges which have been leveled at the Scots, such as the habit of eating human flesh.

Mair then returns to the issue of the early history of both England and Scotland. He gives the English chroniclers' account of Brutus and his three sons, but concludes that "this fable about Brutus we did not, in an earlier part of our work, accept; and whatever (if indeed there were any such person) may be the fact about his sons, it is attested by a multiplicity of proof that we trace our descent from the Irish" (50). It is at this point that Mair confronts the legend of Scota directly. He says that all authorities do admit that the Irish came from Spain, but as for the legend of the Egyptian origins and Scota, with an "original departure of theirs out of Greece and Egypt, I count it a fable, and for this

reason: their English enemies had learned to boast of an origin from the Trojans, so the Scots claimed an original descent from the Greeks who had subdued the Trojans, and then bettered it with this about the illustrious kingdom of Egypt" (51-52).[45] He goes on to mention that frequently "some true statements are mixed up with statements that are doubtful" and it is obviously his job as historian to help his readers sort out the truth from the fable. From this point, Mair moves into a discussion of the Romans and continues with his history. His opening chapters have set the tone for his entire work. His readers are able to conclude that he will give as honest and unbiased a history of "Greater Britain" as possible.

In conclusion, then, it is apparent that Mair is writing a very different type of history from that of Fordun or Wyntoun. His methodology depends a great deal on a new type of critical thinking which developed during the Renaissance. More than this, however, Mair's history must also be attributed to something within his personality which causes him to be impartial and gives him the ability to evaluate information fairly. From his opening remarks his readers realize that he will not either praise Scotland or denounce England simply because of a spirit of nationalism or personal pride. He will be just in his handling of his information and attempt to find the true facts behind his various sources. However, as will be shown in chapter III, Mair is not doing this without a reason. While he may be a Scot and feel pride in that, he also has a more important agenda which overrides and governs his entire history, and that is his conviction that it is in Scotland's

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[45] See John and Winifred MacQueen, "Latin Prose Literature," *The History of Scottish Literature: Origins to 1660*, ed. R. D. S. Jack (Aberdeen: Aberdeen UP, 1987) 236, for a further discussion of Mair's techniques for evaluating sources.

best interests to unite with England forming a new country of Britain, with a common crown. This view will govern Mair's history in much the same way as Fordun's and Wyntoun's beliefs in the importance of a free and independent Scotland governed their histories.

Hector Boece

Hector Boece (1465? - 1536), a devout Catholic and priest, was born in Dundee and received his early schooling at Dundee Grammar School. Boece then went on and studied at the University of Paris at the same time as both Erasmus and John Mair. Boece, like Mair, became a professor in the Collège de Montaigu, University of Paris, where he became familiar with both mysticism and humanism. He taught at the Collège de Montaigu from 1492-98. Then he was appointed first principal of King's College, University of Aberdeen in 1498, and was instrumental in organizing the first curriculum. His own specialty was Scottish history. Boece also held the posts of canon of Aberdeen Cathedral, rector of Tyrie, vicar of Tullynessle, and chaplain of the altar of St. Ninian in the town's kirk of Aberdeen.

Boece's *Scotorum historiae a prima gentis origine* (1527), published at his own expense six years after Mair's, is a Latin history of Scotland up to the accession of James III, and includes many narratives, including that of Macbeth and Duncan, which then passed into Holinshed's chronicles where Shakespeare found them. Boece shared Mair's interest in geography, but he was more interested in marvels than in economics and sociology. He wrote without much analysis and interpretation, and his very influential

work became a model for those of George Buchanan and John Leslie.

Boece wrote his *Scotorum historiae* in Latin, apparently intending it for use by scholarly and clerical audiences. According to W. Douglas Simpson, Boece wanted to write a history of Scotland in the style of the classical Roman historian Livy. He wanted to address a European audience, so that knowledge of Scottish history would become a part of a larger cultural and intellectual society.[46] His history was very popular and in fact there are at least nine surviving manuscripts of the translation made by Bellenden. James V was so taken with the history, which has a very strong nationalistic perspective, that he requested translations by Bellenden in prose and Stewart in verse. Boece dedicates his history to James V, and no doubt hoped it would influence James's rule when he reached majority. His preface clearly states that he expects that James V will realize that Erasmus was right in saying that there is "na thing in moir admiracioun to the pepill than werkis of kingis, for thair lyvis has sa public sycht that euery pepill has the samyn in mouth, to thair commendacioun or repreif; and thairfor na thing bene sa fructifull to repress the common errouris of pepill as cleyn lyfe of princis" (15).

Boece uses a variety of sources for his history, including Livy, Orosius, Pliny, and Bede. In fact, Boece's own copies of both Orosius's *History* and Pliny's *Historia Naturalis*

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[46] W. Douglas Simpson, "Hector Boece," *Quatercentenary of the Death of Hector Boece, First Principal of the University* (Aberdeen: University P, 1937) 7-29, maintains that Boece's history "was the first attempt to set forth a formal full-length history of Scotland, addressed to a European audience. In style and method of treatment it is modeled largely on Livy, and like Livy Boece accepted all the current legends about the origins of the Scottish people and worked them into a picturesque, flowing narrative without undue regard either for authenticity or consistency. For the later medieval period the work is a trustworthy and valuable authority" (9).

appear on a list of the library holdings for King's College, University of Aberdeen.[47] Boece also relied heavily on Fordun's history, and he supplements Fordun with details about a number of Scotland's early kings which he says he found in Veremund's *History of Scotland*. This history is lost now, and some scholars felt that Boece had fabricated it. However, Veremund is given as a source by at least one later author, namely David Chambers in his *Histoire Abrégée de Tous les Rois de France, d'Angleterr, et D'Écosse*, published in 1572.[48] In addition, we have the testimony of Erasmus, who says of Boece that "he knew not what it was to tell a lie."[49] Boece also says in his Preface that he has used Archbishop Turgot's *History of Scotland* and Bishop William Elphinstone's[50] *History of Scotland*. Neither of these works is still extant and nothing further is known of them.[51] Therefore, Boece's main sources remain unknown to the modern reader. While there are occasional references within his text to specific sources, Boece usually does not interrupt

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[47] See Simpson, 23-24.

[48] J. B. Black, "Boece's *Scotorum Historiae*," *Quatercentenary of the Death of Hector Boece, First Principal of the University* (Aberdeen: University P, 1937) 47.

[49] Quoted by Simpson 29.

[50] Ian B. Cowan, "Church and Society," *Scottish Society in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Jennifer M. Brown (New York: St. Martin's P, 1977), notes that William Elphinstone was bishop of Aberdeen from 1483-1514, during which time he supervised the compilation of the Aberdeen breviary (113). He also founded King's College, Aberdeen University (126).

[51] Black notes that "Elphinstone's History has unaccountably vanished. For a time it was thought to be in the Bodleian Library, among the Fairfax manuscripts; but the document was apparently wrongly catalogued, and it is now known not to have been by Elphinstone. As for Turgot's History, it, too, canot be traced. We know that he wrote a Life of S. Margaret, queen consort of Malcolm Canmore; but no record remains of any general history of Scotland by his pen" (47).

his text with the acknowledgement of his sources, but rather allows his narration to flow uninterrupted. This allows for easy reading but does not lend itself to critical evaluations.

Boece does not allow his readers to discover discrepancies or differences of opinions within his sources. He has very few direct references to his sources, and refuses to let his reader know of any problems which he himself may have in reconciling them. Fordun and Wyntoun both present information from a variety of sources, and then when they conflict, the authors either give their readers an opinion as to the true merit of the sources, or else explain that they lack information to decide and give the reader the responsibility for making a judgement. Mair goes even further, of course, and critically examines his sources, openly doubting their veracity at times. Boece does not give any indication of having wrestled with the issue of conflicting sources. Instead, his interest is in writing an elegant history of Scotland which draws his readers right into the work. He gives his readers all the facts and accounts which they need, and never offers any questions as to their validity or accuracy.

Boece begins his history with two letters, one to King James V and one to James Beaton, archbishop of St. Andrews. In these letters he sets forth the purpose of his book, namely to

> place the history of the Scottish people in a brighter light, by clothing it with suitable eloquence, so that the learned will read it. Truthfulness and learning are the qualities most to be sought for in an approved historian, learning may be lacking in me, but I am so sworn to truthfulness that I shall put nothing on record that is not subscribed to by the most reliable authorities and the weightiest

testimonies.[52]

Boece says that history has many lessons for those who study it, and he is determined to educate his readers to the truth history has to teach. James V would learn not only the reasons for political successes and failures, but he would also learn of the bravery of the Scots who defeated their enemies, such as the Romans, Saxons, and Danes. He will be touched by the examples of William Wallace and Robert Bruce, and others who have defended liberty against oppression. Boece hopes his readers will be inspired to similar acts of courage. He also hopes that his readers will return to the basis of their former greatness, namely simple and sober living. Boece is dismayed by the conditions of his own time, "convinced that the fibre of the Scottish race was deteriorating through the infiltration of luxurious manners and customs."[53] According to Boece, this deterioration began in the time of Malcolm Canmore and is directly linked to Scotland's association with Englishmen. Boece's convictions combine and result in his producing a very moralistic, strongly nationalistic history.

While modern historians have discovered evidence pointing to a line of kings in Scotland dating back to the fourth century, at the time of Boece's writing, this information was not available.[54] Boece begins with the information in Fordun, but Fordun himself admits that there was a period of about 700 years for which no detailed account of the kings could be given. The gap between Fergus I and Fergus II consisted of approximately

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[52] Quoted by Black 33.

[53] Black 33.

[54] Black 36-37.

forty-five kings, but no one after Fordun had been able to fill in this gap. Boece manages not only to provide the names of these kings, but also full records for them, according to a hitherto unknown source, namely Veremund. At the time when his history was written, no one doubted Boece's information.[55] "All were prepared to accept the new version of Scottish history at its face value; and the fame of Boece as one of the greatest historians of his time was firmly established."[56] Boece's history filled a need within his readers for information about the longevity of the Scottish nation, and they were willing and eager to believe the authenticity of his information.

Boece begins his work with an explanation of the origin of the Scots, saying in the opening lines: "Eftir the maner of vther pepill, the Scottis, desirande to schew the anciant blude of thair lang begynnyng, schewis tham, be this present History, discendit of the Grekis and the Egipcianys" (21).[57] Boece continues by giving the entire story of the origin of the Scots in the tradition of Fordun and Wyntoun. No doubt or hesitancy is expressed

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[55] Mason notes how the information concerning the ancient kings grew. "In a Scottish context, the conventional belief in the king's duty to defend the realm was more than usually significant. The English claim to feudal superiority over Scotland, although acted upon only intermittently, was an ever-present threat to the status of Scottish kings and thus to the integrity of the Scottish kingdom. By definition, therefore, the defence of the realm entailed a repudiation of English pretensions and an unqualified insistence that the king of Scots owed allegiance to no superior but God alone. According to the increasingly elaborate historical mythology developed by the chroniclers, the king was the latest representative of a royal line stretching back in unbroken succession to the foundation of the kingdom by Fergus I in the fourth century BC. He was, in short, the most powerful available symbol of the kingdom's historical and continuing autonomy" ("Kingship" 128).

[56] Black 37.

[57] All quotes from Boece will be from Bellenden's translation.

by Boece as to the veracity of this story. Furthermore, Boece sees no need to begin his work with any information about the world in general, either its creation or its geography. Wyntoun, because of the nature of his history, has an extensive beginning detailing the early biblical and classical histories before getting into the details of Scottish history. Even Fordun, who is writing a history of Scotland, rather than the entire world, nevertheless begins his work with a brief description of the creation of the world, and sets the events of early Scottish history into the framework of biblical and classical history. Boece finds no such need to set the stage for his history, possibly because the nature of historiography had changed slightly to include less biblical background. His approach, in spite of his strong church background, is to begin with the Greeks and the Egyptians. He does, of course, mention that the reigning Egyptian pharaoh was "the scurge of the pepill of Israell: quhas son, followand his faderis iniquite, be the punicioun of God was eftir drownit in the Rede seyis with all his army" (21). This places the events within the biblical tradition and gives them an anchor within recognizable history, but Boece does not need to go any further back into the beginnings of the world.

Boece's entire focus is on Scotland, and he moves very carefully and methodically through the explanations of the early kings and the settlements first in Ireland and then shortly thereafter in Scotland. The stage is quickly set for more modern events when Boece explains that when the Scots first settled in Scotland, the Picts sent ambassadors to them and desired to make an alliance with the Scots, giving their daughters in marriage. The Scots agreed to this alliance in order to strengthen themselves against the Britons. However, the very next chapter demonstrates how quickly this alliance was dissolved.

The chapter is entitled "How the Britonis, be quent slichtis, dissoluit the band of amite betuix Scottis and Pichtis, and of the displesouris and slauchter following thairupon" (33). Boece is obviously taking great pains to ensure that his readers understand the fact that the animosities of the present day between England and Scotland may be traced back to the very origins of the country. The political implications of Boece's message will be examined in chapter III of this dissertation. For now it is only necessary to note that Boece is writing a highly nationalistic history of Scotland.

Boece continues his history in chronological order, with occasional digressions on topics of interest to him. He spends a great deal of time on the Romans and their presence in Britain, possibly reflecting his interest in and use of Livy, although Livy himself only mentions Britain briefly, when Caesar invaded it twice and when Augustus returned from there. However, the Scots and Picts were victorious over the Romans and "thai gaif peace to the Romanis" (179). Again, we see the constant emphasis on the strength and right of the Scots.

There is very little doubt about the popularity of Boece's history, and proof of this may be found in the fact that it was immediately translated at the request of James V, not once, but twice.[58] First, John Bellenden, at the request of James V of Scotland, translated Boece's *Scotorum historiae* into Middle Scots prose in 1531. "Heir begynnis the Cronikillis of Scotland, compylit be the richt reverend clerk, Maister Hectour Boece, and

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[58] Both of these translations were freely done. Bellenden tended to offer explanations for various characters' actions and also to soften records of cruelty. Stewart's inclination was to condense the materials. See Robert Huntington Fletcher, *Arthurian Material in the Chronicles Especially Those of Great Britain and France* (1905; New York: Haskell House rpt., 1965), for a more complete discussion.

translatit in oure commoun langage be Maister Iohnne Bellantyne, Channon of Ross, at the desyre of the richt hye, richt excellent, nobill and michty Prince, Iames the Fyft of that name, King of Scottis." Thus Bellenden dedicates his work to James V, which he then begins with his own preface, stressing the importance of relating the lives of public persons, namely kings and princes, since

> na thing is that the pepill followis with moir imitacioun, or kepis in moir recent memoire, than werkis of nobill men, of reassoun thair besynes suld be moir respondent to vertew than of ony vther estatis, quhen moir triumphant glorye and preeminence bene randrit to publik than priuatt personis. (15)

Bellenden continues by saying that he finds "no thing moir fructuous, or moir respondent to knychtly besynes, then reding of historijs" (15) and for this reason, he is going to undertake the translation of Boece's history. He quotes Cicero who said that "he that is ignorant of sik thingis as bene done afoir his tyme, for lak of experience, is bot ane barn" (16). Bellenden also makes mention of Seneca's discussion of kings and tyrants and Aristotle's knowledge of the link between the profit of kings and the common good in order to stress the importance of reading history, which offers examples worthy of imitation as well as lessons concerning the fates of the vicious, whose "detestabill lyvis bene abhominabill to thair posterite, ȝite the deploracioun of thair miserie sall move the redaris to imitacioun of vertew" (19). Bellenden is intent on the value of history as a source of examples which will cause its readers to strive for more virtuous lives, and to this end he translates Boece into the vernacular so that more may profit. This educational value of history is one felt very strongly by Boece himself as well. While Boece, especially

with his admiration for Livy, sought to write a history of Scotland which all of Europe could read and profit by, Bellenden has a more immediate goal in translating Boece's Latin. He seeks to translate it into Middle Scots so that more of his own countrymen may profit from the knowledge of their history.

Also at the request of James V, William Stewart translated Boece's history into 61,000 lines of Scottish verse in 1535. There is some confusion as to the identity of William Stewart since there were two men with the same name educated at St. Andrews and connected with the Scottish court at nearly the same time. The most likely candidate was probably born about 1481. There is very little poetry extant which bears the name William Stewart, but since Lindsay mentions Stewart in 1530 as an important poet even before Stewart had written his *Metrical Chronicle*, it is likely that many of his poems have not been preserved. Both Stewart and Bellenden were, by royal command, engaged simultaneously in translating Hector Boece's *History*, Stewart in verse and Bellenden in prose. Sometimes Stewart adds information not found in Boece or Bellenden. He also includes in his translation some minute points omitted by Bellenden while omitting some things preserved by Bellenden. He was very familiar with, and makes reference to, the works of John Mair, Blind Hary, and Froissart. He also was well acquainted with Fordun, and realizing that Fordun was a major source of information for Boece, he had no difficulty with inserting more information from Fordun into his own translation of Boece. For example, the details which he gives in book xv of the drowning of the English soldiers, who had been obliged to abandon Coupar Castle for want of provisions, in their passage across the Forth, are taken directly from Fordun. The cause of the calamity is given by

neither Boece nor Bellenden. Stewart's contributions are further noted by W. Turnbull in his preface to an edition of Stewart's translation, who finds that "as the chronicle advances, passing from the more fabulous and traditional to the authenticated period of history, the interest of course becomes greater; and no one--certainly no Scotsman--can fail to derive both pleasure and satisfaction from a perusal of the last six of the seventeen books, into which, following the division of Boece's original work, the translator has apportioned his own" (xxvii). Turnbull further notes that the value of a translation must necessarily be based on the value of the original and

> the merits of Boece have been unsparingly assailed, not only by strangers, but by his own countrymen, who have charged him with inventing what it is rather to be presumed he found recorded,--as he expressly states he did,--in the writings of earlier annalists. Credulity may, no doubt, be ascribed to him; yet it is to be remembered that he lived in an age when legend was received as fact, and men had not begun to apply critical sagacity to the investigating of long-current obscure traditions, and the 'Art of Verifying Dates' was alike unthought of and unpracticed.[59]

Stewart begins his translation with a prologue where he says that what he undertakes at the request of the king

> wilbe tedious, that dar I tak on hand,
>
> To reid the thing he [James V] can nocht vnderstand.

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[59] W. Turnbull, Preface, *The Buik of the Cronicles of Scotland or a Metrical Version of the History of Hector Boece*, trans. William Stewart, ed. W. Turnbull, 3 vols. (London: Longman, 1858) xxvii-xxviii.

War it translatit in our vulgar tung. (4: 114-16)[60]

He is doing this because

thair is nothing moir gudlie to avance

Na auld stories put in rememberance. (4: 120-21)

He then apologizes for his language which is "both gros and rude" (4: 125), but

neuirtheles the sentence is richt gude;

And thocht it be nocht full of eloquence,

So that it be substantious of sentence

In plane termis, thairof haif thow now weir

Bot it wil be richt pleasand for to heir;

For plane langage is eith to vnderstand. (5: 149-154)

Therefore, Stewart, like Bellenden, finds that it is important for his readers to be able to read and understand this history, and so while it will be difficult to translate it, nevertheless, once done, his readers will derive pleasure and learning from reading the history in "plane langage [that] is eith to vnderstand." Stewart believes he is recounting true history which the present generation can study profitably. His motives behind his translation echo the sentiments of earlier historians, especially Wyntoun, and Stewart finds Boece's history so important that it should be available to non-Latin readers as well. His

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[60] Turnbull notes that "the estimation in which his labour [Boece's History] was held by his Sovereign–who, although apparently ignorant of the language in which it was composed, was the earliest regal fosterer of learning in Scotland–is proved by an entry in the Register of the Privy Seal of the following year, conferring upon him a pension of £50 Scots yearly, and the royal commissions to Bellenden and Stewart, to make a double translation of it for the special use of His Majesty" (xiv).

efforts in preparing this translation reflect the view that the work itself is valuable, well worth the time and effort to prepare it for another audience.

Therefore, it is apparent that Hector Boece has written a history of Scotland which was valued, even if he presents a very different view about the nature of writing history from any of the historians examined so far. He is not concerned with giving his sources or citing his evidence, as all of his predecessors have done. He gives his major sources in his preface, and then has a few scattered references throughout his work, but overall, his concern is centered on writing a masterful piece of Latin prose. In this effort he succeeds extremely well, becoming so popular that his work is immediately translated into both vernacular prose and poetry. Mair was criticized for his lack of style. That same criticism was definitely not made of Boece. These two historians, writing within five years of each other, coming from very similar educational backgrounds, could not be more different. Boece has mixed traditional legend, folklore, and moral advice into his strongly nationalistic history. Mair writes a heavily analytical history in which he attempts to maintain impartiality and honesty. Boece takes Fordun and expands upon him, giving evidence which Fordun lacked to fill in the gaps in Fordun's early chronology. Later I will explore the possibilities of Boece having received this information from a forged history, but the point now is that Boece did not challenge Fordun or question his information. Mair obviously did. However, it was Boece who gained the vote of popular approval. His influence would be felt by both Buchanan and Leslie. His literary influence would be great as he becomes an indirect source for Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, thanks to Holinshed's use of Boece as a source for his *Chronicles*.

Boece writes a highly nationalistic history in the same tradition as Fordun and Wyntoun, but unlike them he does not give credit to his sources. Unlike Mair, Boece demonstrates no interest in presenting his readers with the material to evaluate sources and or examine the historical evidence critically. However, he does write a very enjoyable work, which became both popular and influential.

George Buchanan

George Buchanan (1506 - 82) was born in Stirlingshire, and while his family was poor, they also prided themselves on their ancestry, which traced their family back to the son of Okyna, king of southern Ulster. Buchanan's family had Gaelic origins, and the family still spoke Gaelic in Buchanan's time. He was sent by his uncle to study in Paris, but the death of this uncle two years later caused Buchanan to return home in 1522. He saw his first military action a year later in the battle of Wark against the English, and he gives an eye-witness account of this battle in his history. Buchanan then resumed his studies at the University of St. Andrews, where he was sent to study under John Mair. After completing his degree at St. Andrews, Buchanan followed Mair to Paris, possibly because he thought about an ecclesiastical career. Buchanan probably met Boece during the period 1526-27 when Boece was in Paris completing the qualifications for his doctorate and seeing his *Historia* published. Buchanan spent three years from 1528-31 as regent at Sainte-Barbe College, one of the major centers of intellectual activity. He spent the remainder of his time in Paris as the tutor to Gilbert Kennedy, third earl of Cassillis. He returned home with his pupil between 1534 and 1535, continuing as his tutor until

1536. At this point, Buchanan became the tutor to James V's natural son, possibly as a result of his successful tutoring of Gilbert Kennedy or possibly at the recommendation of John Mair.[61]

Buchanan spent approximately four years in Scotland at this point in his life, but little is known about his intellectual and humanist contacts. The only documented details are the major satirical poems against the Franciscans and some information about his religious development. Satirizing the Franciscans led to his imprisonment in St. Andrews, from which he was able to escape to the Continent. Other charges leveled against him included accusations of Judaism. These accusations apparently were based on evidence that Buchanan and several other Scottish heretics were said to have eaten the paschal Lamb. When Buchanan was questioned about this incident by James V, reports indicate that Buchanan told James V that he too should eat the paschal Lamb. Mair testified as well to the king that anyone who told the king that he should eat the paschal Lamb would wish that he would become a Jew or live in the manner of Jews. If this incident is accurate it would certainly explain Buchanan's later hostility toward Mair, who otherwise had been a friend and teacher. In any case, Buchanan found it necessary to escape from Scotland, and according to Buchanan himself, his escape was managed with the help of James V, because "he sought information in England, thought me suitable for this task as one who

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[61] I. D. McFarlane, *Buchanan* (London: Duckworth, 1981) 18-50. P. Hume Brown, Introduction, *Vernacular Writings of George Buchanan* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1892), notes further that Buchanan was "appointed by the king tutor to his natural son, Lord James Stewart (not to be confounded with the Lord James Stewart better known as the Regent Moray). This engagement is memorable in Buchanan's life, as having brought him into direct relation with the Court" (xviii).

could pass as a religious refugee."[62] After six months in England, Buchanan returned to France where he became a professor at Bordeaux. After several years spent in France Buchanan accepted an offer to teach in Portugal, but eventually he was tried by the Portuguese Inquisition and imprisoned from 1549-51. He finally returned to Scotland some time in 1561 where he eventually declared himself to be a Protestant, becoming a bitter enemy of Mary Queen of Scots.[63] He was the tutor to James VI from 1570-78, and his history was written at least in part to help teach the young king.[64]

Buchanan wrote his *Rerum Scoticarum historia*, intending it for a scholarly and clerical audience. According to the Preface to Watkins's translation, there were no English translations of this work because of "its free sentiments and strong facts" and it was not until "the first year of the Revolution [1643], when an English version, apparently by authority of government, was published at London" (3). Nevertheless, Buchanan's history was popular in Scotland among those who could read the Latin. It was regarded

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[62] Quoted in McFarlane, *Buchanan* 73.

[63]Brown notes that Buchanan did act as a classical tutor to Mary, for which he received a grant for his general services to Mary and the Government. During this period he attended Mary daily, and made no attempt to conceal his opposition to her on questions of religion. "Nevertheless, for the first few years after his return from the Continent, he performed all those services about the Court which princes in that age required of their scholars," including writing Latin masques. However, the events following the baptism of James VI, namely the murder of Darnley and Mary's marriage to Bothwell, proved more than Buchanan could countenance, and he became "one of the most formidable of her adversaries" (xxxi-xxxii).

[64] McFarlane, *Buchanan* 50-246, 320-54. Brown notes that this appointment as James VI's tutor was made by the Privy Council when James was 4 years old. In spite of Buchanan's age and infirmities, "from James's fourth to his twelfth year, however, Buchanan not only exercised a general superintendence over his education, but in certain branches himself gave his pupil instruction" (xxxiii-xxxiv).

as a standard authority for many years. Buchanan worked on it primarily at the end of his life, and it was published the year he died.

Buchanan has dedicated his history to James VI, and he wrote the history while serving as tutor to James VI. He says that he is writing his history because his friends "had conspired together, exhorting me to lay aside things of less weight, that rather delight the ear than instruct the mind, and apply myself to write the history of our nation, as a subject not only suitable to my age and sufficient to answer the expectation of my countrymen; but deserving great commendation, and most likely to preserve one's memory to succeeding ages." Buchanan states further that he is writing this history for James VI, since he finds that "it would be extremely wrong if you, Sir, who in your tender years have read the histories of all nations, and retain very many of them in your memory, should be a stranger at home." Buchanan hopes that in reading his history, James VI will find examples which will enable him to become "a pattern of all those excellencies which mothers desire in their children," and that he will be able help "this government, which seems to be hurried on to ruin and destruction" (4). Further, since illness has forced Buchanan to relinquish his post as tutor, he "thought that sort of writing which tends to the information of the mind, would best supply the want of my attendance; and therefore resolved to send your Majesty faithful counsellors from history, that you might make use of their advice in your deliberations and imitate their virtue in your actions" (Dedication). Buchanan therefore finds that at least one of the main reasons for studying history is for the educational value and the moral instruction which it will provide.

Buchanan opens his history by stating his "determination to record the

achievements of our ancestors, and after purging them from vain fables, to rescue them from oblivion" (1). He plans to trace his history from the beginning, in as far as possible, and commences with an analysis of the origins of the name Britain. He uses traditional sources such as Aristotle, Tacitus, Caesar, Bede, William of Malmesbury, Geoffrey of Monmouth, and Fordun. He was no doubt influenced by Mair, but he makes little or no mention of him, but instead chooses to rely heavily on Boece. He was certainly aware of the controversies surrounding Boece's sources of information about the early kings of Scotland. The information had been most dramatically questioned by Humphrey Llhwyd in his *Commentarioli Britannicæ, Descriptionis Fragmentum* published in 1572. Buchanan's reaction is to devote four of the first five pages of his own work to a criticism of Llhwyd's scholarship concerning the original name for Britain. According to Buchanan, Llhwyd bases his theory that the original name was *Prudania* on the "authority of an old paper fragment, which nothing but mouldiness, and length of time have made sacred with him" (2). Buchanan's attack also demonstrates his own methods for historical research. In ascertaining the original name of the island, Buchanan makes use of ancient authorities. He not only cites Caesar, whom Llhwyd says was the first to use the name Britain, but also Lucretius, Aristotle, and Propertius, all of whom used the name long before Caesar. Buchanan cites evidence of ancient maps as well to support his claim that the island was originally called Britain. He comments that foreign authors tend to use the name Britannia for the entire island, while the Britons and the English use it at times for the entire island and at times for that portion which was the Roman province. He continues by saying that

> William of Malmesbury, and Geoffrey of Monmouth, none of the obscurest writers

> of British affairs, often use this kind of speech, calling that part only Britain, which was contained within the wall of Severus. But though this matter be so clear in these writers, that no man can be ignorant of it, yet great mistakes arose amongst the historians of the next age, some of whom have affirmed in their works, that Alured, Athelstan, and other Saxon kings, did sometimes reign over the whole island; when it is clear, they never passed beyond the wall of Severus. (6)

Several points arise from the study of this passage. First, Buchanan is documenting his evidence by naming actual sources, something which he does not find in Boece. Furthermore, Buchanan demonstrates to his readers that he has carefully weighed and analyzed the evidence at hand, a technique which he may have learned from Mair, among others. However, Buchanan does not leave his readers with any doubt about his own views in the question, and in fact, he manages to produce very harsh and personal criticism of Llhwyd, for example, with whom Buchanan disagrees. Finally, this passage sets the stage for later claims of Scotland's independence, because it demonstrates that some historians give credit to early British kings for controlling more territory than they actually did, simply by misusing a name.

Buchanan continues his exploration of the early names for the island by discussing the use of the name Albion. Again, he demonstrates the thoroughness of his research, going back to the use of the name by "Aristotle, or rather Theophyrastus, in the book entitled, De Mundo" (8). Buchanan puts forth the theory which many have propounded that the name comes from the "white rocks which first appear in approaching the coast from France. But it seems very absurd to me, to fetch the origin of a British name from

the Latin, there being then so little commerce between strange nations" (8). Buchanan presents the evidence from his sources and then does not hesitate to give his readers his own evaluation of the sources. He makes clear distinctions between the information which he has uncovered and his evaluation of that information. While the tone of his opinions would make it difficult to disagree, his readers, nonetheless, have the option of evaluating the information for themselves and agreeing or disagreeing with Buchanan's assessments.

Buchanan also tries to appear reasonable and willing to change his opinion if the information he has proves faulty. At the end of his discussion of the name Albion, he concludes by giving his own opinion. All his evidence

> adds strength to my opinion, that the name of the island, derived from Album, whether Albion or Albium, remains in Scotland to this very day, as in its native soil; neither could it be extirpated there, notwithstanding so many changes of inhabitants, kingdoms, languages, and the vicissitude of other things. These things seem true, or at least probable, to me; yet if any man can inform me better, I will easily be of his opinion (9).

The overall effect of the beginning of this work and its very extensive discussion of the derivation of the name for Britain/Albion leaves his readers with confidence in Buchanan as a researcher and evaluator of historical sources who is doing all he can to write a clear and accurate history of Scotland. However, Buchanan still has to deal with the matter of the information found in Boece about the early kings, especially since Buchanan uses Boece so heavily. While Buchanan does not directly address the issue of

the information on the kings, he does make mention of Boece at the end of this section on names, when he moves on to the

> situation of the countries. The English writers have clearly enough described their several counties; but Hector Boethius, in his description of Scotland, hath delivered some things not so true, and he hath drawn others into mistakes, by putting too much faith in those whom he employed, and so published their opinions rather than facts. But I shall briefly touch upon those things of which I am certain; and those which seem obscure, and less true, I will correct as well as I can. (9)

Buchanan accomplishes a number of things with this paragraph. First, he tells his readers to go to the English historians if they wish descriptions of English geography. While these writers may be accurate sources for their own English geography, they would not be considered factual on Scottish geography. Buchanan then addresses the problem of Boece's sources rather gently, by simply saying that some of his statements might be "not so true." This is not due to any deliberate falsehoods or deceptions on Boece's part, but rather because he has been let down and drawn into mistakes by others on whom he relied. Buchanan concludes by promising his readers that he personally will do his best to correct any ambiguities or less factual statements. In fact, in his description of Scottish geography, he comes to a discussion of the province of Caithness, where he mentions "Berubium, (Dunsbay Head,) falsely called, by Hector Boetius, Dum" (15). Buchanan has made direct mention of the error in Boece, correcting it in light of better information. This would lead his readers to trust in Buchanan's own integrity as an historian as well as his

ability to discern the truth. Buchanan puts this statement into a fairly innocuous section on Scottish geography which immediately follows the lively discussion on the origin of names, a highly effective ploy to set the tone for his entire work, giving his readers faith in the accuracy of his history and his ability to correct Boece's errors.

Buchanan writes his history to educate his readers, especially James VI to whom it is dedicated, and to instruct them in proper conduct by providing examples from the past to demonstrate what should and should not be repeated. He clearly is intent on providing a history which demonstrates the reasons for his Scottish pride, pride which he obviously feels very deeply in spite of the number of years he spent abroad. His second book opens with a discussion of the founding mythologies for both England and Scotland. Before dealing with specifics, Buchanan notes the hazards involved in trying to recreate this earliest of histories. He affirms first that "all the nations which hitherto have seated themselves in Britain, even to this day, came either from Gaul, Spain, or Germany" (26). These countries did not have written records of their laws or religions. The ancient writers who wrote about these lands, such as Pliny, Varro, and others, based their opinions on conjecture rather than fact. Caesar and Tacitius did visit the lands they wrote about, but they were able to find no certain answers about their origins. Gildas wrote, not from "any monuments of antiquity, of which he could find none, but from foreign reports gathered by him beyond the sea." Buchanan then addresses the issues of oral histories, to say that chiefs and wealthy men would commission bards to tell of their ancestors in a way which would glorify them. "But, as these had no learning, let any man judge what credit is to be given to them, whose hopes and substance totally depended upon soothing and

flattering of others." Furthermore, mistakes are made even by the best of scholars, and so how many more mistakes are to be expected "from persons, who being without learning, (by which they who casually mistake may be better informed, and those who mistake on purpose may be confronted) depend wholly upon their memory?" (27). Buchanan spends quite a bit of time and effort in his analysis of the availability and reliability of sources for the origin stories before he presents his opinions on them. This enables him to inform his readers about the logic behind his refuting of these mythologies which have become so ingrained in the national histories.[65] Mair also refutes the origin stories, but he does not set the stage for his readers as completely as Buchanan does nor is he as nationalistic, which may explain in part why Buchanan's history was accepted where Mair's was not.

Buchanan demonstrates that, even though there is no substance or truth to either the story of Brutus or of Scota, the Scots still fabricated a higher caliber of story than did the English. Buchanan begins with his refuting of the English origins, mentioning, as had Mair before him, the unlikelihood of thirty-three daughters having killed their husbands on their wedding night, crowding together in one ship and sailing without any assistance to Britain. He discusses the lack of credibility of each and every portion of the story. Buchanan spends a great deal of time on this study and finds that he "cannot but stand amazed at their design," but he is confused as to why those who forged this story would

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[65] Hugh MacDougall, *Racial Myth in English History: Trojans, Teutons, and Anglo-Saxons* (Hanover: U P of New England, 1982), discusses the importance of myth for national consciousness. He states that "myths of origin enable people to locate themselves in time and space. They offer an explanation of the unknown and hallowed traditions by linking them to heroic events and personages of the distant past. In addition, they form the ground for belief systems or ideologies which, providing a moral validation for attitudes and activities, bind men together into a society" (1).

> rather chuse to forge an ancestry out of the refuse of mankind, whose very history must be suspected, even by the vulgar; and the truth of which no ancient writer of credit has confirmed. It would have been no disgrace to them to take an origin which Athens, the noblest and wisest city in the world, esteemed as her chief glory, particularly as the opinion could not have been refuted out of ancient documents, and has had such great examples. . .I wonder what could induce them to make choice of those, of whom all their posterity might justly be ashamed. (29)[66]

Buchanan treats the story of Scotland's origins, but needless to say, while that story is just as unfounded, just as fabricated, nevertheless, "those who have written of the Scottish affairs, have delivered down to us a more creditable and noble origin, as they think, but one no less fabulous than that of the Britons. For they have adopted progenitors for us, taken not from the Trojan fugitives, but from those Greek heroes, whose posterity conquered Troy" (32). Buchanan repeats the founding story of Scotland, as he had done for England, but in less detail and with far less criticism as to its credibility.

Thus, Buchanan is following the example of Fordun, Wyntoun, and Boece in giving a decidedly nationalistic approach to his history. He continues to cite his sources and question the reasons for discrepancies. He relies heavily on Roman writers, such as Caesar and Tacitus, for his early history of Britain. When he arrives at the point in

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[66] Penny Eley, "The Myth of Trojan Descent and Perceptions of National Identity: The Case of *Eneas* and *Roman de Troie*," *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 35 (1991): 27-40, discusses the origins of the Trojan myth. "The myth of Trojan descent is first attested in the seventh century for the Franks, in the tenth century for the British, and the early eleventh century for the Normans." It was then Henry II "who tried to legitimise his rule by promoting the view that Normans and British were of one blood and should therefore share allegiance to one leader" (28-29).

Scotland's early history where Boece had discovered so much missing information about the kings between Fergus I and Fergus II, Buchanan uses Boece entirely, but with no mention as to the source. The detailed information on the kings is just given, with full information about both good and bad kings. Buchanan also gives dates for the beginning of each king's reign, lending a note of authenticity to his accounts. Occasionally in the information on these kings between Fergus I and Fergus II there is a mention of a possible reference by Tacitus or Bede to someone whose name had a similar spelling, but for the most part these kings are included without any citations at all. However, there is no mention of the controversy over the accuracy of this material derived from Boece. The readers are left with the decided impression of factual accuracy. Earlier I showed how Buchanan would comment on something from Boece but note that Boece was mistaken and the true facts were different. That does not occur in this section of Scottish genealogy, for reasons which I will address in chapter III below.

Buchanan's history was the most comprehensive history of Scotland yet to appear. Buchanan did not have any significant additions to make until he came to his own period, but he did produce a very literate history. He differs from Boece in that he makes stronger use of citations and names of sources. He discounts the origin stories, as did Mair before him, but he discredits them in such a way as to favor the Scottish story over the English and also explain why it is not possible to have accurate information about those early times. Buchanan was a highly respected scholar of his time, widely read and travelled, and his history reflects this stature. The nature of his approach to the subject matter is one of a learned professor teaching his students. He is providing a work designed to help his

readers learn from the examples of the past in order to cope with the situations of the present. Unlike our previous authors, Buchanan is not a clergyman, but he still has a strong feeling of moral philosophy and teaching behind his history.
His aim with this history is to strengthen Scotland, including the king, to enable the country to withstand the trials of the present.

John Leslie

The last Scottish historian to be considered is John Leslie (1526 - 1596). Leslie was born in 1526, educated at the University of Aberdeen, and finally received his Doctor of Laws degree at Paris in 1553. He became professor of law at the University of Aberdeen and took holy orders in 1558. He was appointed in 1560 to discuss points of faith in Edinburgh against Knox and Willox. In 1561 he began his connection with Queen Mary when he brought her home from France. He was appointed to the diocese of Ross in 1565, upon the recommendation of the Queen, who had already appointed him to the Privy Council. He was co-editor of the "Actis and Constitutionis of the Realme of Scotland," published in 1566. This work was designed to revise and publish the laws of Scotland. Eventually he became Queen Mary's commissioner and confidential agent, as well as ambassador to the Queen of England. In 1572 he was imprisoned by Elizabeth for his part in the attempt to bring about the marriage of Mary with the Duke of Norfolk. He was released in 1573, but banished from the country and so he retired to the Netherlands. After a year he visited the courts of France, Spain, and Germany at Mary's request, arriving at Rome in 1575. He remained there for nearly four years until he become

nuncio, a papal legate of the highest rank permanently attached to the civil government, to Emperor Maximilian in Prague. Finally, he came again to France where he was appointed Archbishop of Rouen and Vicar-General of that diocese by Cardinal de Bourbon. He retired completely from public life when he heard of the execution of Queen Mary (1587), spending his last nine years in an Augustinian monastery in Brussels where he died in 1596.[67]

Leslie's *Historie of Scotland* was first published in Latin in 1578, and then again, in a Scottish translation by Father James Dalrymple, in 1596. Leslie wrote his history of Scotland over a period of years, and although his work first appeared four years before Buchanan's, Leslie continued to edit and revise it up until his death fourteen years after Buchanan's. He himself describes the writing of this work. He began it, writing in Scots, as a history of Scotland from the death of James I (1436) to the beginning of Queen Mary's reign (1561). This portion of the work was completed "during the time of his remaning as ambassadour for the Quene his soverane in Jngland, 1570." Leslie states in the preface to this early version that while he was "awaiting only on your majesties service" he thought to employ his time in

> reiding the historeis written by Polidorus Vergilius, Beda, Sir John Fressard Knight, Favian, Edward Halle, Lanquett, and Copperis Cronicles, with the summary wrytten lately by John Stowe: In the quhilkis I consider mony and sundry thingis sett forth by their aucthouris, of the deedis and proceedingis betuix

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[67] E. G. Cody, Introduction, *The Historie of Scotland* by Jhone Leslie (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1888, 1895, Rpt. New York: Johnson Rpt., 1968) xv-xvii.

> Scotland and England, far contrar to our annales, registeris, and trew proceedingis collectit in Scotland. And albeit the trew histories of our country be largely, truely, and eloquently treated and wreattin be that cuning and eloquent historiographe Hector Boecius, yit he wreittis only to the deathe of Kyng James the first, quhilke was in the yere of our lorde god 1436 yeires, sen the quhilk time nevir ane hes preassed to gif furthe any thing in wreitt.[68]

Leslie then began his history as a continuation of or supplement to Boece's history which ended at the death of James I.

He started writing "fra the court of Jnland, quhair I was resident for a gryit space of the tother yere, in 1568, at your Majesties command" (xviii), but had to suspend work on his project in the summer of 1569 while he was again employed at the court of Elizabeth. He was able to revise and finish his work in February 1570 while he was "sequestrate in the Bishope of Londons house in the cite of London." He sent this work to Queen Mary, but it was not published at that time. During Leslie's stay in Rome he rewrote his history into Latin and also added seven other books about the history of Scotland before James I. The title of this complete work reads

> Of the origin, manners, and history of the Scots. Ten books. Of which seven treat more summarily of the memorable deeds of the ancient Scots, and the remaining three, more in detail, of the later kings down to our time, whose history was not before written. To which is added a new and accurate description of the districts and islands of Scotland, with a true topographical table of the same. By John

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[68] Quoted in Cody xviii.

Lesley, Bishop of Ross."[69]

The entire work is dedicated to Pope Gregory XIII, and there is also a dedication, complete with portrait, to Queen Mary.

In a long rhetorical address to the nobility and people of Scotland, Leslie explains more of his reasons for writing his history. He states that he was asked by "many persons, both in our own and foreign countries" to publish not only the current history, but "to add a compendium of the previous history already written, correctly, though inelegantly, by John Major, and elegantly enough, by Hector Boece, but, as many complained, with too much diffuseness and prolixity."[70] Again, it should be noted that the contrast between Mair's work and Boece's is pronounced. Leslie gives Mair credit for an accurate history, but notes that readers find it "inelegant." Mair himself had addressed this criticism of his work, but apparently readers were not satisfied with his style. Boece's style, according to Leslie, is much more readable, but he has many diversions and is too wordy. Leslie hopes that his work will combine the best of these former histories and produce a work which is both correct and elegantly written.

Leslie has noted for his readers just what sources he has consulted in the production of his work. He says that "in writing this work, I have not only confronted previous histories with the annals kept in our public archives, and with the oldest codices religiously preserved at Paisley, Scone, and our other monasteries, but I have also consulted Tacitus, Suetonius, Ammianus, Marcellinus, Eutropius, Herodianus, and other

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[69] Cody xix.

[70] Quoted in Cody xx.

writers of neighboring nations."[71] Other sources include Mair and Boece, as well as the histories which Leslie had mentioned reading.

Leslie opens his work with a statement letting his readers know exactly why he is writing. He says that he is writing his work because of "a certane ernist or hett affectione of the catholik religione, and a vehement constance in defendeng thairof" (I: 1).[72] He also wants to set down the many worthy and notable virtues in which our elders sometimes flourished, so that present countrymen can compare their vices with previous virtues, rising to former virtues and returning to "sincere catholic concorde, now at last mychte begin to follow the way of true vertue sa deip imprented with the futstepis of thair foirbears; quhilke fructe, I hope our people abundantlie sal gather" (I: 1). He wants his readers to "reid the historie quhilke I write to the vtilitie and proffite of the commone weil" (I: 2). Once again a historian is writing to provide knowledge and virtuous examples for his readers. Leslie obviously believes strongly in the power of virtuous examples and he, like Mair, is writing history as moral theology.

Leslie wrote his *Historie in Scotland* in Latin, certainly for a scholarly and a clerical audience. He intended that his work be known by the Scottish people, because he says in his dedication that he is writing for the Scottish people "to induce them to keep to the ways of their fathers in all good things, and especially in their ancestral religion." His work was read by Catholics, and Leslie's main purpose in writing was to further Mary's cause as well as that of the Catholic religion within Scotland.

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[71] Quoted in Cody xxi.

[72] Leslie is cited by volume and page number.

A few copies of Leslie's original publication are found in Rome, possibly having been put there during Leslie's stay when much of his history was written, but, according to E. G. Cody, a facsimile reprint was made in the year 1675, possibly by George Leslie, the author's great-grandson. This edition was said to have been dedicated to the Earl of Rothes, who had fought for the cause of Charles I against Parliament and after the Restoration served Charles II in London. Dedicating Leslie's history in this way indicates the emphasis of Leslie on the restoration of the rightful monarch to the throne ("Introduction" xxii-xxv).

Leslie begins his work by conforming "to the exemple of the aunciant writeris, descriue the quarteris and boundes of Scotland with the Iles" (I: 2), and the way in which he handles this information reveals Leslie's use of authorities. After giving the information that many say the land is called Britain because it was founded by Brutus, he adds that "quhat vthiris lait writeris speik of this name perchance mair curious than true, I, haldeng me content with the opinione of ancient Antiquitie, regarde nocht" (I: 2-3). He goes on to discuss the name of Albion and its possible sources in his attempt to present all possible information. He concludes with his own opinion as to the probable origin of the name, but in presenting other information he does allow his readers to decide for themselves:

> The maist ancient wryteris names Britannie Albion, but all controuersie. Bot quhither that was frome Albine first mother of the geyantis, or frome Alvion son to Neptune, quha rayneng, or frome Albanak sone to Brutus, or from alba the chief citie, now called S. Androis, or finalie from Albis rupibus, that is, quhyte craigs, is ȝit vncertane. Bot I take it to be frome quhyte craigs, as indeid I lykwyse beleiue,

> nocht the Romanis bot the Greiks first to haue the Alpes named, evin sa this Ile. (I: 3)

Leslie's discussion of the origins of the names is certainly done with completeness in mind, but he does not go into the same detail that Buchanan would use. Instead, Leslie immediately continues with geographical information about the British Isles, including topics such as the length of the day, the climate, and the fertility of the soil. His general remarks are then followed with detailed particulars about Scotland itself, giving facts about each area of the country. Leslie repeats much of the material found in Boece, and he also adopts Boece's style of using very few citations or references to sources. In fact, Leslie's approach is remarkably like Boece's. He too, once the opening discussion on the origins of the names is completed, avoids any analysis of particular sources. He does not provide his readers with any discrepancies within his sources, but merely narrates his history as a coherent seamless account.

After Leslie's very lengthy description of Scotland, he commences with its actual history, beginning with the origin story. Leslie opens this chapter with the comment that

> the Scottis natione hitherto hes bene maist ancient, and to God and man hes bene bathe grate and acceptable, testifies thair daylye habitatione in the land quhilke presentlie thay inhabite, thair sure and constante libertie frome age til age, thair lawfull successione of kingis sa mony hundir ȝeirs; thair quick receiueng of the christne religione, and evin vnto this age sa constantlie in it perseueiring. (I: 70)

Leslie affirms the ancient and honorable history of his country. It is "most ancient" and also it has a history of freedom, "sure and constant liberty from age to age." Again, the

issues of freedom and sovereignty are of utmost importance, and they serve as the main reason for the persistence of the origin story. The entire story from the Greeks and Egyptians through Portugal, Spain, Ireland, and finally to Scotland is detailed, just as it had been in Boece, as well as Fordun and Wyntoun.

Once Leslie has given the history to the point of the settling of the Scots in Scotland and the arrival of the Romans, he stops his historical chronology long enough to insert a substantial description of ancient Scots culture and customs, including methods for raising children, dress styles, sleeping habits, and even baking methods. Leslie concludes by saying that in many areas of Scotland, where they "speik the ald scottis toung, planelie haue the selfe sam maneris. for quha this day are, haue hithirto keipet the institutiounis of thair elderis sa constantlie, that nocht onlie mair than 2 thowsand ȝeirs thay haue keipet the toung hail vncorrupte; bot lykwyse the maner of cleithing and leiueng, that ald forme thay vnchanget aluterlie haue keipet" (I: 95). This firm conviction on Leslie's part as to the unchanging ways of the Gaelic Scot is contrasted immediately with that has happened along the border with England. Leslie says that "throuch al the prouinces of Scotland, quhilkes ar vpon the bordouris foranent Ingland takes to thame selfes the grettest libertie and licence, quairthrouch thay reioyse that vnpuniste ay thay chaipe." In these areas it has "cumis to passe that be steiling and reif, thay rather seik thair meit" (I: 97). Obviously Leslie finds that living on the borders with England is not helping the morals of those Scots, in large part because they "now vanelie fallin frome the faith of the Catholik Kirk" (I: 101).

Leslie continues with a discussion of the customs and manners of the remainder of

the Scots, after which he gives great details about the division of the Scottish people into "thrie ordouris; ane of thame, quhais pietie and hett studie of religione hes addicted thame selfes planelie to serue the Kirke: The secunde of thame, quhais nobilities, and hines of blude, hes placed in the secunde digrie of the commoune weil; the thrid of thame, quhome the tounes accnawleges amang thame to be frank and frie" (I: 105). Each of these three orders, the ecclesiastical estate, the nobility, and the common people, are discussed in turn. Then Leslie turns to a description of the laws of Scotland, giving their origins and present state, including their magistrates. All of this material on the three estates and the laws are additions to a traditional history which Leslie finds necessary in order to achieve his goal of teaching and guiding his readers. This material will be analyzed in detail in chapter III of this dissertation. It is noted here in order to demonstrate the differences between Leslie's history and the others discussed previously.

Leslie completes his first book with the election of Fergus I as King of Scots. Book two begins with Fergus's reign, and continues through Boece's expanded information concerning the kings between Fergus I and Fergus II. Each king has his own section, and these are numbered, but the dates of the reigns are not usually present. Buchanan is the one who adds that information. While Leslie was born after Buchanan, his history was actually published first since he wrote during his career years, whereas Buchanan wrote in retirement when he was no longer able to teach. Leslie then made changes until his own death fourteen years after Buchanan, but he did not choose to incorporate Buchanan's dates.

Leslie's history of these early kings normally is limited to information about

Scotland alone, but whenever possible, the king is set into a wider context. For instance, the fifteenth king, Eder, is shown in relationship to Julius Caesar, as well as Cassibilan King of Britannie [i.e., England] who received help "frome his nychtbouris the Scottis and Pechtis" (I: 148). By using the known history of the Roman Empire, Leslie achieves a higher degree of credence for his Scottish genealogy. Wherever possible, Leslie has notes at the end of each king's description giving the names of the popes, Roman emperors, and as time progresses, French and English kings, allowing his readers to set the history of Scotland into a larger known historical perspective.

Leslie organizes his work from book two on by Scottish king. He also covers the modern period, especially from James I onwards in much greater detail. Leslie is the first historian who has written in such detail about current events, more so than even Buchanan, and this aspect of his history will be discussed later. He does stop at the accession of Queen Mary, but he wrote notes for the years of her reign which were ready to add to his history, but never actually incorporated.

Therefore, it is evident that Leslie has not only followed some of the traditions of past historians, but also added new ideas to his history of Scotland. He is the first historian studied in this dissertation who began with the plan of writing a contemporary history, covering the era since James I which had not been dealt with or covered in any detail by previous historians. He did not plan originally to recount again the early history of Scotland. However, after writing the three books of the modern era, he was easily convinced to expand that with seven books dealing with the origins and early history of Scotland. He gave as his reasons for this major addition the fact that there was still a need

for an eloquent, but accurate, readable history of this period. While praising Mair's accuracy, Leslie nonetheless avoids most of his information and chooses instead to rewrite Boece. He uses the origin stories without any hint that they lack authenticity. Mair had discounted them as fables and not discussed them at all. Buchanan made use of the stories in a nationalistic way by refuting them but pointing out that the Scots chose a better story than the English. Leslie is still using them as fact until his death, fourteen years after Buchanan's.

In addition, there is little of Mair's critical analysis in Leslie. It is apparent that he preferred the more popular history of Boece and was not able to incorporate Mair's positive aspects on historical writing. What Leslie does have in common with Mair, however, is a strong theological perspective to the writing. Both Leslie and Mair write with one aim in mind, namely to get their current generation to turn away from its moral laxness and return to the higher values and standards of past ages.

Probably because of Leslie's interest in moral theology, he exhibits a less fervent brand of nationalism than his contemporary Buchanan, or his predecessors Boece, Wyntoun, and Fordun. Leslie does have strong nationalistic views, and his conviction that the behavior of the border Scots was caused by the laxness and immoral behavior of the English is certainly a case in point. However, it remains for Buchanan to carry this nationalism to the greatest lengths when nearly every event is used to extol the Scots at the expense of the English, resulting in the greater popular success for his history. Leslie's Catholicism also contributed to the fact that his history was less popular. Nevertheless, Leslie has written a nationalistic historical work designed as moral theology, and he is

trying in this way to provide a cure for the evils of his own time by the use of relevant examples.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a brief overview of the six major medieval and sixteenth-century Scottish historians. While each is unique in the way in which he conceived and wrote his particular history, there are similarities among them. Fordun and Wyntoun wrote over a century before the other four historians, and they were really the first to attempt the compilation of a complete history, rather than the abbreviated chronicles which had existed before. Wyntoun is unique in attempting a world history, but he ends up concentrating primarily on Scotland and its relationship with England. However, he accomplishes a great deal by setting Scottish history into the framework of a world chronology. Fordun likewise attempts to ground his history within a larger frame of reference, such as the papal chronology or the listing of Roman emperors.

Mair and Boece were contemporaries and their histories appeared within a space of six years, and yet it is hard to imagine two more contrasting works. Mair is the only one of our six historians who tries to write an unbiased history, rather than a strongly nationalistic one. However, his bias is for the union of the crowns, so his evidence and history is geared toward that end, demonstrating the connections between England and Scotland, rather than emphasizing the conflicts. Boece, on the other hand, writes a very rhetorical nationalistic history, and unlike most of our other historians, he makes very little use of citations or names of sources.

Finally, Buchanan and Leslie follow in the traditions of Fordun, Wyntoun, and Boece, with strong nationalistic histories. Buchanan had studied with Mair, and while he refuted specific aspects of Mair's history, nonetheless, he follows Mair's example of critically evaluating his materials, trying to analyze his sources. He, like Mair, refutes the origin stories, but his methodology is very different than Mair's. Leslie, on the other hand, states open admiration for Mair's accuracy, but then demonstrates a total disregard for Mair's historical methodology. Instead, Leslie combines heavy use of Boece with his own interests in the law.

This chapter has focused on discovering just how each of these six historians saw his task and role as an historian. Chapter II focuses on the ways in which each of these historians deals with the Arthur story. This analysis will serve to set the stage for chapter III where the focus is on the uses of history by these historians, noting whom they were writing for and what social and political functions they hoped to achieve.

CHAPTER II

The Historians' Views of Arthur

This chapter will look at the six Scottish historians' views on Arthur. Each of these six historians treats Arthur slightly differently, and each selects carefully which materials he will include. The treatment of Arthur by the Scottish chroniclers, reveals, as Fletcher has noted, that "an altogether new phase in the history of the Arthurian tradition appears in the Scottish chronicles, which, in extant forms, began to be composed toward the end of the fourteenth century" (241).[73] It was important for these historians to deal with Arthur, especially since, as Matheson notes, "accounts of King Arthur and his reign are included in the majority of historical chronicles dealing with the general history of England that were written in England between the twelfth and the fifteenth centuries" ("King Arthur" 248-49). The Scottish historians were writing in response to the English, in order to correct erroneous information and add missing data. While there are a variety of perspectives demonstrated in the Scottish histories, overall, the treatment has a new

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[73] Fletcher continues by noting that "in the Scots, we come to the traditional enemies of the races among which the Arthurian story arose and chiefly flourished." The Scots shared with the Saxons the distinction of being mentioned primarily as contributors "by their defeats to the glory of Arthur," but unlike the Saxons, they "had not found the opportunity or desire to forget that the defeats were theirs by going over to the side of the victors." The biggest difference in the accounts from the Scottish historians is the adoption of Lot and his son Mordred as Scottish heroes (241).

emphasis, even though the main source for these historians remains Geoffrey of Monmouth.[74] Karl Heinz Göller notes the different emphasis given by the Scottish historians by saying that "to Scottish nationalists Arthur was the embodiment of every English ruler who had hoped to conquer Scotland; to the minority with British sympathies, however, he was a symbol of the reconciliation and union of all races of the island" (173).[75] However, as shall be evident after the examination of each of these six historians, the Scottish view of Arthur is certainly not uniform, either in the materials used or the attitude towards him.[76] Sometimes Arthur gets little mention and other times the treatment is extensive. After the specific treatments of Arthur are examined, it will be possible to analyze why the historians handled the Arthurian materials the way that they

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[74]Matheson, "King Arthur and the Medieval English Chronicles," *King Arthur Through the Ages*, ed. Valerie M. Lagorio and Mildred Leake Day, 2 vols. (New York: Garland, 1990), 1: 248-74, finds that the story of Arthur, especially as found in the prose *Brut* had a profound influence on English national consciousness. Further, "the immediate success of Geoffrey of Monmouth's account of King Arthur and his reign gave rise to a self-reinforcing progression of chronicles that presented this account as historically true. Both then and through succeeding ages, the person and story of Arthur were eminently adaptable to ideological purposes" (265). The Scottish historians will use the Arthur story for similar purposes.

[75]Göller, "König Arthur in den Schottischen Chroniken," *Anglia* 80 (1962): 390-404, trans. Edward Donald Kennedy, *King Arthur: A Casebook* (New York: Garland, 1996): 173-84, states that the treatment of Arthur was frequently seen by the Scottish historians as the "embodiment of the threat from the South" (173).

[76]Flora Alexander, "Late Medieval Scottish Attitudes to the Figure of King Arthur: A Reassessment," *Anglia* 93 (1975): 2-34, discusses the lack of uniformity in the treatments of Arthur in Scottish writings. Alexander goes on to note that "Scottish chroniclers show themselves to be aware of the idea that Arthur's claim to kingship was a dubious one, but this does not necessarily lead to disapproval and rejection" (19).

did.[77] This will set the stage for chapter III which will look specifically at the social and political implications of each of these historians.

John Fordun

Fordun demonstrates his interest in the nature of kingship and succession in his treatment of Arthur. He discusses Arthur's ascent to the British throne, followed by another chapter devoted to the reasons for selecting Arthur as king, including comments about his character. Then, Fordun notes that Arthur fought a great battle and "fell wounded to the death" (103). This is all the information which Fordun chooses to present about Arthur.

Fordun does have some information concerning Merlin. He tells of several of Merlin's prophecies, to which he returns when describing the conflicts between Henry III and Alexander II. In addition Fordun relates Gildas's prophecies, as well as the events of Aurelius's reign. However, this is the full extent of the information on the Arthurian materials which Fordun includes in his history.

Fordun's sources for the Arthurian materials include Geoffrey of Monmouth as well as Gildas, Bede, and William of Malmesbury. Since Fordun includes few details on the Arthurian portion of his history, he does not show a great concern for his sources.

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[77] As Goldstein notes the Scots took advantage of Edward's desire to base his arguments on his sovereignty over Scotland on Geoffrey of Monmouth. "The Scots demonstrate successfully that two can play the game of legendary history. The primary attack on British legends rests not on the suggestion that they are false, but on the claim that they contain half-truths at best. Scottish legendary history purports to remedy the significant omissions of such authors as Geoffrey of Monmouth" (*Matter* 73).

However, he runs into variations in the material he presents, which he then has to find a way to reconcile. For example, when Fordun uses Geoffrey of Monmouth as a source to define Arthur's relationship to Mordred,[78] he discovers conflicting accounts where first Geoffrey says that "Mordred and Galwanus were the sons of Anna, sister of Aurelius, Arthur's uncle" but later on Geoffrey calls Arthur the uncle of Gawain. Fordun is unable to reconcile these conflicting statements, and so refers "this point to the sagacity of the reader to deal with; for I do not see my way easily to bring these passages into harmony with each other. But I believe it to be nearer the truth that Modred, as I have read elsewhere, was Arthur's sister's son; and that is the drift of this chapter" (103). This passage demonstrates again Fordun's historical methods. He is searching his available sources, which he credits as valid, and then does his best to verify the information and reconcile any differences. When he is unable to weave a consistent narrative, he tells his readers, letting them know that they must use their own sagacity to decide the truth for themselves. After saying this, he has no problem with offering his own conjectures as to the truth of the situation. Thus, Fordun has dealt honestly with his readers and done his best to present the truth as he finds it.[79]

Fordun gives more information about the events leading up to Arthur's reign. First

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[78] I have adopted a uniform spelling of names, using Norris J. Lacy, ed., *The New Arthurian Encyclopedia* (New York: Garland, 1991) as a source for the spelling of names from the Arthurian materials. Within individual quotations the author's spellings have been maintained.

[79] William Matthews, "The Egyptians in Scotland: The Political History of a Myth," *Viator* 1 (1970): 289-306, notes that Fordun's history is "generally a scholarly work, careful to report its sources and any discrepancies and variations in the evidence, grave in style." However, "Fordun's history is throroughly Scottish" (296).

he tells how the Britons under Vortigern, "being in constant fear of the onslaught of the Scots, and no longer trusting to the protection of the Romans, by the advice of their king invited over the nation of the Saxons, under two leaders, Hors and Hengist, to help in their defence, in A.D. 447, or, rather, 449, the thirty-third year of King Eugenius" (89). Fordun further explains that some chroniclers say that the Scots and Picts rose up against Vortigern

> with the most galling outrages and molestations. For, consuming everything with fire and sword, pillage and rapine, they crushed that sinful nation, who abetted the pride and extravagence of their king; so that the masses, as corrupt as their king, were overthrown in a common vengeance; while those of that miserable people whom the inroads of the enemy had not reached, were clean consumed by the severe famine. (89-90)

From Fordun's perspective, the Britons deserved everything they received from the Scots and the Picts because they allowed themselves to be ruled by an extravagant king who was known for the "wickedness and weakness" of his mind. Fordun cites Bede as his source for the information that when the Britons were "desolate and worn-out by the inroads of war, knew not what to do to oppose the irruptions of the enemy, and sank forlorn," they then agreed to "call over the Saxon nation to their aid, from the parts beyond the sea--which, as the issue of the matter more clearly proved, was surely contrived by the will of God, that evil might come upon the wicked" (90).

Fordun continues his history by alternating information first from Geoffrey and then from Bede, ending with a citation from William of Malmesbury. Fordun cites these

sources in his history, letting his readers know where he has received his information. Fordun states that there was a period of two years without a major battle, but that the "Saxons craftily suggested to Vortigern that if he could contrive to get some more stipendiaries from their country, they would easily enable him to overcome his aforesaid enemies." Soon, "swarms of those before-mentioned nations poured eagerly into the island; and the numbers of the strangers began to increase so much that they became a terror to the natives themselves who had invited them." The Britons now realize that they are in trouble, and they urge Vortigern to get rid of the foreigners. Vortigern would not do this "as he loved the Saxons above all other nations, on account of Hengist's daughter Rowen, whom he had taken to wife some time before." The Britons desert Vortigern, and set up Vortimer, the king's son, as king in his place, because Vortimer perceived that "he and his Britons were being undone by the craft of the Saxons." Vortimer then turns "his thoughts to driving them out, seven years after their arrival" (91).

Fordun's narration of these events demonstrates several interesting points which will become relevant in later Scottish history. First, it should be noted that the Britons were suffering the horrors of war, pestilence, and famine, because they were a sinful nation which had followed a foolish, greedy king. The Britons then found themselves in further difficulties because they had invited outsiders to assist them in their battles. Finally it should be noted that the Britons attempted to end their problems by deposing the existing king and transferring their loyalties to his son, the heir to the throne. As we will see in chapter III below, most of these same issues would become relevant for Scotland in the time of Edward I, and Scotland would suffer, Fordun no doubt believed, for the same

reasons.

The stage has been set by Fordun for the next step in the development of the events leading to Arthur's kingship. Vortimer decided that

> it would be unsafe rashly and precipitately to come into collision with the Saxons, before making friends with the Scots, for fear those two nations should combine their strength, and make an onslaught together upon the Britons; so he despatched messengers to King Dongardus, to induce him, in security of mind, to renew, against the heathen Saxons, the wonted treaty they had formerly concluded against the Romans, and to observe it faithfully in all respects. (92)

Vortimer was successful, and indeed managed to slay Hors and drive Hengist out of the country. Unfortunately for the Britons, Vortimer died, he "who so loathed this father's indolence that he would have governed the kingdom mightily, had God permitted it." Vortigern resumed the throne and the Saxons returned in even greater numbers, laying waste to everything. The Britons were either slaughtered or escaped to "Scotia, Wales, and Cornwall." Some did submit to the Saxons "to get some relief in food; though destined to undergo perpetual slavery, even if they were not murdered on the spot"(92-93). The contrast which Fordun makes between the reigns of Vortigern and his son Vortimer is extreme. The treacherous meeting between the British chieftains and the Saxons as told by Fordun is nearly identical to the later meeting in the time of William Wallace between the Scottish chieftains and the English, and such a parallel would certainly have been noted by Fordun's readers.

Vortigern dies a violent death, either being "struck by lightning, or, as *Geoffroy*

maintains, burnt to death in his own tower by Aurelius Ambrosius, this Aurelius was raised to the throne, by the Britons." Fordun gives no background for Aurelius, saying just that he was "a man of great moderation, who alone, probably, of the Roman nation, had survived the storm described above, in which his parents, who bore a royal and distinguished name, had been slaughtered." However, whatever his rights to the throne were, the fact remains that the Britons gained strength under his leadership. In fact, Aurelius sent "greeting to King Constantius [King of Scots], and earnestly besought him, by means of messengers, to take up arms without delay against the heathen Saxons, the restless foes of the true God and the Christian religion, and do his part in coming to the assistance of his allies the Britons, in consideration of the former alliance between them." Fordun states that Constantius was more than willing to do this, renewing and ratifying the treaty "with the greatest solemnities, to last in perpetuity--if, at least, Aurelius would do the same" (94-95). The Britons and Scots then combine forces to fight together against the Picts and Saxons. Fordun emphasizes the treaty between the Britons and the Scots many times, making it very clear to his readers that the Britons were in great distress and would have been totally destroyed if it were not for the peace between them and the Scots as well as the military assistance which the Scots gave in protecting them. Fordun emphasizes the implications of this information by recounting Merlin's prophecy about Vortigern. Fordun begins by noting that "a certain seer from Cambria, named Merlin, chanted many so-called prophecies, dark to the understanding, the meaning of which could never or seldom be discerned by any one until they were fulfilled; but which, on being fulfilled, or after they had come to pass, many very often believed they recognised" (95). Fordun tells his readers

that these prophecies may be found in Geoffrey's *Chronicle*. Fordun goes on to relate one concerning Vortigern, as he was

> sitting upon the bank of a drained pool, etc. He openly declares, however, among other things, that the Britons were to be driven out of the country by the Saxons; and that the Saxons were first to be overcome by the Danes, and then overthrown by the Neustrians, that is, the Normans,--which things, indeed, are, in our own days, known to have been truly fulfilled in all respects. He likewise foretold that the Britons, accompanied by the Armorican and Albanian nations, would wrest back their kingdom of long ago, from the Normans, who now reign in Anglia, and would thenceforth hold sway therein. (96)

Fordun is convinced that the end of this prophecy will one day be fulfilled, and by so writing, he is urging his readers to learn from the lessons of history, so that they will be ready for the fulfillment of Merlin's prophecy "which has still to come to pass."

Fordun relates that the "Britons maintained friendship with the Scottish tribes, and these with the Britons in return," fighting side by side against the Picts and Saxons. This friendship is continually emphasized, making the events surrounding Arthur's kingship more treacherous by contrast. Fordun quotes Gildas, "a sound and elegant historian," since it is because of him that the Britons "as divers histories bear witness, . . .were of any renown among the other nations" (98). Gildas tells of the friendship between the Britons and the Scots, saying that

> the friendly Scots shall see the Britons reign.
> The land shall bear its ancient name again. (99)

Fordun also quotes Gildas's prophecies concerning misfortunes which were to befall the Scots:

> Scotia shall mourn her famous kings of old--
> Her kings so just, rich, bountiful, and bold.
> For an unkingly king--so Merlin sings--
> Shall wield the sceptre of victorious kings. (99)

It is at this point, with all his main themes of friendships, good and evil kings, treachery, and prophecy in place, that Fordun introduces Arthur:

> Now, on the death of Uther, king of the Britons, by poison, through the perfidy of the Saxons (like his brother Aurelius of happy memory), his son Arthur, by the contrivance of certain men, succeeded to the kingdom; which nevertheless, was not lawfully his due, but rather his sister Anna's, or her children's. For she was begotten in lawful wedlock, and married to Loth, a Scottish consul, and lord of Laudonia (Lothian), who came of the family of the leader Fulgentius; and of her he begat two sons--the noble Galwanus and Modred--whom, on the other hand, some relate, though without foundation, to have had another origin. (101)

Fordun then explains the confusion in Geoffrey which was discussed earlier in this chapter about the exact relationships between Arthur, Anna, Mordred, Uther, and Aurelius. However, Fordun never states that Arthur is illegitimate, although he does stress that Anna's children were begotten lawfully and that as a result Arthur did not have a legal right to the throne. In fact, Fordun gives no specific details about Arthur at all. He is using Geoffrey as his main source, so he certainly could have included more, had it been

important to his history to do so. In fact, all Fordun wishes his readers to know is that Arthur became king while the "lawful heirs were passed over" because, as Geoffrey says, the Britons "were pressed by necessity" since the Saxons "were endeavouring to exterminate the Britons" (101). Fordun addresses the legality of this move, saying that "much depends on what and what manner of necessity that was." However, both Gawain and Mordred were still boys, while "Arthur was then a youth of fifteen years, of singular courage and bounteousness, to whom his innate goodness lent such a charm that he was beloved by almost all men" (102). Fordun is willing to acknowledge Arthur's charms and abilities, and he even mentions the many outbreaks of hostilities with the Saxons, but he does not leave his readers convinced that the necessity of the situation was such that Arthur's crowning was the only solution or that the accession of Arthur was in any way legal.

Fordun spends no more time on Arthur, except to mention that in the eighth year of the reign of Eugenius there "was fought in Britain a battle between the British king, Arthur, and his nephew Modred, wherein both of them fell wounded to death, with a great multitude of Britons as well as Scots" (103). Fordun has dealt with the only aspect about Arthur which is significant to his history, namely that Arthur wrongfully assumed the throne. Fordun has made excellent use of the background materials relating to the situation which led to Arthur's accession, however. He has explained in detail how Britain came to be in such dire straits, with the Saxons dominating them again and again. He has made it clear to his readers that the problems began because of the weak and wicked kingship of Vortigern. The situation improved radically under Vortimer, his son, who

assumed the throne at the people's request even though Vortigern was still living. Vortimer resumed friendly relations with the Scots, reaffirming a previous treaty. His untimely death led to a resumption of Vortigern's weak kingship and a more determined return of the Saxons.

Britain succeeds again under Aurelius Ambrosius, because, according to Fordun, he was a good king and he also resumes peaceful relations with the Scots. When the Britons have a good king and when they follow the terms of their treaty with the Scots, then they prosper. However, when Aurelius dies, followed by Uther, and Britain chooses Arthur to rule instead of the rightful heirs, then Britain is again in trouble.[80] Fordun repeats none of the information in Geoffrey concerning Arthur's actual reign, or his conquests in battle. This is not information which Fordun finds necessary to provide his readers with, because all that matters for Fordun is that Arthur's reign ends when he and Mordred battle to death, causing the death of both Britons and Scots alike. The treaty has been broken, in spite of the efforts of the Scottish king Eugenius who "passed the whole time of his administration in ceaseless struggles with the Saxons and Picts, while fortune yielded the victory sometimes to him, sometimes to them; and, doing his best to keep the peace with the Britons, and the bond of their pristine alliance, he oftentimes, himself present in person, tendered them his help against the heathens" (103).

Therefore, it may be concluded that Fordun has included only such information

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[80] Fletcher notes that Fordun repeats very little about Arthur's actual reign, but explains clearly that the Britons chose Arthur because of their fear of the Saxons, even though "the succession to the kingdom belonged by right to Anna, the sister of Arthur and the wife of Loth, and to her children, because of Arthur's illegitimacy" (242).

about Arthur as he needs to support his claim that Arthur ruled without a proper legal claim. Fordun has no interest in repeating the information from Geoffrey which would further the Arthurian legends.[81] He gives many more details about Vortigern, Vortimer, and Aurelius Ambrosius, because, as I will argue below, these details were more relevant to Scotland's more recent history. Accounts such as that of the slaying of the British chieftains by the treachery of the Saxons would immediately capture the interest of Fordun's readers as it is a direct parallel to events of more modern times. The conflicts arising because of weak and wicked monarchs was likewise important to Fordun, as were the methods for changing kings. He was very careful to note that even though Vortigern was still alive, the people selected Vortimer as king. Again, the process for selecting kings has tremendous relevance for Fordun's own time.

Therefore, Fordun's choice of materials reflects the aims of his history.[82] He has a variety of sources, and even if they are not as complete or as abundant as he would like,

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[81] Alexander argues that there are "no grounds for regarding Fordun as hostile to Arthur: indeed all the evidence points in the opposite direction" (20). I would agree that Fordun uses Geoffrey's very favorable estimation of Arthur, but while Fordun may not have been hostile to Arthur's personality, he certainly does present a strong case against the legality of Arthur's succession. In fact, Fordun's emphasis on the Scottish claim to the English throne was a direct response to Edward I's use of Arthur. However, as Göller notes, Fordun's efforts were not as successful. "Edward I had, on similar grounds, claimed the throne of Scotland. The Scottish claim was to remain politically insignificant; and this new interpretation of the Arthurian story stood no chance of gaining acceptance outside of Scotland" (176-77).

[82] Goldstein states Fordun's aim most succinctly when he says that "Fordun's message to his nation is clear. As in Barbour, the significance of the exemplum is double-edged. Not only must Scotland retain its freedom from foreign rule at all costs, as it always has done, but the Scottish people must also humbly obey their lawfully established king" (*Matter* 126).

nonetheless, he includes materials based on their accuracy and their relevancy to the narration of the history of Scotland. The aspects of the Arthurian materials which Fordun includes demonstrate his focus on the nature of kingship and succession.

Andrew Wyntoun

Andrew Wyntoun devotes about the same amount of space to his discussion of Arthur as Fordun had done, but he mentions very different events and gives a totally distinct perspective. He has nothing but praise for Arthur and he is also concerned primarily with issues of national sovereignty. He spends most of his time discussing Arthur's conquests in response to the Roman demand for tribute. There is a brief mention of the arrival of the Saxons, but nothing about the way in which Arthur attained the crown of Britain. Wyntoun mentions the Round Table as well as Mordred's treason, but does not give specific information regarding Arthur's death.[83]

Wyntoun refers frequently in his section on Arthur to various sources, including Huchown and the *Brute*. Unfortunately neither of these sources, which are Wyntoun's main references for the Arthurian materials, can be positively identified. Wyntoun himself

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[83] Matthews notes that Wyntoun's history is both less scholarly and also less political than Fordun's, raising no protest about Edward I's seizure of the Stone of Scone. He presents the two origin legends in a non-competitive way, "without the least indication of any political rivalry between them. Still more surprising is the noncombativeness of its [i.e., Wyntoun's] biography of King Arthur; it reports his mighty conquests without questioning their actuality or their justification, shows no awareness of the problem of Arthur's legitimacy, and regards Mordred as a traitor–though it makes no mention of Mordred's being either Scot or Pict. This failure to apply the legends to national interests is striking in a fifteenth-century Scottish historian who could scarcely have been ignorant of the political implications" (297).

credits Huchown not only with his *Gest Historyalle*, the source which Wyntoun is using, but also with "a gret Gest of Arthure," as well as "the Awntyr of Gawane," and "the Pistil als of Suet Susane" (V: 4310-12). Other scholars have credited Huchown as at least the possible author for *Gawain and the Green Knight* and *Pearl*. Whoever Huchown may have been, he apparently was a significant source for Wyntoun.[84] Possibly he was the greatest Scots poet before Dunbar.[85]

Wyntoun's other main acknowledged source for the Arthurian materials is simply called the *Brute*, which generally refers to Geoffrey's *Historia*, but Wyntoun does also refer to Barbour's *Brute*, which no longer is extant, and probably if it did exist was limited to a genealogical list.[86] Wyntoun also made use of various chronicles as well as Geoffrey of Monmouth for the materials in this section.

Wyntoun begins his materials about Arthur with the arrival of the Saxons, just as

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[84] Henry Noble MacCracken, "Concerning Huchown," *PMLA* 25 (1910): 507-34, maintains that the *Cambridge History of English Literature*, as well as other works, identifing Huchown of the Awle Ryale as the English statesman Sir Hew of Eglintoun, a contemporary of Barbour, are overly hasty. MacCracken notes that much of the information used in such an identification is based on a large amount of guesswork. While Sir Hew traditionally has been identified as the only Hew living in the fourteenth or fifteenth century who was a poet, and Huchown is a variation of the name Hew, still "Hew was not an uncommon name in Scotland and there may well have been other Hews who were poets in that time. Sir Hew is never called Huchown of the Awle Ryale in any document of the period, but is always referred to as Sir Hew of Eglintoun." Therefore, it is just as reasonable to conclude that Huchown of the Awle Ryale was a Scot.

[85] Agnes Mure MacKenzie, *An Historical Survey of Scottish Literature to 1714* (London: Maclehose, 1933; Norwood, 1977) 29-30.

[86] See Matthew P. McDiarmid and James A. C. Stevenson, ed., "Barbour's *Othir Werk*," *Barbour's Bruce: A Fredome is a Noble Thing!*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 1985), 1: 17-22.

Fordun had done. However, Wyntoun gives very few historical details about the Saxon invasion. There is no mention of Hors and Hengist, for example, or of Vortimer. The entire period from the invasion of the Saxons through Aurelius is told in just a few lines, most of which is given as an account of Merlin's prophecy:

The Saxonys of Duchelande
Arrywit that tyme in Inglande;
Merlyne alsua mystely
That tyme made his prophecy.
How Wertogerne withe his falsheide
Off Brittane made the kyngis dede,
How Vter and Aurelyus,
To surnayme callit Ambrosyus,
Off Inglande prewaly past than,
And eftyr bade in Les Brettan;
And the Saxonys withe thar slycht
In Inglande coyme, and al thar mycht
Was ekyt that in multitude
Thar war slayn doun the Brutis blude,
And Inglande thar eftyr ay
Thai haf ȝhit haldyn to this day,
The Brute tellis opynly;
Tharfor I lef now that story. (V: 4219-32)

Merlin gives his prophecy mysteriously just as the Saxons are arriving in England. Wyntoun relates the outline of the prophecy, but then he refers his readers to "the *Brute*" for fuller details. In as much as Wyntoun is undertaking a history of the world since Creation, he cannot expand on every incident. Merlin's prophecy is obviously important to Wyntoun, but he can deal with it briefly, confident that his readers would be able to fill in the details. Wyntoun does not need to comment in depth about either Merlin or the nature of his prophecies. Fordun had compared Merlin's prophecies with Gildas's, and he had also demonstrated that the very nature of prophecy was such that it sometimes only became clear after the events of the prophecy had actually come to pass. Wyntoun does not debate the validity of Merlin's prophecies. Instead, he uses the prophecies to summarize many years of history.

Wyntoun finds it unnecessary to give a detailed account of the arrival of the Saxons in Britain. It is only important to Wyntoun that his readers be given a brief summary of the events, in order that they will recall the complete story from the *Brute*. Wyntoun emphasizes the points he considers most relevant. The falsehood of Vortigern (Wertogerne) is stressed. Uther and Aurelius's arrival from "Less Britain" is noted, with no account given as to their right to the throne. These events all occurred when Theodosius the Younger was emperor.

Wyntoun ensures that his brief account reminds his readers that the Britons suffered from the Saxons because of the falsehood of their own king, Vortigern. Also, they were overwhelmed by the sheer multitudes of the incoming Saxons as well as by their cunning and trickery. Any hope which they might have had for withstanding the Saxons

came from Uther and Aurelius, who had secretly waited in "Lesser Britain" before arriving to fight the Saxons. The Britains obviously needed a strong king who was righteous and truthful, the very opposite of Vortigern.

Wyntoun then continues by grounding British history in the framework of both the papal chronology and the historical lists of Roman emperors. For example, using information from Higden's *Polychronicon* Wyntoun says that

> quhen this Leo wes emperour
> King of Brettane than wes Arthour. (V: 4279-80)

Earlier, Wyntoun had noted that

> The Saxonys in Inglande war
> Qwhen Theodosyus ȝoungare
> Off the impyre helde the state. (V: 4233-35)

The emperors are themselves placed within the papal chronology. Wyntoun's desire to write a complete world history requires that he keep all the major events in some sort of sequence, and he selects the framework of the popes and Roman emperors as the most obvious and accurate way to order his history.

Wyntoun chooses to mention Arthur's conquests outside of Britain. Fordun had omitted mentioning Arthur's European victories, possibly because they added nothing to his main point about Arthur, namely that while he was no doubt a good and admired leader, he had nevertheless obtained the crown of Britain fraudulently. Wyntoun never discusses how Arthur became king. For Wyntoun, this is not important. What is important is that Arthur made a name for himself as a warrior not only in Britain, but also

all through Europe. Arthur had won:

all Frawnsse and Lumbardy,
Gyan, Gaskoyn and Normanday,
[Burgon], Flanderis and Brabande,
Henaude, Holande and Goutlande,
Sweys, Swetheryk and Norway,
Denmark, Irland and Orknaye;
And all the Ilis in the se
Subiet war til his pouste. (V: 4259-66)

This list of conquered lands serves Wyntoun well. First, Scotland is noticeable by its absence. Arthur is not listed as a ruler of Scotland. Second, this list of conquered lands precedes Rome's demand that Arthur pay tribute for his lands. Arthur has ruled all the aforementioned lands:

And all thir landis euir ilkan
To the crowne of Brettane
He ekyt hail, and made thaim fre,
But subdit til his realte,
Withe out serwis or homage,
Or ony payment of [trewage]
Mad to Rome, as befor thai
Lange tyme oyssit for to pay. (V: 4267-74)

Arthur had conquered all these lands without having to pay any tribute to Rome and he

was not going to start paying any now.

Wyntoun gives his readers direct information about his sources. He is confronted with differences among his sources as to who actually required the tribute from Arthur. Just who was this Lucius? At this point Wyntoun must deal with discrepancies among his authorities as to who the emperor was or what Lucius' title was, and Wyntoun excuses some of the sources which might "[wauer] fra the suythfastnes" for the sake of eloquence. Wyntoun comments on Huchown, for instance "that cunnande was in littratur" (V: 4309):

He was curyousse in his stille,
Fayr of facunde and subtile,
And ay to pleyssance hade delyte
Mad in metyr meit his dyte. (V: 4313-16)

However, Huchown never wanders from the truth for the sake of eloquence.

Hade he [Huchown] callyt Lucyus procuratoure,
Qwhar that he callit hym emperoure,
He had ma grewit the cadence
Than had relewit the sentence;
Ane emperoure, in propyrte
A commawndour sulde callit be;
Lucyus swylk micht haf beyn kende
Be the message at he sende.
Heyr sufficiande excusacyonys
For wilful defamacionys;

He mon be war in mony thynge

That wil him kep fra mysdoynge. (V: 4319-30)

Wyntoun acknowledges that some latitude may be taken for the sake of the cadence, but in so doing he also insists that one must avoid "mysdoynge" or wrong judgments. As Breisach notes, medieval historians felt that the purpose of history was to teach, and so they were concerned with being truthful as far as avoiding evil and choosing good. Minor variances could then be tolerated, as long as the overall message was the same.[87] The needs of the poet for a good cadence, especially for someone of Huchown's reputation, would allow for variations as long as the general truth was still the same. In this case, no matter what Lucius's exact title was, he still obviously bore enough authority to make effective demands on Arthur for tribute. Arthur took the demands seriously enough to discuss them with his Round Table "Ducheperis" before setting out with an army to Rome to answer those demands.

Wyntoun discusses Arthur's overall character next, saying that

Arthuris gret douchtynes,

His worschip and his with prowes,

His conquest and his ryall stait. (V: 4331-33)

He talks about the Round Table with its twelve peers, and describes the destruction of it all because

of tresson til hym don

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[87] Breisach says that "truth sprang not from a detached establishing of neutral facts but from a devout look at the past in the interest of faith" (127).

Be Modrede, his systyr son. (V: 4345-46)

Once again, treachery and false leadership have caused Britain's ruin. While Arthur is out of the country, on his way to answer Lucius's demands, Mordred is able to destroy what Arthur has left behind. Again, Wyntoun does not give any details, but merely refers his readers to Huchown who

has tretyt curyously

In Gest of Brutis aulde story. (V: 4351-52)

No information is found in Wyntoun as to the last battle or Mordred's end. When Wyntoun reaches the end of Arthur's life, he notes that

Bot of his ded and his last ende

I fande na wryt couythe mak me kende;

Sen I fande nane that thar of wrate,

I will say na mar than I wate.

Bot qwhen that he had fouchtyn fast,

Eftyr in til ane Ile he past,

Sare wondit, to be lechit thar,

And eftyr he was seyn na mare. (V: 4353-60)

Wyntoun will not give any evidence as to the end of Arthur's life, but he does repeat enough to indicate the belief that Arthur went to an island and was seen no more.

Wyntoun's comments on the end of Arthur's life point out another of the difficulties which he and our other historians confronted, namely the lack of sources or information on certain subjects. Wyntoun handles this difficulty openly, telling his readers

that he cannot give the information when he lacks supporting authorities. He does manage to hint, though, at the missing information about Arthur's end, leaving it to his readers to decide if Arthur died or if he will return again.

This is all the information which Wyntoun presents about Arthur. He continually refers his readers to other sources such as Huchown and the *Brute* if they wish to discover more. However, for the purposes of Wyntoun's history, he needs only to remind his readers of a few salient points. Wyntoun does wish to be sure his readers realize that Britain is in trouble with Saxon domination because of poor leadership. While Wyntoun does not discuss how Arthur came to the throne, he has nothing but praise for Arthur, and is the first of the Scottish historians to mention Arthur's tremendous prowess in battle, giving full credit to Arthur for all of his victories. Wyntoun also emphasizes Arthur's refusal to pay any tribute to the Romans, because he has achieved all his victories without any Roman help and without owing any homage to Rome. Wyntoun finds that it is not right for Rome to appear claiming sovereignty and the right to tribute over Arthur's Britain simply because Arthur has demonstrated his ability to lead his people and bring some measure of order to the chaos which had existed. Wyntoun's reasons for stressing this aspect of the Arthurian material, namely Rome's demands and Arthur's refusal to acquiesce, will be discussed in depth in chapter III. For now, it is enough to note Wyntoun's emphasis on Arthur's refusal to submit to Rome.

Wyntoun also uses this section on Arthur to ground his history once more in the overall world chronology, especially the history of the popes and Roman emperors. This methodology of placing the one chronology within a wider, more established chronology

serves to legitimize the early history of Scotland and Britain. It is important for Wyntoun to make this history accurate and real to his readers if he is going to be able to draw on it later on in order to provide examples for present problems and give evidence about appropriate courses of action.

Therefore, Wyntoun has placed his selection of Arthurian information within his history, making use of the general world chronology. As Fordun did as well, Wyntoun has selected those portions of the Arthur story which fit the overall thematic needs of his work. While Fordun and Wyntoun choose very different aspects of the Arthurian materials to present, they both make their selections from similar motives. Both have need for proof about events which occurred during or just before the writing of their histories, as shall be shown in chapter III of this dissertation. Both historians then select from the various sources on hand the materials which they need to prove their point. Fordun's emphasis is on the methods for selecting a king and on the importance of just and fair rulers. Wyntoun is concerned with the necessity for just and fair rulers, but he also wants to raise the issue of national sovereignty. He has picked from his Arthurian sources the information concerning Arthur's refusal to submit to claims of sovereignty by Rome. Wyntoun demonstrates the justice of Arthur's claims, and he further shows how Rome's claims, which drew Arthur away from Britain and allowed Mordred to gain power, caused the destruction of Arthur and his Round Table, and by extension, the safety and peace of Britain. Wyntoun will be able to follow up on this knowledge of the evil caused by false claims to sovereignty in more modern times, as will be shown below.

John Mair

John Mair deals more extensively with Arthur than either Fordun or Wyntoun. He has a lengthy section dealing with Merlin's birth and his prophecies. These prophecies are discussed again later in the history with reference to both Edward I and Edward II. Mair then gives the details of Arthur's birth and his unlawful succession. He adds information about Arthur's determination to destroy the Scots and subdue both Britain and parts of Europe. Mair mentions Arthur's Round Table and his armor. He discusses Arthur's position as one of the Nine Worthies, as well as Arthur's relationship with Angusel, King of the Scots. Mair concludes with the final battle, as well as the proverb concerning Arthur's return. He mentions that Arthur is buried in Glastonbury. Mair has included all the information which was found in either Fordun or Wyntoun, as well as adding details which the two other Scottish historians had decided not to mention.

Mair uses a variety of sources for his Arthurian materials, including Gerald Cambrensis, Bede, and Fordun. However, most of his information comes from Geoffrey of Monmouth. Mair is the first Scottish historian to treat the Arthurian story in any great detail. He needs a source which gives more than brief mention of Arthur, and for this Geoffrey of Monmouth is crucial. Mair has already demonstrated that he is aware of possible inaccuracies within Geoffrey's history, but nevertheless, overall, he accepts the narrative about Arthur which Geoffrey has pulled together.

Like Fordun and Wyntoun, Mair begins his account of the Arthur story with a detailed description of the coming of the Saxons. Wyntoun covers this period in history briefly, but Fordun provides a detailed account. Mair follows Fordun's emphasis on this

phase in the history of Britain, but he adds more details as well as more analysis of the events. He begins by relating how Vortigern, earl of Wessex, had Constantine, the king, killed by making an alliance with the Picts. "These Picts, therefore, that they might do Vortiger a pleasure, by a deed of daring rashness murdered king Constantius. Vortiger thereupon orders his hundred Picts to be seized, and sends them to London, where, under the sword of the avenger, they paid the penalty of their crime. This he did that, under a cloak of deceit, he might hide his own guilt" (68). Mair has done more than merely relate that Vortigern was a deceitful king; he has given precise particulars about how Vortigern took hostages and used others to accomplish his own gains. Vortigern will use this method again when he forms an alliance with the Saxons to gain assistance in defending his territory. Mair makes it clear to his readers that Vortigern is in need of assistance as a direct result of his own treachery. His treatment of the Picts, whom he had deceived and then murdered, led directly to an alliance of the Picts with the Scots against the Britons. "When the Picts heard of the slaughter of their own soldiers, they were filled with indignation at a crime so foul, so dyed with treachery, and, with the Scots, their confederates, they make for the northern part of the Briton's country, which they laid waste, nothing sparing" (68-9).

Furthermore, Vortigern has more difficulties because of the actual murder of Constantine. "Aurelius Ambrosius and Uther, the brothers of murdered Constantius, were on their way with an armed force to attack Vortiger" (69). Vortigern then has to look to the Saxons for assistance, and in fact Mair tells his readers that "Hengist makes Vortiger king, on the understanding that he should have a place given him wherein to build a castle,

and land for his men--a condition that was readily granted" (69). Vortigern soon marries Hengist's daughter after secretly yielding all of Kent to the Saxons.

Mair now discusses the repercussions of these actions.

> But this thoughtless marriage of his with a heathen damsel, whose character was all unknown to him, and the loss to his kingdom of large possessions, which accompanied the union, were his destruction. It was this conduct that stirred up some men of rank in the kingdom, who soon stripped Vortiger of the sovereign power, and placed the crown on the head of his son Vortimer, born of a Christian woman. (70)

Mair is following the information found in Fordun, but supplementing it with many more details. He can analyze why Vortimer was made king over Vortigern, and further he details just how Vortimer died. Vortimer's stepmother makes away with Vortimer by poison (70). This results in Vortigern resuming the throne, as well as the invasion of Britain by the Saxons. The Saxon treachery is recounted, as Fordun had also told, whereby the Saxons had carried concealed daggers in their boots and when Hengist

> gave the word--'The time is come to speak of peace and friendship'--they were to make a sudden rush upon the Britons thus caught unarmed and unawares. To Engist they gave heed, and there fell through Saxon treachery upon that hill ten hundred and sixty noble men among the Britons. Vortiger, the king, was taken, and that he might escape with his life, he handed over to the Saxons his strong places, cities, and all munition of war, and with the Britons fled into Wales, -- where to this day may be found the true Britons and the British tongue. (70-71)

Mair recounts these events clearly and in full detail so that his readers will understand the dangers of treachery and deceit, especially in kings. Both Fordun and Mair spend considerable time with this particular moment in history, but as we shall see below, they do it for different reasons.

Mair continues the prelude to Arthur's rule by relating how Vortigern, now forced to build in Wales, has problems getting defenses constructed for protection against the Saxons. It is at this point that Mair provides a description of Merlin's birth and early history. He narrates the account of Merlin's mother who admits that she has no idea who Merlin's father was, but that "there came in to her once, when every door was closed, a well-favoured man (such at least she thought him), and he had many times had to do with her" (74). Mair then details three possible explanations for this claim. "This matter may be explained in three ways; and, firstly, thus: The woman was ashamed to declare the father of Ambrosius Merlinus . . . A second explanation is this: a succubus demon may have had a fruitful seed from some man . . . I come now to the third fancy: a demon can open a door without a key" (75). Mair then evaluates each of the three explanations, concluding that he personally accepts the "first, therefore, or the third view as the more probable, dismissing the second as in itself suspicious, and also as failing to prove the birth of Merlin without a father" (76). Mair does not discount the fabulous aspects of Geoffrey's narrative,[88] but rather spends a great deal of time working on the resolution of the facts, and would seem to be using logic and reason to decide between the

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[88] Fletcher notes that Mair "comments on the more fabulous portions of Geoffrey's narrative. This learned scholar and divine does not reject the magic incidents, but tries instead to explain them" (244).

explanations.[89] Ultimately he allows his readers to form their own conclusions, just as Fordun had done earlier. However, unlike Fordun, Mair has made a real effort to analyze his sources and apply reason and logic to their information. Mair also makes it clear to his readers which explanations seem plausible to him and which do not. This method of analysis, as was discussed in chapter I of this dissertation, reflects Mair's absorption of the Renaissance modes of inquiry.

Having dealt with Merlin's birth, Mair then discusses the dragons in the underground lake and Merlin's prophecies regarding future British history. However, Mair finds that some things cannot be foretold with certainty. Mair does not deny the validity of the prophecies themselves, or of Merlin, but he expresses concern over just how much these prophecies are able to foretell.

> Many things of this sort the demon was able to reveal to Merlin--such as that of the fighting dragons and the lake; but as to things future and contingent, --for example, that the Saxons should conquer the Britons, or that the brothers of Constantius would slay king Vortiger,--the demon had not the power to foretell with certainty. He can indeed read the signs of the times and forecast the future more clearly than is possible to man; but the purely contingent he cannot with certainty foretell. (77)

Mair will return to the matter of Merlin's prophecies when he discusses Edward I.

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[89] This method of evaluation matches at least partially that of the ancient Hellenistic historians, who came to accept only those accounts which reason could approve. The Renaissance historians were using these ancient historians as models for changes in their own historical methodology. See Breisach p. 31.

He notes that in the matter of the right of succession in Scotland and the conflict with Edward I, that "Caxton makes mention of a prophecy of Merlin's about this same Edward. For the English Merlin, who was a seer, used to say that one day there should sit upon the throne a dragon pitiful and brave, who should open his mouth over Wales, and plant upon Wyk his foot. All this they claim to have found fulfilment in Edward" (224). Mair goes on to note that others have interpreted Merlin's prophecies differently, and some of these interpretations, such as that naming Robert Bruce as the fox which the dragon would rear, Mair questions, but nevertheless Mair presents the actual prophecies as valid. He decides, however, that his treatment of the prophecies "shall be here, as elsewhere, dry and meagre" (224). He presents the various interpretations of the prophecies, but does not attempt to reconcile them or come to a definitive answer. The interpretation of prophecies is one which was not easily answered.

Later on in his history Mair again deals with some prophecies of Merlin, noting that "about this same Edward of Carnarvon [Edward II] the English histories like to recall certain prophecies of Merlin" (254). Mair gives the English historians' interpretations of these prophecies, but then concludes that while these historians have spent time trying "to disentangle many more of Merlin's knotty sayings," Mair himself confesses that "I lay no great store by his misty dicta, for they are no more than mist in the clouds of the air" (254). Does Mair discount the interpretation of these prophecies because they are unfavorable to the Scots? This is one possible explanation, but it is also possible that Mair finds the interpretation of prophecies to be problematic, and further decides that the resolution of these discrepancies is not of primary importance to him.

Mair moves on to the events from the reign of Aurelius Ambrosius, detailing how the Britons were eager to make Aurelius their king. The rights of Aurelius and Uther to the kingship had been narrated earlier, when their relationship to the murdered Constantine was given. Aurelius and Uther were Constantine's younger brothers, who had been hidden away in "Less Britain" after the assassination of their father Constantine by the Picts. Constans, the eldest of Constantine's sons, had become a monk, but he was proclaimed king by Vortigern. In fact, Constans was only a puppet whom Vortigern quickly disposed of. Once Aurelius has "made an end of Vortiger and his men" (78), he appeals to the Picts and the Scots to assist him in driving out the Saxons. The Picts reply that they are under treaty with the Saxons and therefore refuse to help. The Scots however, agree to send some troops to help the Britons. Mair quotes Bede as saying that "between the Saxons and the Picts, whom one and the same necessity had drawn to make a common stand, the war is carried on with their joint forces against the Britons and the Scots" (78). Hengist is defeated "by Aurelius Ambrosius and the Scots" (79). Mair stresses the joint participation by the Britons and the Scots, as an indication of his overall theme of the necessity for the unification of the crown of Britain. Aurelius is poisoned by a Saxon and he is buried "in the monastery of Stonehenge, which Aurelius himself had built in honour of the Britons that had been slain by Engist" (79). Mair accounts for the building of Stonehenge as a tribute to the Britons, but makes no mention of how it was built or whether Merlin assisted in the construction.

However, Mair does include the appearance of the comet which announced Aurelius's death to Uther, Merlin, and others, and further includes Merlin's interpretation

of the comet.

> Uther, Merlin, and many more, saw this comet, and Merlin declared to Uther its hidden signification. Through this comet he knew Aurelius Ambrosius, though the two were far distant from one another, to be dead. By the ray to the east, he declared that Uther should have a son, who should gain possession of both Gauls and many kingdoms in the east, and who should far excel in renown all the Britons. (80)

Thus, Arthur's reign is foretold at the death of Aurelius.

Mair then summarizes Uther's reign primarily to include the way in which "he changed himself by means of Merlin's incantations into the outward seeming of her [Ygrene's] husband, and so, the woman all ignorant of the crime, he had to do with her, and by her he begat Arthur, afterwards king. Herein Merlin sinned, in cooperating with the king, so that he should have carnal dealing with the wife of another, nor can he by any means be cleared of blame in the matter" (81). Mair gives the details and then shows no hesitation about judging the act, laying blame not only on Uther, but also Merlin for improper use of his abilities. Again, the historian reserves the right to make his own judgment on the events and actions of the past. Mair does not simply present the evidence; he also frequently gives his evaluation of it.

It is at this point that Mair begins his accounting of the life of Arthur, noting that "concerning the life of king Arthur, I find a great variety of statement" (81). Mair will work at resolving any differences, just as he has done before, weighing the information which he has and evaluating it to the best of his abilities, but allowing his readers the

freedom to do the same. He begins Arthur's succession to the throne, stating that "inasmuch as he was a bastard, his origin is a more doubtful matter, and it is a question how he came to his kingdom." Mair decides, like Fordun before him, that Anna, the sister of Aurelius, had borne lawful children to Lot, the lord of the Lothians, "whence by right of succession the kingdom of the Britons should have fallen to Modred. But here the Britons say that Modred and Valvanus were under age, and as the need was urgent, and a hostile invasion was imminent, they were held to be unfit to guide the affairs of the Britons. Wherefore into the hands of Arthur, albeit he was a bastard, they gave the reins of government" (82).

While the details are more complete than those found in Fordun, the conclusion is the same. Both Mair and Fordun find that Arthur assumed the throne unlawfully. Mair, however, differs from Fordun in that he presents an alternative plan which should have been used and which would have solved the issue of the kingship lawfully while still allowing for effective leadership. "Now I am not prepared to deny that, in case of necessity, it is within the rights of the people to transfer from one race to another the kingly power; but let that be always done after weighing carefully all the circumstances and with deliberation. And they should rather have said that to Modred, inasmuch as he was under age, a coadjutor should have been given" (82). Mair includes this information here in the story of Arthur's succession, but it will be applicable in more modern history later on, as will be demonstrated in chapter III of this dissertation.

Mair goes on to say that whatever the legality of the situation, the actual facts remain. "However this matter should have been undertaken, what is certain is this: that

Arthur, youth as he was, was declared king of the Britons." As far as Arthur himself is concerned, Mair readily concedes that "his natural endowment was of the noblest; he was fair and beautiful to look on, of a most chivalrous spirit, and none was more ambitious of warlike renown." According at least to the British chroniclers, Arthur was successful not only in driving out the Saxons from the island, but "the Scots and the Picts likewise (if we are to credit British chroniclers) he brought under subjection, and compelled to obedience. At Edinburgh, in Scotland, was Arthur's kingly seat, and to this day that spot near Edinburgh bears his name. He is said to have tarried some time in the castle of Stirling; but the Scots were not then in possession of that region" (82). Mair has included information from the British chroniclers which Fordun did not. This selection of materials relates clearly to the reasons behind the two histories. Fordun is stressing Scottish independence, so he would not include any indications of British domination, especially when this information is not supported by information from his own Scottish chroniclers. Mair, on the other hand, can include the information to his advantage. He notes that the details are found in British chroniclers, who may or may not be believable on this particular point. However, by including the possibility that there had been some sort of early linking of the countries, he is preparing the way for substantiating his claim that both nations would be served by a more equitable union of the crowns in present times.

As far as Arthur's dealings with the Scots themselves, Mair tells his readers that "the king of the Scots (as they relate) went out to war with Arthur, and so became subject to him, or was joined in a league of friendship or by necessity. He set before him to destroy all the Scots once for all, and would have done this had they not come to him as

suppliants" (82-83). Mair informs his readers that he takes this information from Geoffrey of Monmouth, and Mair goes on to recount Geoffrey's accounts of Arthur's conquests, concluding that whatever else may be said about Arthur, he "was renowned in war" (84). Mair recounts what he has read "in the histories of the Britons, that Anguischel, king of the Scots, when he was about to lead a great force beyond sea to fight along with Arthur, marched against the emperor of the Romans, with Arthur returned to Britain, and was slain in his first conflict along with Gawain against Modred; and Arthur caused his body to be carried with all honour into Scotland" (84). Mair says that "for albeit the king of the Scots loved Arthur on account of his uprightness, among the Scots themselves he was hated, perchance because they desired to serve under Modred for the pay that he would give them" (84). Mair has placed the Scots and their king into the context of Arthur's European victories, and also has them participating in the final battle. The conflict among the Scots as to whether to follow Arthur, who is accounted a truly great leader, or Mordred, who should legally have had the throne, is portrayed by Mair in an effort to keep the Britons and the Scots within the same historical chronology.

Mair recounts the final battle between Mordred and Arthur, wherein both came to their ends. This battle took place because "Modred was unlawfully intimate with his queen Gaunora, and had proclaimed himself king of Britain." Arthur must return from his wars with Rome in order to meet this threat to his kingdom. Mair makes it clear that this war is a civil war brought on by treachery and deceit on one side, as well as a general dissatisfaction on the part of some about Arthur. Arthur "returned to Britain, and Modred met him with a great army; for Modred had with him various among the Britons, Saxons,

Picts, and Scots, and those who were ill-affected towards Arthur." He relates that when Arthur "knew his wound was mortal," he set out "for a certain island that he might there be cured, and that he would thereafter return to reign again" (84), but Mair concludes that "however this may be, Arthur was buried in Glastonbury, and at his burying was sung a verse in no way differing from the opinion of the vulgar, which verse runs thus: 'Here lies Arthur, great king was he, and king will be'" (85). Again Mair weighs the evidence, expressing his reservations, and helping the reader to arrive at a logical conclusion. He selects information which will assist in the overall theme of his history, and his account of the final battle is the first time that a Scottish historian has included the information about Mordred and Guenevere. Mair may be including it to demonstrate that there were faults on both sides of the issue. He would not want the Scots assuming that Mordred was the injured party, bearing no guilt of his own. Mair is also the first to stress the fact that there were Scots on both sides of the final battle, and that there had been a firm alliance between the Scots and the Britons, with the Scots participating in Arthur's conquests in Europe.

After the retelling of these various accounts of the events surrounding Arthur, Mair concludes that:

> the extravagant laudation of Arthur by the Britons leads to a partial doubt of the facts of his life. The prayers that were made to him from a bed of sickness, and many other things that are related concerning Arthur and Valvanus, in respect to events that are said to have come to pass in Britain at that time--all these I count as fiction, unless indeed they were brought about by craft of demons. And for this

> reason certain writers, like him of Bergamo in the Supplement to his Chronicles[90], hold Arthur himself to have been a magician. But to this belief, about a king of such renown, I cannot give assent. (85)

Mair thus discounts the assertion that Arthur was a magician, but nevertheless, he does call Arthur a "king of such renown" and again gives him credit for much of what is attributed to him. He mentions that Arthur has been listed "among the Nine Just Men [the Nine Worthies]," and while Mair continues with a discussion as to the validity of assigning such prominence to those particular nine men, he nevertheless concedes Arthur's right to a place of honor. He challenges Arthur's original accession to the throne, because the nature of his birth makes him a bastard. He also discounts certain miraculous events, but even there allows room for doubt as he says they are fiction "unless indeed they were brought about by craft of demons." Overall, Mair presents a picture of Arthur which shows him as a great warrior and leader, although without a legitimate right to his throne.[91]

In conclusion, Mair has detailed much more of Arthur's story than either Fordun or

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[90] According to Constable's note to this passage, this writer was "Jacques-Philippe de Foresta, called Bergamensis after the town of Lombardy where he was born. He wrote a chronicle from the creation of the world till the year 1505, to which he made a Supplement," before dying in 1515.

[91] Göller maintains that because of Mair's interest in the union and his definition of himself as a Briton, meaning inhabitant of the island, he "perceived Arthur as a congenial, positive figure, a model for the future kings of the country, who, following in his footsteps, could establish the unity of the nation in spite of popular opposition to it. He therefore extols the king as the most powerful, bravest, noblest, and most chivalrous ruler of the world" (180-81). Mair is also one of the only Scottish authors to associate Arthur with Edinburgh.

Wyntoun had done. Overall, his emphasis is closer to that of Fordun's in as much as he includes the complete history of the arrival of the Saxons. Mair also uses the information which Wyntoun had chosen as well, concerning Arthur's victories, the Round Table, and the final battle. However, Mair's entire approach to Arthur is different from either Fordun's or Wyntoun's. Mair, because of his knowledge of humanism and his Renaissance approach to historiography as well as his unique political motivations, gives an analytical approach to his sources. More than this, however, Mair attempts to provide the details as fairly as possible, weighing all sides, and not giving a one-sided biased approach. To this end, Mair selects his materials to emphasize the causes behind various events. It was Vortigern's own treachery and deceit which led to the invasion by the Saxons. His false dealing with the Picts was recounted as a parallel to the later deceit by the Saxons against him. Arthur is shown to have obtained his crown illegitimately, but he is also credited with deserving his honors. Mordred is far from blameless, although certainly he had been wrongly denied the kingship in the first place. Mair always emphasizes how the victories which restore peace are achieved as a result of combined efforts, especially between the Britons and the Scots, and not by one group alone. Mair recounts the story of Arthur clearly and concisely, giving exactly the information he needs to convey his primary point that the nations of England and Scotland should be united. In chapter III of this dissertation I will demonstrate how the story of Arthur was used by Mair as a point from which to argue for this union.

Hector Boece

Hector Boece gives a more detailed account of the invasion of the Saxons and the reign of Arthur than the previous historians. He relates Merlin's prophecies and also discusses the peace treaty between King Lot, the Picts, and Conrannus, which was confirmed by the marriage of Aurelius's daugher Anna to Lot. Boece continues with Lot's claim to the British throne at the death of Uther. He discusses Arthur's adulterous birth, as well as the agreement Lot makes with Arthur, agreeing to Arthur's rule in exchange for the provision that his own sons would then succeed Arthur. Boece gives full details of the various battles Arthur fought and tells of the Round Table as well. He goes on to narrate Arthur's foreign victories but denies their validity. Boece then discusses the final battle in which Arthur is slain, and relates how the nobles of Britain refuse to accept Arthur's treaty with Lot. He ends this section of his history with the mention of Guinevere saying that she was held by the Picts for the remainder of her life.

Boece gives a great deal of space in his history to the discussion of the Saxon invasion and Arthur's rule. He has specifics not mentioned by previous Scottish historians, and he gives a more detailed accounting of the entire period. He uses Fordun as a primary source for this material, as well as Geoffrey of Monmouth. Boece adds as a source Veremund's *History of Scotland*, a history which is now lost and which, as noted above, some scholars feel Boece fabricated. Whatever the truth may be about Boece's sources, it remains evident that Boece felt the need to write about the Arthurian materials in greater detail than even Mair had done, devoting proportionately more space than his

predecessors had done.[92]

Boece begins this section of his history with information about Vortigern's treachery in obtaining the throne of Britain. He gives full particulars, including how Vortigern appeared to support Constantine as king, "be applauding of the nobillis to his opinion." Next, he made peace with the Scots and Picts, bringing in "ane hundreth personis of thair blude cum to London, to remane as ane garde aboute Constancius, and to haif his body in keping." Vortigern promised a large reward to these bodyguards for slaying Constantine. Soon though, he turned around and had the Scots and Picts slain, assumed the throne himself, and stated that Aurelius, Constantine's son, was not "richtwis air to the crovne" (317-19). Boece gives such a detailed account of the methods Vortigern used to obtain the throne in order to explain to his readers how unlawful but ambitious men could assume the throne. Vortigern had no rights to the crown, but through treachery and murder he became king of the Britons, and was able to deny the throne to the obvious heir, namely Constantine's own son.

Boece continues with an account of the tremendous suffering brought on by the arrival of Hengist and the Saxons, at Vortigern's request. Boece emphasizes the battles between the Saxons and the Scots and Picts, particularly the destruction of the inhabitants of the border region. Huge numbers of Scots and Picts were slain, according to Boece. His readers would understand that the Saxon threat was not something endured by Britons

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[92] Fletcher notes that Boece is "thoroughly patriotic, in mediæval fashion, and on almost all possible occasions makes it appear that it is the Scots who distinguish themselves and the Britons who are cowardly and treacherous" (245). Göller calls Boece's history the "Scottish counterpart to Geoffrey's *Historia* written almost exactly 400 years later" (177).

alone. Boece continues with the information about Aurelius and Uther, who had been sent for safety to Brittany and who try to mount armed attacks on the Saxons. Hengist's answer is to bring over even more Saxons, including his own son Occa, to marry his daughter to Vortigern, and finally to assume the throne of Kent himself. This proves too much for the Britons, who deprive Vortigern of his authority and make his son Vortimer king instead.

According to Boece's account, Vortimer was able to ally himself with both the Scots and the Picts in his fight against the Saxons. This information differs from that given by the other Scottish historians who said that the Scots and Britons were fighting against the Picts and Saxons. Boece gives a more unified picture of the people of Scotland, with everyone fighting against the Saxon invasion, as "King Wortymer, richt desirus to recover the liberte of his realme, rasit the banner of the Croce, and commandit all Cristin pepill to follow the samyn" (338). The poisoning of Vortimer, restoration of Vortigern to the throne, Vortigern's banishment to Wales, and the "grete cruelteis done be Saxonis to Britonis" all are recounted in complete detail. The land became known as "Hengest Land and the pepill Hengest men, bot now, be corrupcioun of langage, the realme is callit England and the pepill Ingliss men." Boece gives details from Bede that "baith the publicc and privaitt housis war bett doun to the soill be iniure of Saxonis. And ȝite ane thing wes mair miserabill: na men durst berye the dede Cristin pepill, for cruelte of Saxonis" (344). Some Britons were subjected to perpetual servitude, while others were slain. Some fled out of the country and other hid in the mountains. They "laid strang garesoun of armyt men on the bordouris in all partis of thair realme, and brocht ilk day

new pepill oute of Almany to expell the Scottis and Pichtis oute of the landis betuix Humber and Tyne" (344). Boece has spent a great deal of time making sure that his readers realize the full impact caused by the Saxons. The entire situation arose because of Vortigern's unlawful seizure of the crown, and the atrocities committed by the Saxons affected Scots and Picts as well as Britons. The political implications of Boece's emphasis will be discussed below, but clearly Boece found it important to expand his coverage of the Saxon invasion and to include more details.

Boece has now reached the point in the story at which the Arthurian materials first appear, with the use of the prophecies of "ane prophete, namyt Merlyne" beginning in the reign of Vortigern, and Boece concludes that "this prophecy of Merlyne was wele provin in the end of his empyre" (345). In dealing with the mysteries surrounding Merlin's birth, Boece concludes that

> too declair quhat prophete this Merlyne wes, gottin be the devill, as the fayme wes than, or gif sik gereracioun be possibill to nature, pertenis litill to purpos quhilk we tuk on hand be this history. Nochtheles, becaus we ar falling in sik commonyng of sik detestabill conuersacioun of devillis with the nature of man, we will nocht pass dry fute, bot write sum thingis quhilkis happynnit noch lang afoir the making of this buke. (346)

Boece is able to acknowledge that some materials and information lie outside the scope of his work, and these items he will not treat. However, he does discuss his reasons for including stories of devils and Merlin's prophecies, since such events are still happening in

his own days:[93]

> And because thir illusionis of devillis war sene in oure dayis, we haif colleckit tham in oure buke, that redaris may vnderstand sik illusionis of devillis may be. Forthir twiching the prophecijs of Merlyne, houbeit mony of tham be verefijt in oure dayis, we will leiff tham to be discussit be theologis, quhethir thai suld be abrogatt or haif faith, for we will stand content to obey thair conclusionis, and write furth the wailȝeant dedis of nobill men, as we haif begunnyn, and returne agane to oure history, quhaire we left. (348)

Boece finds it necessary to make mention of Merlin's prophesies because his readers know of them and need to understand them. Also, many of the prophecies have been verified in Boece's own times, which again adds validity to them. While Boece seems to have some reservations about these prophecies, he presents the information and allows his readers to

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[93] Boece had narrated such an event saying that in the "ȝere of God j^{m} iiij^{c} xxxxvi ȝeris, certane marchandis war passand betuis Forth and Flandris, quhen haistelye come sik ane thud of wynd that saill, mast & takillis war blawin in the brym seyis, throw quhilk the ship belevit nocht bot sikker deth. The patrone perof astonyst with sa huge and vncouth tempest aganis the sesoun of the ȝere, becaus it was aboute Sanct Barnabais Daye, quhen the samyn erar cumin be vaching of the devill, the inymye of man, than be violence of wedder. In the meyntyme the voice was hard of ane woman in the howie of the ship, wareand hir self, for that samyn instant houre scho was conversit with ane devyll in ymage of ane man, quhilk had vsit hir in that samyn maner mony ȝeris afoir, and perfor besocht the pepill to cast his in the seyis, that be the deth of hir the remanent pepill in the ship mycht be sauffitt. Than, be commande of the patron, ane preist sent to hir in that hevy commande of the patron, ane preist went to hir in that hevy chere, commanding hir to mak confessioun of hir abhominabill lyfe, and to haif confidence in God, be quhais mercy all synnys ar purgitt quhen the synnair has repentance and teeris. Quhen this woman wes makand hir confessioun with grete repentance to the preist in sycht of all the pepill, ane vgly cloude with ane crak of fyre and reyk flew out of the schip, and fell doun with ane vennimois odoure in the seyis. Sone eftir the tempest cessit, and the merchandis come to the port quhar thai desyrit, but ony forthar troubill" (346-47).

decide, urging them to look to the theologians for the final answers. It may be noted that Boece seems to have fewer reservations about Merlin and his prophecies than Mair did. Also, Boece does not find it necessary to give any details about Merlin's birth or information about the specifics of Merlin's prophecies. General references to their existence is all that Boece decides to include, although he does give the specific prophecy concerning Vortigern, namely that he and his "childerin within schort tyme suld be wyncust by Ambroiss & Vter, sonnys of Constantyne, and brynt with all his tresoure and gudis" (345), a fitting end for his traitorous life.

Boece begins his account of Arthur's birth with the tale of the comet as "Merlyne interprete this comette to King Ambrose, this crovnit dragoun to Vter his bruther" (357). Even though Boece's work was written after Mair's, Boece demonstrates less doubt of "fantastic" events, and does not hesitate to tell of such things as comets as harbingers of future events. There was an appeal for this type of writing among medieval readers, and in fact Boece's history was much more popular than Mair's. As Roderick Lyall notes, "Boece's mixture of traditional legend, contemporary folklore and moral advice, all with a strongly nationalist subtext, was evidently more acceptable to his fellow-countrymen than Mair's thoughtful proto-Unionism, and his work was translated into Scots three times within a generation of its first appearance, most notably in the version by John Bellenden (1533)." The reasons for this popularity will be considered in chapter III below, but at the moment it should be noted that Boece has written a very vivid and nationalistic history.

Boece's account of Ambrose's reign discusses the alliance of both the Scots and the

Picts with the Britons against the Saxons in a successful effort to slay Hengist and remove the Saxons from Britain. All of this resulted in a "new peace and mariage maid amang the princes of Albion." Boece gives the details of this new peace as they will definitely have ramifications for more modern history. Ambrose, to show his benevolence, brings both Lot, whom Boece calls "King of Pichtis," and Conrannus, King of the Scots, to London for feasting and celebration. A new peace was then made "vnder thir condicionis, that all the landis liand beyond Humbir suld pas in perpetuall dominioun to Scottis & Pichtis, but ony clame of Britonis in tymes cuming, and the Saxonis to be haldin as inymyis to thaim baith, and gif thai enterit agane in ony part of Albion, the Albianis with vniuersale consent suld concur to giddir to resist thame" (351-52). The conditions of this peace were to be strengthened by the marriage of the eldest of Ambrose's daughters to Lot and the youngest of his daughters to Conrannus. Lot's wife, Anna, bore him "thre sonnis, namyt Modredus, Waluanus, & Thametes." Boece then remarks that the "Britonis, Scottis & Pichtis stude mony ȝeris thus in gude peace & concorde" (352). As will be shown below, Boece has definite reasons for including such a lengthy discourse on this particular treaty. He is also the first of the Scottish historians to included the Picts with the Scots in this way. This becomes important later on for the claims to the unity and independence of Scotland as a whole. Also, in giving the terms of this treaty Boece is letting his readers know of Scotland's early independence from the Britons.

Boece continues his narration with the renewed aggression of the Saxons, the poisoning of Aurelius, and Uther's succession as king. Boece tells his readers that Uther "wes degeneratt fra vertew in amist shaymfull lust," and that he was guilty "nocht only of

adultry bot als of slauchter." He "finaly gatt this lady at his will, and had on hir ane son, namyt Arthure, quhilk succedit to him, as we sall schaw . . . Sum men writis thatt Vter was transformit be necromancy of Merlyne in Gothlois similitude, and be that waye he gat Arthure. Nochwithstanding, in quhatsumeuer waye it was, Vter gatt him on ane vther mannis wyiffe" (360). Boece does not say that Merlin transformed Uther, but he also does not deny the possibility, thus allowing his readers to believe or not as they wish. However, no matter how Arthur was conceived, Boece arrives at the inevitable conclusion that Arthur's right to succeed to the throne of Britain was questionable, noting that "Lothus, King of Pichtis, wes impacient and richt commovit that Arthour, gottin in adultery, suld be preferrit to his childerin, quhilkis war iust hertouris of the crovne of Britan, and gottin in lauchfull bed." Lot then "knawing thir weeris rysing betuix Saxonis & Britonis" decides to take advantage of the situation and offers "to cum with all his pepill in support of Occa aganis Britonis." He also tries to enlist the support of "Conrannus, King of Scottis, to concur with him to that samyn effect. Conrannus refusit, saying he wald nocht violatt the peace maid afoir with Britonis" (362). There are several battles and Occa ends up declaring himself king of Britain. Scots and Picts are again faced with fighting the Saxons. Arthur "gaderit ane strang army of Britonis, and faucht aganis the Saxonis." Boece gives details of Arthur's battles to conquer the Saxons, and when he finds himself coming to the Humber to invade Saxon territory with his army that is "soft and nocht abill to sustene siklike travaill, laboure or besynes as thai war afoir" then Lot becomes an ally of Arthur, helping him fight the Saxons. As a result of this assistance, Lot is able to negotiate an agreement whereby

> Lothus, King of Pichtis, was confideratt with King Arthoure in this manner: thatt Arthure sall reioise the crovn of Britan during his lyffe, and eftir his deth the sonnys of Lothus sall succeid; and the Pichtis to concur with Britonis aganis the Saxonis in tymes cuming, and all landis quhilkis the Pichtis mycht conquess on Saxonis beyond Humbir to pas vnder thair dominioun; attoure, Modrede, King Lothus son, sall mary the dochter of Gawolane, gretast prince vnder the King of Britonis, and the childerin gottin betuix thame to be nureist with thaire gudeserr Gawolane; and Gawyne, bruther to Modrede, to remane in continewall residence with King Arthure, with rentis according to his estaitt. (369-70)

It should be noted that Boece is giving a much fuller account of the events and battles than even Mair did. Certainly the account has grown dramatically since its treatment by Fordun and Wyntoun. The possibility that this expanded treatment is related to political events taking place at the time that Boece was writing will be examined in the next chapter. For now it need only be noted that none of our other historians discuss the possibility of an agreement to allow Lot's descendants to reign after Arthur. This is perhaps yet another solution to the problem of crowning a king who is not too young, while still providing for the proper hereditary succession. Every detail is given, making a full and complete accounting with no loose ends. This may also reflect a changing sense of history where it is necessary to explain everything and make it all fit. The use of more extended analysis and detailed accounting among the Scottish historians begins with the writings of Mair and Boece. These two historians differ, however, on what they find acceptable to include. Mair usually does not include information which he cannot explain, whereas Boece

includes unexplainable accounts but distances himself from some of the details by the use of the phrase "sum men writis." He is presenting what others have said, but qualifies the information and forces the reader to decide on its value. Boece's lack of a definitive statement on some of the events, especially the more miraculous happenings, may have helped his popularity as well, because he allows his readers to continue believing in whatever way they prefer.

Boece emphasizes the fact that the "Scottis and Pichtis war confideratt with King Arthure againis the Saxonis." He goes on to mention more than once how "Modrede come in support of King Arthure aganis the Saxonis."[94] Meanwhile, while all of this turmoil was engulfing Britain, Scotland was being well-governed and was at peace. "Sic thingis done in Britan be Arthure, the realme of Scottland was governit in grete felicite and iustice be King Conrannus" (373). The contrast between the two nations is noted as is the amount of assistance which the Scots and Picts, under Mordred, gave to Arthur, strengthening Mordred's right to succeed Arthur according to the treaty between Arthur

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[94] According to Matthews, Boece emphasizes that the Scots and Picts often rescued the Britons against invading Romans and Saxons, even though the "Britons persisted in malevolence. Against the odds, however, the Scots always preserved the freedom that had been theirs from the beginnings in Egypt. Matters came to a head in the reign of the British king Arthur, whose story Boece relates from an unsypathetic Scottish point of view. In those days, says he, Britain was thoroughly degenerate, given over to idleness, pleasure, adultery, murder, Pelagian heresies, and Christmas gluttony. It was in this moral sink that Arthur was born." Arthur's career began well, but moral decay set in and once again "the bounty of northern compassion flowed." It was the bravery of Mordred which allowed Arthur to maintain his rule (292).

and Lot.[95]

Boece discusses the extent of Arthur's conquests as well as his Round Table, noting that "sum autoris writis that Arthure in thir dayis dantit Scotland, Ireland, Island, Orknaye, Denmark, Swedrik, Pruse, Zeland, Gothland, Holland, Brabant, Flandris, Picardy, Normandy, Bertanze and all France, and maid the pepill of the samyn tributar to him" (376). Boece notes, however, that there are discrepancies among the historians and that some accounts of the Roman Empire, which relate the "horribill weris betuix Gotthis & Franche men . . . makis na mencioun of Arthure. Nochtheles, sen we ar sett to mynneiss na manis honouris, we fynd that Arthure wes in gloir of marciall dedis na les wailȝeand than vther princes of Britan, and ekit his realme equalie in pollesy and riches" (376-77). Boece is sure that Arthur was king and did perform many notable deeds, but notes that there is trouble reconciling different accounts. Boece does not know which accounts are most accurate, but allows for the possibility that maybe Arthur did not fight in as many battles as some say.

Boece gives a different perspective on the final battle, which he says occurred because the British nobles would not honor the treaty between Lot and Arthur once Lot was dead. Mordred was understandably upset over this treachery and that led to the final battle in which "Arthure is slayne with all nobilite of Britonis" and "on the syde aduersair, Modreid, King of Pichtis, slayne with xx^{m} Scottis and Pichtis" (380).

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[95] In fact, Göller notes that in Boece's history, "all battles consequently are attributed to Arthur's conception and illegitimacy, factors that were treated as insignificant or positive in the works produced outside of Scotland. Boece even interprets the Saxon wars –originally the starting point and impetus for the Arthurian story–from this point of view in order to give them a new meaning" (177).

In conclusion, it is evident that Boece attaches a great deal of importance to the events surrounding the Saxon invasion and the rule of Arthur. He deals with this material in detail, giving vivid accounts of battles, treaties, and treacheries. He has taken the basic format given by Fordun, stressing the illegitimacy of Arthur's kingship, but he has expanded the information to include more facts, especially about the relationships between the Scots and Picts with the Britons. His approach is very favorable to the Scots and Picts, and he demonstrates none of Mair's rational analysis. He wrote his account within six years of Mair's and they are similar in giving many more details about the Arthurian period than did either Fordun or Wyntoun. However, while both historians follow Fordun's basic outline, they each have a different perspective on the materials. Boece's account is much more nationalistic and partisan. Mair seeks to stress the interdependence of England and Scotland, but Boece wants to make it very clear that Scotland was independent, and that it had acted to help the Britons against the Saxons. However, its assistance was met by treachery and treason.

Boece's account is fast-paced and highly emotional. He mentions the European conquests as well as the Round Table, but unlike Wyntoun, Boece shows no willingness to credit Arthur with either the victories or great prowess.[96] While Boece stops short of criticizing everything about Arthur, he does cast doubts as to the veracity of some of the stories surrounding Arthur. He indicates that Arthur is not as honorable as might have

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[96] Göller finds that Boece portrays Arthur as "being treacherous and easily influenced by others." However, Boece does mention Arthur's generosity as well as his strategic capabilities. "That the British fail again and again is not the king's fault but must be ascribed to the weakness of his soldiers, who do not prove themselves worthy of Arthur" (177-78).

been thought, since, among other things, he allows his nobles to renounce the treaty which he made with Lot. Boece certainly gives a new and different view to the events surrounding this period, especially with his exact particulars concerning first the treaty with the Scots and Picts and Aurelius which gave Scotland freedom in perpetuity, and next with the treaty between Arthur and Lot, giving the inheritance of the throne of England to Lot's sons. Certainly the fact that England was not willing to recognize the rights of Lot and his sons to the throne of England would be a very important point in more modern history, as will be argued below.

George Buchanan

George Buchanan has arranged most of his history according to the Scottish kings, and the accounts of other nations are set in the context of the Scottish regnal chronology. Buchanan describes both Vortigern and Vortimer. He finds that Merlin is a fraud, but that Gildas is reliable. He comments on the lawful marriage of Lot and Anna, as well as the illegitimate birth of Arthur. Buchanan mentions Arthur's exploits in Gaul, but terms them "forgeries" made by Geoffrey of Monmouth. Buchanan discusses Arthur's denial of his treaty with Lot and his naming of Constantine, his cousin, as his successor. The final battle is recounted in which Mordred is slain and Arthur mortally wounded. Guenevere is instrumental in helping Mordred plan Arthur's downfall. Buchanan denies any validity to the stories of fabulous and miraculous aspects of the Arthurian materials.

Buchanan uses a variety of sources for his Arthurian materials, including Bede,

Gildas, and Fordun. He also follows Boece's basic format and treatment.[97] Further, he makes rather extensive statements concerning problems found in the use of Geoffrey of Monmouth as a source, although he himself uses information from Geoffrey. However, as far as Geoffrey's accounts of Arthur's exploits in Gaul, Buchanan says that he has "no certainty of the exploits he performed in Gaul: for as to what Geoffrey of Monmouth attributes to him there, it hath no shadow or semblance of truth in it; so that I pass it all by as an impudent forgery, unworthy of belief" (105).

Buchanan begins his discussion of the Arthurian period with information about the arrival of the Saxons, giving yet another perspective, beginning with the selection of Constantine as king of the Britons. According to Buchanan, the Britons had been left "weak, and quite forsaken by their foreign allies." In order that they "might have a leader to resort to for public advice," they "chose for their king, Constantine, their countryman, a nobleman of high descent, and of great repute, whom they sent for out of Gallic Brittany." Buchanan notes that Constantine managed to maintain peace with his neighbors throughout his ten-year reign,

> till at last he was murdered by the treachery of Vortigern, a potent and ambitious man. Constantine left three sons, of whom two were under age; while the eldest, being unfit for government, was sent to a monastery, and there confined.

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[97] Fletcher finds that Buchanan's account of Arthur "chiefly follows Boece, but with great condensation and some omissions and other changes of details due to the author's independence of judgment in comparing authorities and to his attempt to reason for himself as to the causes of actions" (249). Göller notes that the "unbiased reader might have expected an objective, scholarly presentation of the Arthurian story from the learned humanist George Buchanan. However, his *Rerum Scoticarum Historia* (1582) also basically follows Boece; his professed critical relation to his source is often illusory" (179).

> However, he at last was elected king, by the assistance of Vortigern, who was desirous of obtaining wealth and power under the title and influence of another man. (98)

Buchanan has given his readers much more information about Constantine and his sons. He is the first of the Scottish historians to give details of Constantine's reign, and he also discusses the fact that of Constantine's three sons, two were underage. This fact will have a bearing on the selection of Arthur later on. Buchanan has also let his readers know that Constantine's kingship was based on an election and that he was brought over from Gallic Brittany. Again, the ability to choose a king, as well as the fact that the selected king had come from outside the country, will be important both in the remainder of the Arthurian materials and later in the discussion of more modern Scottish history.

Buchanan gives further details which he has obtained from Bede and Gildas relating to the relationship between the Britons and the Romans. He quotes from Bede about letters which had been sent to Rome regarding complaints by the Britons: "'The barbarians drive us to the sea, the sea beats us back again upon the barbarians; we have no choice but one of these two kinds of death, either to be killed or drowned'" (98). Buchanan adds this information to clarify the situation which the Britons find themselves in and also to provide more insight into Vortigern's character. Buchanan goes on to note that while

> the rest of the Britons being driven to this desperate case, Vortigern alone rejoiced at the public calamity; and in the general confusion thought he might, with greater impunity, perpetrate the wickedness which he had long before meditated. This

> was, to cause the king to be slain by the guards whom he had placed about his person; after which, to remove the suspicion of so foul a parricide, in a pretended fit of anger, as if he were impatient of delay in executing revenge, he caused the same soldiers to be put to death, without suffering them to speak for themselves. Thus having obtained the kingdom by the highest degree of villainy, he maintained it in no better a manner than he usurped it. (98)

Buchanan makes no mention of the fact that these soldiers who were to guard the king and who were later slain were Picts. He finds no need to bolster the antagonism of the Scots and Picts for the Britons by adding the national details about the bodyguard to the account of Vortigern's treachery. Buchanan's focus is clearly on detailing Vortigern's actions, making his deceit and treason very clear. The implications this emphasis has on modern Scottish history will be discussed in chapter III.

Buchanan then continues with the information about Vortigern's general incompetence and his need for assistance from the Saxons, noting that Vortigern "engaged the Saxons to take his part, who were then become great pirates at sea, and infested all the shores far and near." He assigned Hengist his own lands in Britain "by which means Hengist was induced to fight, not as for a strange country, but for his own demesne and estate, and therefore was more likely to do it earnestly. When this was spread abroad, such large numbers of the three nations, Jutes, Saxons, and Angles, are said to have flocked out of Germany into Britain that they became formidable even to the inhabitants of the island." It is at this point that Buchanan first mentions the wars which took place between the Britons and the Scots and Picts, during the reign of Eugenius, King of the

Scots. Eugenius was either killed in battle or died a natural death, depending on which source is consulted, but Buchanan makes it clear that all sources agree that "however he came by his end, it is certain that he governed the Scots with such equity, as deservedly to be reckoned amongst the best of their kings" (99). The contrast with Vortigern is left to speak for itself. Eugenius is succeeded in A.D. 452 by his brother Dongardus, and "in the second year of Dongardus, Vortigern was deposed , and his son Vortimer chosen king of the Britons. He renewed the ancient league with the Scots and Picts, that so he might more easily break the power of the Saxons, which was a triple alliance that the three nations had entered into against the Romans in the days of Carausius" (99). Buchanan again provides a different perspective with his account of this period. He focuses on the longevity of the alliance which had been broken only by the treachery of Vortigern.

Buchanan narrates the events of the next Scottish king, during whose reign, Vortimer is murdered "by the fraud of his step-mother, and Vortigern had made himself king without authority or right." At this point, the two sons of Constantine, Aurelius and Uther, who had been underage at the time of their father's murder, return from Gallic Brittany to reclaim the throne, now that they are of an age to rule.

> On their arrival, and before they would venture to alarm the foreign settlers, they subdued Vortigern in Wales, and then sent messengers to the Scots and Picts, desiring their alliance, and craving the assistance of their arms against the Saxons, who were the most bitter enemies of the Christian name. This embassy was kindly received by the Scots, who renewed the league that had been made with Constantine; and from that day it remained almost inviolate, till the kingdom of

> Britain was oppressed by the Angles, and the kingdom of the Picts by their neighbours. But the Picts answered the British ambassadors, that, having already made a league with the Saxons, they saw no cause to break it. (100)

Thus Buchanan has accounted for the alliance of the Scots and Britons against the Saxons and Picts. He has not given many details concerning the Picts, and especially the reasons for their willingness to side with the Saxons, but he has given more details about the arrival of Aurelius and his brother. He has also provided an example of what happens when rightful heirs, who are underage at the time they might have been chosen to rule, come of age. This is yet another topic which will not only have relevance for the Arthurian story, but also for more modern Scottish history.

Buchanan now brings in both Merlin and Gildas, who lived in the time of Aurelius. He takes a very different view of Merlin from any seen so far. He places Merlin as a contemporary of Gildas, saying that:

> they were both Britons, and transmitted a great name to posterity, who conceived a high opinion of their prophecies and divinations. Merlin was somewhat the elder of the two, but a cheat and impostor, rather than a prophet. His vaticinations are still scattered up and down; but they are obscure, and contain nothing of certainty, either that could encourage hopes before their accomplishment, or indeed to satisfy men when they are fulfilled; so that there is no truth in them on any account. Besides, they are so framed, that you may accommodate or apply them to different or contrary events, according to your fancy. (101)

Buchanan obviously discounts the reliability of prophecies, but he seems to have no

doubts as to the authenticity of Merlin himself. While Buchanan does not discount the existence of prophets, acknowledging that Gildas "was a learned and good man, and one held in great veneration both in his lifetime and after his death, because he was excellent in learning, and eminent for sanctity," he does note that "the prophecies which go under his name, are such ridiculous sentences, so coarse and ill-constructed in the language, and also in the whole series of their composure, that no wise man can believe them to have proceeded from him whose name they bear" (101). The prophecies are such that they are either open to many interpretations, depending on the wishes of the audience, or completely unbelievable. This view is even stronger than that taken by Mair, and demonstrates a further development in the ability of the historian to evaluate and criticize his sources. Historians may be developing the abilities to evaluate their sources because politicians, especially since the time of Edward I, are using historical sources as evidence to support their positions. Buchanan finds that he must warn his readers about the validity of both Merlin's and Gildas's prophecies so that his readers will be able to separate the true from the false.

When Buchanan sets forth the events leading to Arthur's birth, he notes that "Uther might have been accounted one of the greatest kings of his age, had he not, by one foul act, brought a cloud over all his eminent virtues" (102). Buchanan then recounts the taking of Igerne, Gorlois's wife, by Uther, saying that "her chastity being a long time proof against his desires, at last her continency was conquered by Merlin, a man audaciously wicked; and in this adulterous commerce Uther had a son by her, named Arthur" (101). Eventually, after the death of his own wife, Uther, "having invented an accusation against

Gorlois, he besieged his castle, took it, slew him, married Igerne, and owned Arthur for his own son, educating him nobly, with the design of leaving him heir to the kingdom" (102). Buchanan states that in order to make these events appear in a better light, "a tale was forged, not much unlike that which had been often acted in theatres" (102). According to this tale, "Uther, by the art of Merlin, was changed into the shape of Gorlois, and so had his first night's lodging with Igerne; and indeed this Merlin was a man of such a character, that he had rather be famous for a wicked deed, than none at all" (102).

Obviously, Buchanan puts no belief at all in the tale of Merlin's magic, but says that the tale was made up in order to give a more favorable impression of the events leading to Arthur's illegitimate birth. Buchanan does what Boece could not, namely tell his readers outright that Merlin's magic was a story invented to give a more favorable opinion of Uther.[98] Buchanan does admit that "Arthur, the spurious offspring of an illicit amour, on growing up, appeared so amiable in the lineaments of his person, and inclinations of his mind, that the eyes of his parents, and of all the people too, were fixed upon him, predicted his future greatness, and concurred in regarding him as their future king" (102).

> However, when Uther finally died and Arthur became king,
>
> Lothus, king of the Picts, strenuously opposed it, grievously complaining, that his children, for he had two, by Anna, the aunt of Arthur, who were now of years, should be deprived of the kingdom; and that a bastard, begotten in adultery, was

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[98] Göller notes that Buchanan likens the story of Merlin's magic to "'one that was often performed in the theatres concerning Jupiter and Alcmena. That is to say, Uther was through the art of Merlin changed into the likeness of Gorlois when he first cohabited with Igerne.' Thus Arthur is presented as a British Hercules" (179).

> preferred before them. On the other side, all the Britons espoused the cause of Arthur, and denied that he was spurious; because Uther having married his mother at last, though after his birth, by that means treated him as his legitimate son, and continued so to do. (102)

Buchanan does not cite any of the versions of the story which state that Uther married Igerne before Arthur's birth,[99] since these versions would greatly weaken the rights of Lot's sons. Buchanan acknowledges again that all the questions regarding Arthur's right to the throne would have had little meaning if it were not for the person of Arthur himself. "Yet that which availed Arthur most, was his great ingenuity, and the proofs of virtue which he often evinced" (102). Even Lot himself recognized virtues in Arthur, as Buchanan tells us that

> the liberal and promising disposition of Arthur, and the greatness of his mind, even above his age, very much affected him; insomuch that the alliance made by former kings, betwixt the Scots, Picts, and Britons, was again renewed, which produced so great a familiarity, that Lothus promised to send Galvinus, the youngest of his two sons, to the British court, as soon as he was old enough to bear the fatigue of the journey. (102)

Thus, "Arthur assumed the regal government before he was quite eighteen; but as his courage was above his age, so success was not wanting to his daring spirit" (102).

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[99] Geoffrey and Mallory, for instance, both have Uther marrying immediately after Gorlois is killed in battle the night Arthur was conceived. However, Buchanan stresses evidence for a later marriage after Arthur's birth when he had stated that Uther had to wait for the death of his own wife.

Buchanan has interpreted everything, making all the details fit into a complete and coherent narrative. He explains events using human, rather than divine or magical, explanations, which is evidence of the new humanist Renaissance approach to history.[100]

Buchanan then deals with Arthur's victories and says that "some writers of English antiquity say, that Arthur fought twelve pitched battles with the Saxons; but, as they give only the names of the places where they were fought, and nothing else, I shall take no farther notice of them" (105). As was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Buchanan finds much in Geoffrey of Monmouth to convince him that Geoffrey is not accurate, and he therefore decides not to include the information at all. This decision is a change from earlier historians who might have expressed doubts about some of their information, but who nevertheless included whatever their sources had mentioned.[101]

Buchanan continues his account by narrating the final battle between Mordred and Arthur, in which Mordred and his brother Gawain are slain and Arthur is mortally wounded. Then Buchanan acknowledges that he knows

> what fabulous matters are reported by many concerning the life and death of Arthur, but they are not fit to be related, lest they spread a mist over his famous

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[100] See Breisach pgs. 154-60 for further discussion of this topic. Renaissance historians were inspired by the ancients and so granted mankind a "greater measure of 'home rule,' which in turn made them stress the importance of human deeds and motives in history" (160). Buchanan's discussion of the events leading up to Arthur's birth clearly demonstrates the shift to explanations which use human, rather than magical or divine, agents.

[101] See Breisach's discussion on pgs. 154-55 of the Renaissance historians and their more demanding standards of accuracy, forcing them to check one source against another, instead of merely stringing them together.

> actions; for when men confidently affirm lies, they cause the truth itself many times to be called in question. This is certain, that he was a great man, and very valiant, animated by a pure love of his country, which he freed from servitude, and that he restored the true worship of God, which he also reformed when it was corrupted. (106)

While fabulous tales have arisen concerning Arthur, Buchanan is still quick to point out that Arthur himself was a great man. Buchanan admires Arthur because he loved his country, and he was able to restore its freedom and reform its worship life. These two single actions, freedom and reformation of church life, were of enormous importance to contemporary Scottish history, and Buchanan's emphasis on them will be examined below.

Buchanan notes that he has spent more time with Arthur than might seem appropriate for a history of Scotland, but he explains this by saying that he has

> spoken of these things, concerning his lineage, life, and death, at a greater length than the nature of my design required; for I never meant to record all the exploits of the Britons, but to free and preserve the affairs of our own nation from the oblivion of time, and the fabulous tales of some loose and unprincipled writers. I have insisted the longer on the exploits of Arthur, partly because some curtail them out of envy, and others heighten them with ostentatious hyperboles. He died in the year 542, after he had reigned twenty-four years. (106)

Buchanan tries to appear fair and consistent, giving a factual account of the history as he has determined it to be, while at the same time warning his readers about what he sees as obvious falsehoods. He does not want to be guilty of ignoring Arthur because of envy, or

exaggerating his deeds beyond all historical actuality. Also, since one of the primary reasons for writing history is to teach and provide examples of proper behavior, Buchanan can use Arthur as a model to help his readers see the importance of freedom, love of country, and proper worship. Buchanan certainly demonstrates a good deal more skepticism than most of our previous writers, and while he comments that he may have devoted more space to Arthur than would seem necessary for a history of Scotland, still proportionately, he does not deal with this period in as much detail as either Mair or Boece.

In conclusion, Buchanan has followed the basic outline of Boece, who in turn followed Fordun. However, there is a definite difference in tone and emphasis in Buchanan. Unlike Boece, Buchanan does not play as openly upon his readers' nationalistic sentiments. He is more apt to discuss the merits of various kings no matter which country they come from. Vortigern's treachery is explained at a much greater length than had been done by the previous Scottish historians, but Buchanan makes no effort to exploit the emotions of his readers by discussing the slaughter of the guards as an issue of nationalism. Buchanan's writing is more logical and explanatory than Boece, who tends to portray events with much greater vividness and rhetoric. Buchanan demonstrates to his readers a greater degree of critical evaluation with regard to his sources. He also refuses to include information which he finds to be false. However, Buchanan has very definite aims in writing his history, including the instruction of the current king of Scotland, as was shown above. To that end, he stresses the nature of kingship in this section on the Saxon invasion and Arthurian kingship. He capitalizes on the mistakes of earlier kings, whether

British or Scottish, as opportunities to instruct the present monarch. This use of his history will be examined in detail in chapter III. In the end, Buchanan has given a rational explanation for the events of this period, emphasizing those issues which had current relevance for his readers, and helping his readers to learn the facts while discounting the fabulous.

John Leslie

John Leslie arranges his history, after the opening information on geography, entirely by the reigns of the Scottish kings. Each chapter is devoted to a specific reign, and the focus is heavily on Scotland, almost to the exclusion of other information. Leslie does, however, use the Arthurian materials, and he discusses Merlin as a soothsayer. He continues the affirmation of Boece and Buchanan as to the falseness of the claims of Arthur's foreign victories, maintaining that Arthur did not subdue the Emperor Lucius. He affirms the truth of the Round Table, noting that he himself had seen it.[102] Arthur's death is recorded, with mention of Guinevere, but no direct mention of Mordred.

Leslie has based his brief mention of Arthur in terms compatible with Boece and Buchanan, following Fordun's original plan. He also uses Mair as a source, and he refers to Pliny and Bede. The amount of information he gives on Arthur is less than that given

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[102] Fletcher notes that Leslie follows Boece, but abbreviates the account greatly, but Leslie does add his opinion that "Arthur was the builder of a stone house formerly existing not far from the river Carron, which Boece, while mentioning a vulgar ascription of it to Cæsar, was inclined to assign to Vespasian. He adds also a popular idea or two about Arthur, saying that the number of his knights was twenty-four, and that he himself had seen what, 'unless our ancestors have erred,' is the veritable Round Table at Winchester (where we of the twentieth century may see it too if we choose)" (249).

by any of the other Scottish historians, for reasons we will consider later. For the moment, it may be noted that Leslie's history has a much tighter focus on Scottish history, and he gives few details about events outside of Scotland.

However, Leslie does describe the reign of Vortigern as a prelude to the Arthurian monarchy. He recounts briefly that Vortigern had hired the "keipers of Constantine" to betray him, and then to keep this fact from coming to light, "he comandes thir keiperis to be taken, in prisone to be sett, in haist to be heidet." Then, as Leslie notes, "quhen he was maid king, he buir him self w^{t} sik Maiestie in authoritie, or after the opinione of sume, w^{t} fulehardines and audacitie, that alluterlie he refuset to pay the ald vse and wont to the confiderat kingis[103], in tribut and custome." Again, the reader is given the details about Vortigern's treachery and assumption of the throne, but the condemnation of Vortigern does not seem as intense. However, because of his foolhardy actions, he soon has incurred the wrath of the Scots and the Picts, and the Britons find themselves at war. "Of this, betueine thame, rase hatred and Jnuie: of hatred & Jnuie cam Jniurie and wrang: of Jniurie and wrang weiris are begun" (I: 215). Leslie informs his readers about the progression of hostilities from ill-will and hatred to outright war. He intends his history to be a learning experience for his readers and this statement helps educate his readers as to

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[103] Constantine, according to Leslie, "had maid peace, nathir w^{t} concent of the Nobilitie, nathir w^{t} thair counsell, he delyuered thame frome the tribue and custome, quhilke xxx ȝeris afor continuallie to the Scottis thay had payed: he mairouer delyuered sum castelis quhilkes war situat vpon Humber, frank and frei, to the Britonis" (I: 213). This arrangement did not please the Picts, who then attacked. Vortigern managed to make himself king, but only with the assistance of Hengist and the Saxons. Once on the throne, Vortigern, pleased with his new exhalted position, refused to pay his tribute to the Saxon leaders, resulting in his ultimate downfall.

the outcome of Vortigern's actions.

Vortigern, according to Leslie, is now in a difficult position, due entirely to his own ill-chosen actions. When he

> saw him selfe sa sair opprest, that he was nocht able, him selfe alane, the hale ennimies to resist, quha laitlie had wonn sa noble a victorie vpon the Scottis, he callis the Saxonis, that cruel and wylde natione in Germanie, to helpe, albeit thay war Ethnikis and supperstitious. The superstitious Saxounis cumis at flichte speid, following the convoy of ane Hengistie and his brother Orsie, contumeliouslie w^{t} weiris thay vex the confedrat kingis of Scottis and peychtes, and vehementlie oppressis tham. (I: 215)

Thus Vortigern has had to call in the help of a heathen and superstitious people to aid him in defending his realm against enemies which he himself has created. Vortigern manages to get himself "delyuered frome the seruitude of the Scottis & Peychtes, obteyneng the Victorie, quhilke felicitie followet this calamitie far bittirer, that quhais helpe in thair delyuiring thay had vsed happilie, into thair seruitude nocht lang eftir thay cam miserabillie." Leslie then relates how the Saxons invaded Briton, when Hengist broke his bond and "callis his wyfe out of Saxoune, and with her a gret Nobilitie, and of men of weir nocht a smal multitude" (I: 215). Hengist had his mind set on reigning himself, and

> throuch many iniures and wranges he prouokes King Vortigerne to battell. The gret parte of the Nobilitie of britannie he brings to nocht: the rest of the people outher quyte he destroyes, or in prisone w^{t} King Vortigerne he miserabillie thame castes. Hengestie haueng athir put the Brionis to flicht, or brocht thame vnder

> seruitude, occupies the cuntrey braid and wyd frome end til end, and commandes in Londoune that crouned he be king, and that, gif war possible, he mycht cause al blude of the yle of Britane be in perpetual obliuione, and neuir thaireftir cum in rememberance, the Ralme he commandet to cal frome that further Hengestland and the people Hengestmen frome his awne name, to wit, Hengestie: Thay no'w'standeng, thinkeng the language sa hard, thought better to follow the style that now thay follow, to cal the Realme England, and the people Englesmen. (I: 216)

Leslie succeeds in this description of Hengist's actions in explaining the attempted genocide of the Britons as well as the loss of their own name in favor of the new and ultimately permanent name of England. Vortigern not only was treacherous in his attainment of the throne, but his actions ultimately changed the character of the country permanently. Vortigern and the few remaining Britons were granted "the cunteried of Cambrei, (quhilke now thay cal Wallis)," and it is in Wales that "this peple sticking maist constantlie to the puritie of Christne religioune, suffired na blek [stain] nathir of paganisme, nor ony vthir secte, bot the religioune of Christe in that cuntrey to entir: for na storme of persecutione." As for the land dominated by Hengist, "the crueltie of the Saxonis was sa gret, in destroyeng the kirkes, in muthiring the Preistes amang the altares, in slayng the Prelat with the peple al throuch another, that ane christiane, as witnessis Beda, skairslie durst burie another christiane." Leslie's final comment about Vortigern leaves no doubt in his readers's minds that Vortigern "receiued thaireftir his rewarde surely for his mischeif that he had wrocht." Leslie's only mention of Merlin appears at this point

in his text. Merlin is mentioned briefly when Leslie states that Vortigern's end had been fortold by "Merlin the soothsayer or forteller of things to cum, borne of a noble woman, gottin (as said is) be ane euil spirit, fortalde him, that sa sulde be his end" (I: 217). There is no further mention of Merlin and no extended debate about the difficulties of prophecy as is found in Mair, Boece, and Buchanan.

Leslie condemns Vortigern and he certainly gives strong examples of the hazards involved in poor leadership, but he does not spend his energies in a pointed criticism of the treachery and treason. His most vivid portrayals of the disaster faced by the Britons are aimed at the religious persecution, and this aspect of Leslie's writing will be discussed more fully below. Leslie has taken some liberties with the story of Vortigern's reign, at least as far as the chronology, because he does not mention Vortimer until after Vortigern has been exiled into Wales. Also, while Vortimer gets brief mention and Leslie credits him with being king in place of his father Vortigern, and "nevir was absent in mister, cheiflie to the expelling out of the boundes of Britannie Hengestie, and his sone Occa," there is no mention of Vortigern's poisoning of Vortimer before resuming the throne. Leslie includes his brief mention of Vortimer's reign primarily as a way of detailing King Congall's assistance to the British and his friendship with Vortimer.

Leslie gives more information than any of the other five historians concerning the religious conversion of the Saxons. He notes that

> about this tyme the twa Bishopes, Germane and Lupe, Jlluminat w^{t} al vertues, as w^{t} starnes, cam in Britannie, of y^{t} mynd and intentione, to rute out be the rute the Pelagian hæresie, and to informe the King Hengest w^{t} the Saxons in the Catholik

> doctrine dulie, and haly præceptes thairof: quhilkes baith, verie happilie succeidet with thame, quhill in the meane tyme, thay wanted nocht to helpe thame, in this thair godly intentione, mony Princes weil confirmet in the Catholick & Christne faith, of Britannie selfe. (I: 218)

Brief mention of this conversion had been made by earlier Scottish historians, but Leslie's entire emphasis is on the religious trauma caused by the Saxon invasion and the steps which were taken to heal the breaches of faith. This emphasis is certainly in keeping with Leslie's purposes in writing history, as discussed previously.

Leslie discusses next the reign of the Scottish king Conran and how, "receaueng in mariage Ada the sister of Ambrose king of Britannie, cam in gret freindschip and familiaritie with him. Mairattouer he helpet nocht litle, againste the Saxounis, thir tua kingis of Britannie, Vteropendragon and Arthur." Aurelius, Uther, and Arthur are mentioned primarily as a way of putting Conran's reign into a wider historical framework. Leslie notes that during Conran's "tyme rang in france Childerik and Clodouie, in Britannie Aurelius, Vteropendragon & Arthur." He then continues with a discussion of Conran, including a detailed account of a miraculous hunting expedition. "To King Conran chanced a meruellous thing and notable in tyme of hunting, for he mekle delyted in hunting the wylde deir: quhen now with the hundes the Hart was hunted and at last ouircum and slane, out of his mouth caist a meruellous multitude of serpentes, quhen, nochtw'standeng, the Hart hornes vses, as testifies Plinius, to remeid the Serpents bite" (I: 219). This account is not found in any of our other histories and the positioning of the story right after the brief mention of Aurelius, Uther, and Arthur, serves to minimize the reference to

the British kings and keep the focus firmly on the importance of the Scottish monarch and the events surrounding him.

Leslie continues with a detailed discussion of the establishment of monasteries, especially the Benedictine order. Then, Leslie moves on to the reign of Eugenie III, at which time he returns to his discussion of Arthur. He does not devote a lot of space to Arthur, and the events which he does relate are told in the context of the Scottish historical background, but he, too, demonstrates a certain amount of doubt concerning some of the Arthurian information, being by no means willing to accept everything he presents.

Most of the information concerning Arthur is narrated within the section dealing with the reign of Eugenie III, son of Congal. Leslie states that

> thay wryt that about this tyme King Arthur subduet throuch battell Scotland, Jrland, Jsland, ffinmarshie, the Jles of Orknay, Denmark, sswadne, Sarmatia, Prussia, Pomerania, the landes of Gothe, Holland, Zeland, Brabante, flanders, (Flandirie) al Britane, and at last hail France, to haue maid the inhabitouris of thir cuntreyes w^{t} thair Princes, tributaries. thaireftir (that J pas ouer the kingis of Grece, of the Meades, & Persianis be him ouircum) they wryte that the Romane Emperour Lucius he subduet. (I: 223)

Leslie finds this rather hard to believe, as he says that "mony rasonis persuades me to reakne sik speikingis rather among flett fables, than notable Histories" (I: 223). Leslie evaluates his information to see if it is reasonable and if it fits with his known world. Nevertheless, in spite of the lack of trust in the multitude of victories, Leslie concedes that

"how evir the mater be, the King Arthur was notable, of coragious spirit, a noble & balde vertue, and honorable in actes." Leslie continues by telling of Arthur's "four and tuentie kene knychtes, and because of thair honour and glore in weirfair, that he nobilitat thame with armes, as in our langage we name thame, and for the knawlege thay had in weirfair, and for the gretnes of that glore, he imbracet tham al alyk with alyk fauour." Leslie always brings his accounts back to a focus on what is known to his readers, so that even in his description of Arthur's knights, he refers to the terms found in "our langage" (I: 223).

Next Leslie describes the Round Table, stating that "the sam self table (gif our countrey men throuch sum superstitioune of our forbearis haue no^{t} erret) haue my selfe seine; quhair it is solemnelie keiped, perpetuallie to be remembered of; in the castel of Wintoune, and ouer al noted w^{t} the names of his weirlie knychtes; quhilke I sawe nocht lang syne" (I: 224). He even gives the reasons for the Round Table, which had appeared in romances and other Arthurian materials, but not in the other Scottish historians. Leslie states that "quhen thay al satt doune to the table, that na man war proud, or throuch vane glore began to crak hich gif he war in the first place sett, or began to Jnvie gif he saw him selfe set laicher than he walde; he caused a round table to the forme of a croune be maid" (I: 223). Again, Leslie explains his information, judging it on the basis of such things as common sense and eye-witness accounts.

Leslie concludes his information about Arthur by saying that "this Arthur at last, as our Histories makes mentione, was slane be the Scottis and Peychtes" and that his wife "Guanora, be the Peychtes eftir his deith was takne be weiris, and to the day of her deith, in Angus vnder sure custodie, was keipet; quhais Sepulchre is ȝit to sie" (I: 223-24).

There is no mention about the final battle particulars and nothing about Mordred. Leslie does let his readers know that "wrytes nocht a few that Eugenie gat S. Mungwe[104] of Anna the Sister of Aurelie King of Britonnie, and lawful heir to the King of Peychtes" (I: 224). This is as near as Leslie gets to mentioning the issue of lawful right to the throne. He makes no reference to Arthur's birth, illegitimacy, age, or anything relating to his ascendency. Leslie mentioned earlier in his discussion of Fergus I, the "Scottis wil haue na Bastard or vnlawful birthe to succeid w^{t} thame w^{t} gude wil" (I: 132), but that is as close as he comes to a discussion of Arthur's legitimacy. It is not of importance to Leslie. He is much more interested in the religious history.

Therefore, Leslie's account of the Arthurian period is very different from any of the previous Scottish historians. He agrees with Boece and Buchanan about the lack of veracity in Arthur's European victories, and he also recounts his belief in the Round Table and Arthur's knights. He gives Arthur credit for being a notable warrior, with a courageous spirit and honorable actions. However, Leslie give far less information about Arthur than the earlier Scottish historians. There is only the very briefest mention of Merlin, but no account of Arthur's birth. There is a mention of the marriage of King Conran to Aurelius's sister, but nothing of Lot or his marriage to Aurelius's other sister, Anna, or the treaty these marriages were meant to ratify. Leslie does give passing mention to Anna, in his comments about the evils which befell Britain, but he provides no details.

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[104] Also spelled by Leslie as Mongwe, Mungo, and Mungwe, this refers to St. Mungo also known as St. Kentigern (518? - 603), who was said by some Scots to have been of royal descent. After being driven out of Cumbria by King Morken, he found asylum in North Wales before finally returning to Glasgow where he died.

Obviously, Leslie feels that Arthur deserves to be mentioned because of his courageous spirit and the deeds he did, and Leslie also feels it is necessary for him to make it clear to his readers that all the information about Arthur's vast conquests was not accurate. However, Leslie finds no need to give anything more than the briefest accounts of the Saxon invasion or Arthur's rule, since they do not bear on his overall aim of providing a detailed and complete history of Scotland.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to discuss how each of the six Scottish historians handle the materials dealing with the Saxon invasion and the reign of Arthur. It is evident that they each work with the materials a little differently. Fordun cares only for the matter of Arthur's right to the throne, and so he covers issues relating to the selection of kings. He gives full and complete particulars about Vortigern, Vortimer, and Aurelius as well as Arthur, always focusing on the reasons underlying their selections as kings. Wyntoun spends the same amount of time on Arthur as Fordun did, but he gives a very different perspective by emphasizing his conquests in response to the Roman demands for tribute. Wyntoun is concerned with issues of national sovereignty.

Mair is the first of these six Scottish historians to give a really extensive treatment of the materials surrounding Arthur. He expands Fordun's basic outline, and gives a complete history of the arrival of the Saxons. However, he also includes Wyntoun's emphasis on the Round Table, Arthur's victories, and the final battle. In addition, Mair spends a great deal of time on Merlin and the issue of prophecy. Mair's emphasis is

different from either Fordun or Wyntoun, though, because he works hard at examining underlying causes for various events. He also purports to portray an unbiased approach, providing details fairly and weighing all sides. His approach may not be unbiased, but instead of favoring Scottish nationalism, his bias is to extol the union of the crowns. His approach may be contrasted with that of Boece, his contemporary. While Boece also provides a wealth of information, his account is much more nationalistic, stressing the injustices done to Scotland in spite of all the assistance it provided to Britain.

Both Buchanan and Leslie write histories which are more tightly focused on the reigns of the Scottish kings. Buchanan still provides a great deal of information, basically following Boece's framework. He does present the information less emotionally than Boece, though, and he demonstrates a higher degree of critical evaluation. His emphasis is on the nature of kingship. Leslie, on the other hand, gives the least amount of information about this period of any of the six historians. His focus is clearly on Scotland, and he covers other events only as they impinge on Scotland. He also gives more attention to ecclesiastical matters, and so stresses the heathen nature of the Saxons and the complete destruction of churches.

Each of these historians has made a conscious effort to use his sources in ways that fit the general purpose of his history. Each has selected from the available materials in order to emphasis the topics which he felt to be most important. Some of the historians mention the Round Table, but others do not. Some go into details about treaties, but others choose to emphasize battles or kingship. All six of these historians used basically the same sources. There are questions surrounding Boece's use of Veremund, but Boece

himself is used as a source by both Buchanan and Leslie. Fordun is Boece's main source, and he is also acknowledged as the primary source for Mair, Boece, Buchanan, and Leslie. Both Wyntoun and Fordun used the records of St. Andrews, and yet their accounts of this period are very dissimilar. Everyone is, of course, indebted to Geoffrey of Monmouth as well as Bede and Gildas, among others. However, even with the same basic sources, our historians have accomplished very different effects by the very nature of their selection and use of the materials.

Now that I have examined just why each historian was writing and what each thought the purpose of history was, as well as how they handled the materials concerning Arthur, I will turn to examining exactly what each historian hoped to accomplish. An examination of the possible uses and users of history and the social and political climates existing at the time the histories were being written will then lead to the discovery of why each historian made the selections he made and what he hoped to accomplish with his history.

CHAPTER III

Users and Uses of History: Social and Political Functions

The two previous chapters have investigated the task and role of the historian as seen by each of the six Scottish historians, as well as each of these historians' views about Arthur. It is now time to examine whether the treatments of Arthur are indicative of the ways in which these historians treat major historical figures, especially English kings with an interest in controlling or conquering Scotland. Expanding the investigation to include not only Arthur, but also William the Conqueror and Edward I, who also had visions of conquering Scotland, will aid in revealing the social and political functions of these histories, investigating in as far as possible, just who the intended audience was and what purpose each historian felt his history would serve.

John Fordun

As was discussed in Chapter I, little is known about Fordun's life or his reasons for writing his history. However, his probable association with the Cathedral of St. Andrews would have been influential. The Register of the Priory of St. Andrews, compiled between 1313 and 1332, contained many early annals and documents concerning Scotland. In addition, the appearance from 1327 to 1363 of Ranulph Higden's popular history of

England could have served as another incentive for Fordun to write a comparable history of Scotland.

Fordun wrote his history soon after the events known as the Great Cause, referred to briefly in chapter I. According to E. L. G. Stones and Grant Simpson, the events of King Edward I's reign from May 1291 until November 1292 concerning the Scottish succession have been known, since at least the eighteenth century, as 'The Great Cause' because of the extraordinary nature involved in the determination of succession rights by a king from another court. It was an event which was perhaps unique in medieval history, and it contributed to the nature of medieval history, since the debate itself required the presentation and evaluation of various documents, determining their relative values in uncovering the true nature of the historical records (I:1). It certainly influenced Fordun in his writing, and in fact, Fordun began his collection of materials relating to Scottish history as a direct result of Edward I's seizure of historical records.[105]

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[105] Henry M. Paton, *The Scottish Records: Their History and Value* (Edinburgh: Historical Association of Scotland, 1933), outlines the difficulties in dealing with medieval Scotland, noting that "public records of England are extant from about the middle of the twelfth century; and had the coeval Scottish records survived (for they once existed), it might not have to said that the history of Scotland in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries has still to be written" (4) It is this loss of records that Fordun is reacting to and trying to combat. On August 12th, 1291 Edward I had authorized a search of the archives at Edinburgh for "all documents bearing, or supposed to bear, upon the merits of the claimants and upon his alleged right of suzerainty" (5). By September nearly the entire collection was on its way to London, and in spite of a "pretext of handing it all back to Balliol's chamberlain" there is "no evidence that any part of the collection ever returned to its home"(5). There is no doubt that "this great mass of Scottish record material has for the present vanished from our ken"(6). Of less importance to the study of the early Scottish historians, but indicative of the continuing loss of Scottish records is the fact that "much of the material for the succeeding period of Scottish history, 1306-1460, has also disappeared." These records apparently were still "extant in 1579 and also about 1630, when lists were made. For a second time, as it would appear, the menace arose from over the Border" (8-9), thus

Fordun lived in a time when the government of Scotland was in a tumultuous state. For example, the reign of David II (1329-71) saw a futile attempt at war with England, the capture of David II, yet another regency, and finally the ultimate ransoming of David with its resultant economic and political woes. David himself cared nothing for Scotland and even made a private arrangement with Edward III, whose sister Joan was David's wife, to have Edward's son declared his heir. This arrangement was repudiated by the Scottish Parliament, and in fact, upon David's death in 1371, Robert Stewart, David's nephew and former regent, became King Robert II. Unfortunately for Scotland, Robert proved to be a weak king, although he had been a good regent. Robert's efforts at restoring peace and prosperity to Scotland were undermined by the weakened economy, still suffering from the ransom payments to England for David II's release. Furthermore, there was a great deal of animosity between the great nobles of Scotland. It was in this climate of political and economic unrest, lack of strong royal leadership, and difficulties with England that Fordun composed his history.

Fordun's interest in the nature of the monarchy as well as the means for selecting kings was evident in his treatment of Arthur and the related period. Fordun stressed the spurious nature of Arthur's claim to the throne as well as the conflicts which arose because of weak and wicked monarchs. This emphasis is especially understandable in the light of the reigns of David II and Robert II. Does this emphasis carry over to Fordun's treatment of more nearly contemporary kings? To answer this, I shall now consider Fordun's

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limiting our ability to identify sources for the later historians. See also Gordon Donaldson, *Scottish Historical Documents* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic P,1970).

treatment of the reigns of first William the Conqueror and then Edward I in order to ascertain whether or not Fordun's treatment of Arthur truly reflects Fordun's views on the monarchy. Analyzing Fordun's discussion of the sixth-century Arthur, the eleventh-century William, and the thirteenth-century Edward, all of whom had designs of one sort or another on Scotland, should provide an adequate basis for discovering what the role of history was for Fordun.

Fordun treats the reign of William the Conqueror in some depth, using mainly the works of William of Malmesbury as his source. Fordun's first mention of William is in book V chapter XII, a chapter that has a rather odd arrangement of materials. The first portion of the chapter is related to the reasons for William's arrival in England. Fordun writes that "William the Bastard, count of Normandy, hearing that Harold had usurped the kingdom of his cousin Edward, was goaded on by various causes to come to England" (198). Fordun gives three specific causes for William's actions. First, Harold had broken the treaty which had been made between him and William. This treaty had provided that Harold would give William Dover Castle at the time the treaty was signed and then would support William's claim to the kingdom of England after Edward's death. William, for his part, had promised his daughter to Harold in marriage.

William was further angered because Harold's father, Godwine, "had treacherously put to death his cousin Alfred, together with many Englishmen and Normans at Ely--all his comrades except every tenth man, being beheaded" (198). Alfred was Edward the Confessor's brother, and his murder in 1036 by Earl Godwine and other supporters of Harold while on a visit from Normandy to England to see his mother Emma angered

William. The third specific cause which Fordun relates as reason for William's arrival in England is that "Godwin had banished out of England the archbishop Robert and Earl Odo, together with all the French." Therefore, being "irritated on account of these and other matters, he gathered his forces together from all sides, and sailed over into England; and, on the 14th of October 1066--the tenth year of the emperor Henry and king Malcolm--he deprived this same Harold of his kingdom and his life together, in a slight and ill-contested battle at Hastings" (198).

At this point, without providing any transition, Fordun notes that "in the second year of this emperor, Padbrunna (Paderborn), a city of Germany, was burnt down, together with its cathedral." Fordun discusses the actions of a monk named Paternus, a Scot residing in this German town, "shut up in a little cell hard by a monastery. To him it was revealed that unless the people made haste to appease God by repentance, the whole city would perish by fire within thirty days." The people did not repent. Saint Paternus had the monks take away the valuables from the monastery so they might be saved, and "at length a fire burst out suddenly in seven parts of the city, and burnt the whole city and the monastery to ashes. But when the fire had reached the little cell of the man of God, and he was asked to come forth, he would not; but intrusting all to the judgment of God, he and his little cell were burnt up" (198-99).

This incident brings Fordun's chapter to a close except for the final sentence, which once again takes the reader back to William the Conqueror. "In the year of William the Bastard's arrival in England, a comet was seen; whence the rhymer says:--

'In the year one thousand and six and sixty more,

A comet's tresses streamed o'er England's shore.'" (199)

The juxtaposition of the account of William's arrival in England and the Battle of Hastings with the story of Saint Paternus, the Scot who warned the German town to repent or be burned, indicates the reasons for William's victory. The concluding statement about the comet would seem to demonstrate that the English lost their kingdom as a form of divine retribution. This logic is further reinforced in the opening of the following chapter, where Fordun relates that he had included the information about the Battle of Hastings in his chronicle as an example to "our chieftains" because "the sad slaughter of the battle of Hastings, wherein, through that cause, the English lost their kingdom" was directly due to the fact that "they be burdened by besetting sins of such kind and so great--far be it from them!--that they be, like him, unable to withstand their foes in battle" (199). As Fordun will shortly demonstrate, these "besetting sins" involved gluttony, wantonness, and a turning away from the church.

Fordun's own period was one of strife, especially between the baronial families, and Fordun is providing a pointed example of the results of such actions. It was because of their sins, as well as the moral laxness of the church, that the English lost their kingdom to William. Fordun's readers would certainly understand his warning that the same could and was happening in Scotland. In order to support his claim that the English lost their kingdom because of a change in their behavior, Fordun begins by briefly relating the history of England, from the arrival of the Angles, noting that "in the first years of their arrival, they were savage in look and manner, of warlike habits, heathen in their customs; but afterwards, when they had embraced Christ's faith, little by little, as time went on, in

proportion to the ease in which they lived, did they put the use of arms in the second place, and turned their thoughts entirely to religion" (199). However, this happy state of affairs did not last. "Nevertheless, afterwards, in course of time, for a good many years before the arrival of the Normans, the upper classes, given up to gluttony and wantonness, went not to church in the morning after the manner of Christians, but, in their chambers, and in the arms of their wives, barely listened to a priest who hurried through the rites of matins or the mass." The common people left unprotected then "became the prey of the most powerful--who amassed heaps of treasure, by either swallowing up their substance, or selling their persons into far off lands." By far the worst sin, according to Fordun, was the treatment of the maid-servants. "When their maid-servants were with child by them, and [they] had glutted their lust, [they] were wont to sell them either to some common brothel, or to service abroad." The clergy itself did nothing about these practices. In fact,

> the clergy, contented with a smattering of letters, could scarcely stammer out the words of the sacraments; and one who knew grammar was an object of wonder and astonishment to the rest. The monks made a mockery of the rule of their order by fine clothes and every kind of food without distinction. Drinking-bouts were indulged in by all, who continued nights as well as days in that occupation. They eat till they brought on surfeiting, and drank till they were sick; whence there followed the vices which wait on drunkenness, and unman the minds of men. (200)

Fordun spends a great deal of time on the issues of the loss of morals among the nobles and the decline in the education and discipline of the clergy because these were real issues for him in present-day Scotland. While each generation usually finds that the present

society is becoming more morally corrupt, it is true that in Fordun's time the clergy in Scotland were beginning to experience a definite decline in morality which would continue until the Scottish Reformation.[106] The direct result of the English sinfulness had been the loss of their kingdom. "So it came to pass that, when they engaged William with more rashness and headlong fury than military skill, they themselves and their country sank into slavery by one, and that by no means a hard-fought battle." Fordun had made the same point in his descriptions of Vortigern's reign and in fact, as was shown earlier, Fordun spent more time detailing the events, most notably the moral corruption leading up to Arthur, than he did with Arthur himself. Fordun ends with the moral advice that "nothing is more bootless than rashness; and what is begun with a rush, soon ends, or is checked. But as God, in His mildness, often cherishes the bad with the good in quietness, so does He in His sternness, sometimes fetter the good with the bad in bondage" (200).

Fordun's two chapters dealing with the Norman conquest of England then fit together as a direct warning to his own contemporary Scotland concerning the dangers of loose living and rivalries between chieftains. Fordun gives very little information about William himself or the battle. What reasons Fordun gives for William's invasion demonstrate the moral laxness of England, with broken treaties, treacherous murders, and unjust banishments. Fordun had used a similar approach when narrating Vortigern's reign and the reason for the Scots' and Picts' battles against him. There too, it was the case of a

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[106] Cowan finds that in many cases churchmen had "integrated with society to such an extent that their behaviour and standard of values corresponded with that of the laity whom they were expected to inculcate with more charitable virtues." In additions, the spiritual role of many churchmen declined and "their increased rapacity came to threaten many of the services which they had previously provided" (134-35).

"sinful nation, who abetted the pride and extravagence of their king; so that the masses, as corrupt as their king, were overthrown in a common vengeance" (89). The consequences of unrepented sin are further demonstrated in the brief example of the burning of the city in Germany, foretold in the prophecies and warnings of the Scottish saint, who himself dies in the blaze. This information is followed by a detailed account of the loss of discipline and moral fiber in the English church. The English loss is then an inevitable result of their own behavior. It is probable that Fordun would expect his readers to heed the warnings he provides concerning the loss of the English kingdom so that the same does not befall Scotland, which in Fordun's time is suffering from similar declines in both secular and sacred leadership.

Fordun also discusses issues surrounding the relationships between Scotland and England, especially those reflecting on overlordship. He discusses at length and over several chapters the reign of Scotland's King Malcolm, his wife, Saint Margaret, and the wars with England's William. Fordun notes that Malcolm accepted the English refugees after the defeat of Harold, "affording to each such protection as was in his power." Malcolm had close ties to the English, having been brought up in England from the age of nine. He took the English princess Margaret as his second wife in 1069. Margaret was the granddaughter of Edmund "Ironside" King of England in 1016 and also Edgar the Atheling's sister. Malcolm was especially sensitive to the rights of Edgar, "whose sister he made his consort, out of regard for her old and noble descent. On his behalf, Malcolm harried the border provinces of England with fire and rapine" (202). Fordun adds that

> many a time, however, did the king [Malcolm], from the earliest days of William

> the Bastard's reign even until after his death, march into the northern provinces of England, with a strong hand, wasting and destroying all things round about; taking away, in a hostile manner, by spoiling and plunder, all that had breath; and consuming with fire and sword, from off the face of the earth, all he did not take away for the use of man. (203)

The end result of all this activity on Malcolm's side was that "the whole country, except some castles, surrendered to him, and all the inhabitants submitted and swore fealty to him" (204). Thus, most of the border provinces owed fealty to Scotland, not England. Fordun then discloses that "though Malcolm was bound to do homage to William the Bastard for twelve towns situated in England, he threw off his allegiance on some provocation from certain Normans, and, in his fearful raids, heaped upon them these unbearable disasters which they well deserved." It is not hard to see where Fordun's allegiance lies. In addition, Fordun makes it very clear that most of the fealty was owed by the border provinces to Scotland, and only twelve cities were bound to England. Again, as was demonstrated earlier, from the beginning of Fordun's work, he continually emphasizes Scotland's early pre-eminence and continuing independence from England.

Fordun continues with information about William's reaction to Malcolm's action, but William was "unable to brook the never-tiring inroads of this outbreak." In response he sent his son Robert "to Scotland, to make war upon King Malcolm. Robert, however achieved nothing" (205). Finally, "in the thirty-first year of King Malcolm, William the Bastard, king of England, died at Rouen." He was succeeded by his son, William Rufus, who was able to make peace with Malcolm. Fordun informs his readers that the terms of

this peace required that "the king of Scotland should obey King William; that William should restore to Malcolm the twelve towns the latter had held under William's father; and that Malcolm also should give twelve golden merks a year" (207). Temporarily, at least, "a good understanding was brought about between Malcolm and William. Nevertheless there were many disputes on both sides, and justice wavered by reason of the fierce enmity of the two nations" (207).

Thus, Fordun has succeeded in explaining not only Harold's loss at the Battle of Hastings, but the relationships between Scotland and England which developed during William the Conqueror's reign, and the reasons for the long-standing enmity between the two nations which would become more and more important as time went on. Fordun tries to make it clear that Scotland only owes obedience to William Rufus for the border towns which William has agreed to give back to Scotland, and not for the nation as a whole. This background information becomes more relevant when Fordun begins his discussion of the relationship of Edward I to Scotland. As he had done with Arthur, Fordun spends most of his time discussing the nature of the society within which William operated, demonstrating that the political actions were a direct result of the social conditions. If Fordun can continue with this emphasis when he discusses Edward I, then he will have given his readers a solid case for understanding that Scotland must take responsibility for what has happened to it by reforming its moral and religious conduct.

Fordun devotes a great deal of space to the period of Edward I, since it is not only

of vital importance to Scottish history, but also to the contemporary political situation.[107] He details the actions of Edward from the time he first becomes a political force, during the reign of his father Henry III. While Edward did not inherit any titles at a young age, as both Arthur and William had, he did demonstrate an early aptitude for military leadership. Fordun emphasizes especially the assistance offered by the Scots to Edward in his battles against the Welsh. He then continues with an explanation of the relationship between "Alexander, king of Scotland, and Edward, king of England, about the boundaries and marches of the two kingdoms" (301).

The situation between Scotland and England changes rapidly when Alexander III dies in an accident in 1286.[108] His first wife and both his sons and his daughter had died

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[107] Goldstein notes that the Scots had watched what Edward had done in Wales, where he had "made it abundantly clear that his ambition was to exercise suzerainty or lordship over all of Britain." It was this English imperialism which alarmed the Scottish historians who "sought to prevent Edward's domination of Wales from being repeated in their own kingdom" (*Matter* 31).

[108] Matthew P. McDiarmid, "The Kingship of the Scots in their Writers," *Scottish Literary Journal* 6 (1979): 5-18, notes that Scotland at the time of Alexander III's death was "something more than a loose federation of regions; it was an established *order*, a more relevant description; an order in which by now mainly 'Inglis' and/or Gaelic speaking lords or lairds had their traditionary offices or loyalties, under a king whose interference with his subjects, regions and their customs, was slight so long as his pre-eminence was recognised and the various forms of service were performed. By the Anglo-Norman criterion of unity–that the king's law, the king's justice, went everywhere–it was indeed much too loose, under-centralised, and therefore surely easy to divide and conquer. So Edward I may have thought. Where its surprising strength and will to resistance came from is best understood by looking at another loose unity within, a church of equal-ranking bishops–conceding only a historical precedence to the bishop of St. Andrews–which, under threat from the English hierarchy, had secured papal recognition of its independence. Naturally it gave its full support to the secular order. Under attack it could rouse loyalties outside itself in every class. Edward's agents report that everywhere priests go among the people persuading them that war against the English is a holy war" (5).

before him. His second wife had not borne him any children. His only heir was his granddaughter Margaret, Maid of Scotland and the infant daughter of the King of Norway. Once the Maid of Scotland dies on the way to Scotland and a possible marriage to Edward I's infant son, and the succession to the throne of Scotland is in jeopardy, Fordun makes a very clear statement about the relationship between Scotland and England:

> The kingdom of Scotland were as free and quit of all thraldom and subjection, as ever it had been, at its best and freest, during the lifetime of Alexander III, the illustrious king thereof;--according to what appears in a certain instrument drawn up by them, a copy whereof is more fully contained in the book of the pleading of Baldred. And in case the aforesaid marriage did not hold good, or either of the contracting parties deceased without issue, while the other survived,--in any case or event, the aforesaid kingdom was to be freely, entirely, and absolutely, without any subjection, restored and returned to the next heirs. (306)

According to Fordun, when the dispute arose about the succession, between Robert Bruce and John Balliol, the Scottish nobles decided to ask Edward I to be the "supreme judge in this matter, and declare the right of each; and, by his might, duly coerce, according to the requirements of the law, that party against whom he might pronounce his award." However, Fordun goes on to make it clear that in spite of the request for Edward I to judge the merits of the contenders for the thrones, "no right or superiority of dominion should thereby accrue to Edward; as he was called thereto, not as lord paramount, or judge by right, but as a friendly umpire, and the strongest neighbour, to settle a quarrel,

equally by his wisdom and his might, after the manner of a friendly peacemaker, and for the sake of reciprocity" (307). Edward was not to assume any sovereignty over Scotland as a result of his position as mediator during the crisis caused by the empty Scottish throne. Fordun maintains his emphasis on Scotland's independence.

Fordun continues his description of the events of the Great Cause by relating that Edward I had asked both Robert Bruce and John Balliol individually if they would be willing to be subject to him if he should rule in their favor. Fordun reports that Bruce answered, "If I can get the aforesaid kingdom by means of my right and a faithful assize, well and good; but if not, I shall never, in gaining that kingdom for myself, reduce it to thraldom--a kingdom which all the kings thereof have hitherto, with great toil and trouble, kept free from thraldom, in security of peace." Bruce reaffirms the independence of Scotland in the past as well as his determination to maintain this independence. However, Fordun reports that when John Balliol is questioned, he deliberated quickly with his council and then "fell in with the aforesaid king's wishes, that he should hold the kingdom of Scotland of him, and do him homage for the same." Immediately thereafter, "Edward pronounced John Balliol to be the lawful heir in the succession to the throne." Fordun leaves little doubt in the minds of his readers that Edward's decision was based solely on his desire to have control over Scotland. Fordun ends the chapter with the withdrawal from the scene of Robert Bruce, commenting that he never did "tender homage or fealty to John of Balliol" (309). Further strife is thus inevitable.

Fordun continues with this section of Scottish history in full detail, never hesitating to expose Edward's treachery as well as his desire to conquer Scotland. Fordun tells his

readers about Balliol's renouncing the "homage and fealty he had tendered to the king of England, as wrung from him by force and fear" (316), and then Edward's efforts to woo Robert Bruce with various pledges. "When, however, Edward got what he wished, he nowise kept his pledges" (317). It is clear that Edward fits Fordun's concept of a wicked monarch and both England and Scotland suffer as a result. Fordun had clarified his concept of the evil ruler with his description of Vortigern, whose actions parallel Edward's. Fordun had earlier recounted how Vortigern also demonstrated his desire for personal gain rather than his country's welfare when he told how "King Vortigern invited over the nation of the heathen Saxons, to provide for his own safety, and attack the enemy." Soon when the Saxons increased their population alarmingly, the Britons, "fearing their treachery," told Vortigern "to drive them out of the borders of his kingdom; but Vortigern evaded acquiescence in their advice, as he loved the Saxons above all other nations, on account of Hengist's daughter Rowen, whom he had taken to wife some time before" (91).

Fordun provides his readers with positive as well as negative examples of leadership. Vortimer and Arthur had been given as contrasts to Vortigern. Now, as a contrast with Edward I, Fordun relates the story of the heroic acts of William Wallace, noting that there "flocked to him all who were in bitterness of spirit, and weighed down beneath the burden of bondage under the unbearable domination of English despotism; and he became their leader. He was wondrously brave and bold of goodly mien, and boundless liberality" (321). In other words, Wallace has many of the characteristics which earlier had been ascribed to Arthur. Wallace is a true leader, faithful to the nature of his

calling, and determined to free Scotland.[109]

The war with England becomes much more intense, but Fordun also informs his readers that the defeat of the Scots, such as that occurring at the Battle of Falkirk, is due in large measure to the discord and treachery among the Scottish nobles.[110] "It is remarkable that we seldom, if ever, read of the Scots being overcome by the English, unless through the envy of lords, or the treachery and deceit of the natives, taking them over to the other side." Of course, at Falkirk, Fordun notes that

> it is commonly said that Robert Bruce, --who was afterwards king of Scotland, but then fought on the side of the king of England--was the means of bringing about this victory. For, while the Scots stood invincible in their ranks, and could not be broken by either force or stratagem, this Robert of Bruce went with one line, under Anthony of Bek, by a long road round a hill, and attacked the Scots in the rear. (323)

Over and over again Fordun makes his point that the proper management of Scotland depends on unity of purpose and honorable leadership. He does not hesitate to condemn Edward as treacherous and double-dealing, but he also makes it clear that Edward could not have succeeded without the help of the Scots themselves. The Scots are defeated by

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[109] Goldstein asserts that there must be "no mistake about what Wallace himself aimed to achieve, whatever his humble recruits may have understood: he fought to reactivate Scottish government and restore the deposed king" (*Matter* 52).

[110] For a more complete discussion of the problems resulting from the divided loyalties of the nobles in the border region see G. W. S. Barrow, *The Anglo-Norman Era in Scottish History* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1980).

one of their own.[111] Fordun concludes his comments on Edward I by saying that

> this 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. (336)

Fordun has given his readers a well-defined example of what a king should not be. He emphasizes again, as he had with his discussions of both Arthur and William, that a nation's misfortunes may be attributed to the conduct not only of the ruler but also of society as a whole. Fordun's continuing emphasis would indicate his hope that his readers will heed the warnings he puts forth so that his present-day Scotland will be able to turn

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[111] Goldstein notes that the "emergence of national consciousness in Scotland is ultimately inseparable from the history of *racial* consciousness–the perception (real or imagined) of belonging to a common *gens* or blood group. When put to the test, the loyalties of Gaelic speakers (and even of English- and French-speaking Scots) tended to be identified by family ties rather than by feudal bonds and obligations. During the thirteenth century and even later, consciousness of kin-based communities frequently predominated over what I refer to as 'national' consciousness" (*Matter* 24). Goldstein notes further that "the inherent contradiction between ties of kinship and obligations of personal service to a sworn lord thus provides a persistent source of ideological conflict" which these histories of Scotland try to resolve (*Matter* 25). G. W. S. Barrow, *Robert Bruce and the Community of the Realm of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1988), states that "more important than any 'clan system', with all its picturesque accompaniment of slogans, badges and tartans, was the indisputable fact that the family as a whole, rather than any single father-to-son dynasty, was the dominant social unit in Scotland. Even allowing for the small population, a remarkably small number of surnames sufficed for the landowning class. The Scots, in short, were a kin-based society" (4).

back to the ways which will make it strong and independent.

It is clear that Fordun is writing a history which he feels will be an accurate accounting of Scottish history, something which hitherto had been unavailable. He has written the first complete Scottish history as a direct response to Edward I's seizure of historical records. Fordun seeks to correct the English accounts of Scotland's history in a number of particulars, so that the Scots will have a full documentary account of their past history. He spends most of his time on more recent events, especially those related to the nature of the monarchy, in order to fulfill yet another aim of his history, namely to instruct the current political leaders. He hopes that by demonstrating clearly where Scotland succeeded and more importantly why it failed, he will be able to help modern kings and the nobility learn from the past mistakes and take charge of the present. Fordun lived during the reigns of two very weak Scottish kings, and he sees the necessity for strong leadership with a united purpose. When Fordun had dealt with Arthur, he made it very clear that Arthur had no right to the throne, but he also pointed out that Arthur attained the throne because of the very nature of his personality and his ability to rule wisely and powerfully. Scotland is in need of such a leader, and Fordun no doubt hopes that by writing his history he will make it clear to his readers that they need to focus on living upright lives and following strong leaders who are free from treachery and deceit. The Scots, after all, have a long and honorable history as a free and independent people, a fact which Fordun opens his history with and never loses sight of. They had even refused to submit to Julius Caesar (44-45). They need now to be aware of this substantial heritage and demonstrate that they are worthy successors to the past heroes.

Andrew Wyntoun

Wyntoun was born thirty years after Fordun, and he lived through the reigns of David II, Robert II, Robert III, and James I. Robert III, on the grounds of sickness, virtually abdicated in favor of various regents, most notably his younger brother, the Duke of Albany. Once again Scotland suffered from the fighting of the Scottish nobles amongst themselves. Robert III, fearing for the safety of his son James, the heir to the throne, sent him to France, but the ship on which he was traveling was seized by English pirates, and James was delivered to King Henry IV who held him as a hostage. The shock of these events killed Robert III, and James was proclaimed king of Scotland. However, he spent the first eighteen years of his reign in the hands of the English. He did not return to Scotland until 1424, after Wyntoun's death. His uncle, the Duke of Albany, ruled in his stead and made very little effort to secure his release. When Albany died in 1420, the year of Wyntoun's death as well, the regency was taken over by his son, Duke Murdoch. The Scottish nobles took advantage of this period of interregnum to build their own private armies and solidify their individual positions. Once again the climate in Scotland was divisive and filled with strife. It was within this political climate that Wyntoun wrote his world history.

Earlier in his history, Wyntoun had presented those aspects of Arthur's story which dealt with Arthur's prowess in battle, his refusal to pay any homage to Rome, and his ability to lead his people and bring some measure of order to the chaos which had existed. These emphases suggest that Wyntoun is concerned with the necessity for just and fair rulers, and that issues of national sovereignty are vitally important as well. Considering

the political climate of Scotland at the time Wyntoun writes his world history, this emphasis is certainly understandable. Do these same concerns carry over to his treatment of William the Conqueror and Edward I?

Wyntoun tells very briefly of the defeat of Harold, merely noting that William

come on him with stalwart hand,
And slew that traytour in the fycht,
That had vsurpit agane the rycht
The kinrik, in disherisoun
Off thaim that suld with all resoun
Haif had the crovne of heretage,
Be lauchfull and be lele lynnage.
Thus William Bastard in Ingland
Enterit to be king regnand. (VI: 2472-80)

Wyntoun does not give the details of Harold's reign as Fordun had done. Wyntoun merely mentions that Harold was treacherous and took the crown of England unlawfully. There is no mention of the abuses of the church or the sinfulness of the nobles. Also, in keeping with the nature of the world chronicle, Wyntoun mentions that the events surrounding William's assumption of the crown took place when Nicholas II was pope and Henry III was emperor.

Wyntoun then discusses the reign of Malcolm in Scotland, of whom Wyntoun says that:

In the Cristyndome, I trow, than

Was nocht in deide a bettyr man,

Na liffande was a bettyr knycht,

Na mar manly, stowt and wicht. (VII: 17-20)

Once again, Malcolm is seen as exhibiting the qualities of character similar to Arthur, whom Wyntoun had described as having

gret douchtynes,

His worschep and his prysse prowes. (V: 4331-32)

When Wyntoun returns to William, it is to explain the debt which he owed to the Scots because of their assistance to him:

Off Ingland, as the story sais,

That William Bastard in thai dais

Throu fauour of the Scottis men,

Thare help, thare will, thar counsall, then

The stait tuke of the ryalte

Off Ingland with aith of fewte,

That of det aucht homage to the crovne,

And sa ioisit he possessioun. (VII: 109-16)

Then Wyntoun describes briefly the fate of the defeated English and notes, as Fordun had also told, that Malcolm welcomed the English refugees to Scotland.[112] Eventually, this

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[112] David C. Douglas, *William the Conqueror: The Norman Impact on England* (Berkeley: U California P, 1964), discusses the impact which the arrival of the Normans had on Scotland. He notes that "in 1070 it was Scotland that was most immediately affected. Ever since 1066 Scotland had served as a refuge for disinherited English magnates. Edgar Atheling remained an honoured guest at Malcolm's court; and Malcolm

leads to war between William and Scotland, until William's death in 1087, when William was succeeded by his son William II. Malcolm, in his turn, died as a result of treason, having been slain by a traitor.

Wyntoun thus describes William's reign, but in much less detail than Fordun had done. He does comment on it as a source for uneasy relationships with England, and while he acknowledges Malcolm's harboring of refugees, Wyntoun makes it clear that it is William who initiates the hostilities.

A thousand twa and sevinty ȝeere,
William Bastard with his powere
In Scotland come, and waistit wyne
All the land till Abirnethyne.
Bot, agane as he past hame,
Oure king him followit to Durehame,
And put him thare in sa gret dreid
That he fled forthwartis full gud speid. (VII: 291-98)

Wyntoun has also succeeded in raising the issue of sovereignty and homage, indicating that under Malcolm, a righteous and just king, Scotland is free, independent, and strong. Thus, Wyntoun holds Malcolm up as an example of what a king should be. Wyntoun's focus is on Scotland, and details about William are given only as they relate to Scotland.

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had married Edgar's sister Margaret. In these circumstances, the victorious campaigns of William through the north of England during the winter of 1069-1070 was bound to provoke an immediate reaction from Scotland, which now could provide a new and most formidable threat to the Anglo-Norman kingdom" (225).

As he had done with Arthur, Wyntoun emphasizes the importance of having just and fair rulers.

Wyntoun spends much more time on Edward, but Edward had a greater impact on Scotland and his history was also much closer to Wyntoun's own time. The lessons which Scotland should have learned as a result of Edward's reign were also very relevant in Wyntoun's own period. Other than an early note about Edward's birth (VII: 2942), Wyntoun makes no mention of Edward until he is king. The first full description of Edward is far from flattering:

> Al thus said the kynge Edwart,
> Withe the lange schankys callit eftirwart,
> Qwhen thar was of his nacion
> Mony a famows gret person,
> And of his legis gret gentil men
> On the feylde ded lyande then,
> Al on the erde, qwhit forȝet,
> To be gleddis or hunddis met.
> The Kynge Edwarde lyklyly
> His prynceheide changit in terandry,
> And in lurdanes his ryolte,
> That sulde haf beyn of gret pete,
> And til his legis of tendyrnes,
> That swa slayne vndir his banere was. (VII: 3457-70)

Again, Wyntoun's emphasis is on tyranny and treachery. Edward stands in contrast to Scotland's own Alexander III, who is discussed in detail. Once the issue of the Scottish succession arises, Wyntoun increases the depth of his coverage.

Wyntoun acknowledges that Edward was chosen to decide who should be declared king of Scotland, and according to Wyntoun, there are only two contenders, namely John Balliol and Robert Bruce. (These are also the only two contenders whom Fordun considered really viable.) According to Wyntoun, Edward was in France at the time he was asked to decide and as a result he put the case to experts at the University of Paris. Wyntoun then gives the complete genealogical history of both contenders, and he goes into the legal claims of each in great detail. Several French legal experts are quoted by Wyntoun, giving their complete arguments as to whom should succeed. Valid arguments can be made for both contenders, according to Wyntoun. As far as Edward himself is concerned, Wyntoun makes the statement several times that:

> The kynge of Inglande sulde of law
>
> Al that debate, as ourlarde, knaw. (VIII: 621-22)

Thus, Wyntoun finds that Edward, especially since he claims to be Scotland's overlord, should understand the legality of the claims if he is going to render a just verdict. Most of the experts from France seemed to support the claim of Robert Bruce as having the greater weight. However, "Edwarde the kynge gaff sentens Contrare til al gud consciens" (V: 209). As Fordun had noted as well, Edward's decision was based on the fact that Robert Bruce declared that if he became king

> I sall als frely in all thing

Hald it, as it efferis to a king,

Or as my elderis forouth me

Held it, in freast ryalte. (VIII: 849-52)

Balliol, on the other hand

Assentit till all his will,

Quhare of fell eftir mekly ill. (VIII: 859-60)

Edward declared in favor of John Balliol because he would grant Edward homage. The legality of the claims, as illustrated by Wyntoun in his extensive citing of the French legal experts, ended up having no influence on Edward's decision. He went with the claimant whom he thought would be more malleable.

Wyntoun then gives just a few details as to the means by which Bruce became king, and instead he refers his readers to Barbour's writings. At this point in his narrative, Wyntoun takes time for a digression in which he gives further genealogical information, including very detailed information concerning the origins and pedigree of the Comyn family as this would become very relevant to further Scottish history, especially in the time of Wallace. Wyntoun spends a great deal more time on matters of genealogy than Fordun did. Wyntoun continues with a clear outline of the Bruce family genealogy as well before proceeding with his narrative.

Wyntoun gives the details of the crowning of Balliol, noting that while Balliol made homage to Edward, Bruce "gat neuir homage na fewte" to Balliol. Like Fordun, Wyntoun also includes complete details concerning Balliol's refusal to continue to pay homage followed by Edward's wooing of Bruce and Edward's subsequent treachery and

falseness. Wyntoun stresses the divisiveness which caused such difficulties in Scotland at this time:

> This tyme was gret discension
>
> In Scotlande, and gret dewisn;
>
> For the kynrik was swa
>
> Dewidit in to partis twa. (VIII: 1899-1902)

The recurring problem within Scotland's politics was the conflict and power struggles between various nobles and their families. Wyntoun notes that the Comyns favored John Balliol but that various clergymen favored Robert Bruce.[113] This major division explains why Wyntoun had gone to such lengths earlier to explain the genealogies of the families involved so that his readers would understand the importance of various allegiances as well as the difficulties caused by the assorted power struggles.

Wyntoun also uses the example of William Wallace to give an example of true leadership. When Wyntoun had dealt with Arthur, there was no comparable example of leadership on the Scottish side. When he had discussed William, he had the example of Malcolm for his readers. Now, when he has to examine Edward I's actions, the contenders for the throne of Scotland do not exemplify the strengths which Wyntoun seeks. Therefore, he must turn to Wallace, the contemporary of Edward I who does demonstrate the qualities which Wyntoun is searching for. He explains the role of Wallace by saying that in 1297:

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[113] A discussion of the role of the church in the Great Cause and the struggle for Scotland's independence may be found in Roberts, who notes that "open hostility to England was perhaps fostered by the Church, fearing for its own independence" (119).

Wilȝame Walas in Cliddisdaile,

That saw his kyn suppryssit haile

Withe Inglis men with gret dispyte,

Sum of thar harmys he thoucht to qwhite.

For he was cummyn of gentil men,

In sympil state set he was then;

His fadyr was a manly knycht;

His modyr was a lady bricht;

He gottyn and borne in [maryage].

His eldar brothir the [heretage]

Had, and ioyssit in his dayis. (VIII: 2013-23)

While Wyntoun notes that Wallace was "off stature he wes strang and stout," he stresses the nobility of Wallace's ancestry. He emphasizes the dispute with the English, but makes less mention of the distress of the common Scot than Fordun had done. There is only a brief mention of Wallace's execution:

Schir Iohun of Menteythe in tha days

Tuk in Glasgow William Wallace,

And send him in till Ingland sone.

Thare he wes quarterit and vndone

Be gret dispite and fellony;

Thare tholit he that martery.

In all Ingland thare wes nocht than

As William Wallace a lelare man. (VIII: 2755-62)

Wyntoun, writing shortly after Barbour, omits many of the details about this period in Scottish history, referring his readers to the more complete account to be found in Barbour's *Bruce*.

Wyntoun writes his history at a time when Scotland is suffering from tremendous political turmoil. He focuses on Scotland, emphasizing the events in Scottish history, even though he is writing a world history. When dealing with Edward I and his relationship with Scotland, Wyntoun includes only as much about Edward as is necessary to demonstrate his treacherous and deceitful nature. Once Wyntoun has proven the disastrous effects of Edward's monarchy on both Scotland and England, he shifts his focus to deal directly with Scotland's persistent political problems.

Wyntoun uses genealogical history to demonstrate the influence of family loyalties and the effect they have had on Scottish politics. He wants to be sure his readers understand the problems which arise when the loyalties of Scots are divided. When Wyntoun had discussed Arthur, his main emphasis had been on Arthur's abilities as a leader to unite the Britains in their battles against the Saxons. The necessity for unified leadership and united actions had been demonstrated in the story of Arthur. Wyntoun also had emphasized with his description of Arthur the importance of fair and just leadership. Wyntoun stressed that Arthur ruled wisely, enabling him to keep the Britons focused on their central goal of defeating the Saxons. During the time of Edward I, the Scots could not maintain a united focus. Their loyalties were divided, especially between John Balliol and Robert Bruce. Once again, as Wyntoun had done with the Arthurian materials, he

emphasizes the dangers of false or multiple claims to the throne. Various nobles saw the time of conflict as an opportunity to increase their own power at the expense of the nation as a whole.

Wyntoun also used Arthur as an example of someone who refused to submit to the claims of sovereignty put forth by Rome, an example which Wyntoun probably felt that Scotland needed to follow. Time and again, Scottish leaders are tricked by Edward because they are seeking their own glory rather than national independence. John Balliol agreed to pay homage to Edward in order to gain the throne of Scotland. Wyntoun had clearly demonstrated that the legal experts whom Edward had consulted felt that Robert Bruce had a stronger claim. However, because Bruce refused to pay homage and Balliol agreed, Edward awarded the throne to Balliol. Afterwards, Balliol realized that he had erred, when Edward attempted to control Scotland. When Balliol refused to pay homage any longer, then Edward made promises to Bruce, getting Bruce's promise to acknowledge Edward as his overlord. As soon as Bruce had fought for Edward, Edward demonstrated his falseness by refusing to honor the promises he had made. These self-serving actions are clearly injurious to Scotland as a whole, and does not follow the example set by Arthur in his dealings with the Romans and later by Wallace, who even under torture held to his promise to try to guide his nation to freedom.[114]

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[114] As Roberts states, "thus died arguably the greatest of all Scottish patriots, whose deep attachment to his country lay quite outside the loyalties more typical of a feudal society and whose actions were never tarnished by self-interest. Fiery and impetuous, and capable of savage atrocities, he was a born leader who had inspired the common people of Scotland with a fierce determination to resist the English occupation of their country" (124).

Wyntoun has written his world history for several reasons. He wants to be sure that Scotland's history is told fully and accurately, and in addition that it is set within the context of the larger world chronology. This setting will allow his readers to understand the history of Scotland in a wider context. Wyntoun wants to educate his readers so that they can learn from the examples of the past. Scotland desperately needs a strong, just monarch and a united nobility. The interregnum period brought about because of the weak nature of the current monarchs, especially Robert II and Robert III, followed by the regency of the underage James I, had been used by the nobles to build individual armies and increase personal power. While Wyntoun does not give direct political advice, he must have hoped that by writing his history of the world, focused primarily upon Scotland, that he could help his readers see what glories Scotland had experienced in the past and how to achieve national independence and prosperity again. To this end he discusses Arthur as an example of a just and fair ruler who did not bow to the Roman pressures for tribute. Wyntoun continues with a discussion of William as an example of a well-known king who conquered the Anglo-Saxons and tried to lay claim to Scotland. However, Wyntoun counters the example of William with that of Malcolm, a monarch who may not be as well-known in the histories of the time as William, but who demonstrates the attributes of a strong ruler. Finally, Wyntoun's discussion of Edward I shows his readers the dangers associated with not only a treacherous and self-centered ruler, but also with a divided power base within Scotland. Therefore, this examination of Wyntoun's treatment of Arthur, William, and Edward serves to demonstrate his primary concern with the issues of leadership and national sovereignty.

John Mair

Mair finished his *Historia Majoris Britanniae tam Angliae quam Scotiae* some 100 years after Wyntoun. Mair was born during the reign of James III, just as James came of age. James III proved to be an unpopular ruler,[115] more interested in such subjects as architecture, astrology, and necromancy than politics. He was not socially adept and preferred the companionship of a group of intelligent and gifted favorites to his own nobles. His reign was marked by a number of plots and conspiracies, and the English, in spite of the peace treaty of 1474 played on these Scottish feuds. James, fearful for his throne, even imprisoned his two brothers, one of whom died mysteriously in his bath while the other, Albany, killed his guards and escaped from Edinburgh Castle to London. Three years later Albany joined with an English army determined to invade Scotland. James III attempted to meet this threat of invasion, but instead was overcome by his own nobles and taken back to Edinburgh. Albany assumed the regency and the English took Berwick before returning home to let the Scots defeat themselves.

In 1488 another group of conspirators captured James III's son, proclaiming him king in place of his unpopular father. James fought the rebels, but was slain or murdered in the end, and James IV became king at the age of 15. He proved to be a very different king from his father and would not be ruled by his nobles. He himself led an army a year later when civil war broke out, and defeated the rebels.

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[115] As Mason notes, "even the most sympathetic of historians would be hard-pressed to portray the first three Jameses as anything other than aggressive, ruthless and as often as not vindictively high-handed. Not only were they far from embodying the personal virtues beloved of contemporary political moralists, but they were also frequently and manifestly both unjust and uncounsellable" ("Kingship" 142).

The reign of James IV proved to be a period of peace and prosperity for Scotland. It was also a period during which the Renaissance reached Scotland and learning as well as the arts flowered. It was the age of Henryson, Dunbar, Douglas, and Blind Harry. Scotland developed its third university, King's College, Aberdeen. The first printing press arrived in 1507. James himself was very well educated, with a special gift for languages, including Latin, French, German, Flemish, Italian, Spanish, and Gaelic. He was interested in music, playing the lute himself, and always traveling, bringing his court musicians with him.[116]

James IV even attempted to resolve the difficulties which still existed in the Highlands, where the Church and State had very little influence and the area was ruled by a strong clan system. He took a unique approach to the problem by actually visiting the Islands and western Highlands, coming armed and escorted to be sure, but in the spirit of friendship, hunting and feasting with the leaders and speaking to them in their own language. He even tried to encourage fishing and shipbuilding industries. When these efforts proved unsuccessful, James IV made the mistake of reverting to feudal policies, revoking charters and establishing overlords, resulting in Highland uprisings.

Southern Scotland continued to enjoy relative peace and prosperity. However, the conflicts in Europe were soon to result in a shifting of the balance of power. In 1501 James IV agreed to marry Margaret Tudor, Henry VIII's sister, and a year later he signed a treaty of perpetual peace with England. At the same time, James still attempted to

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[116] See Gordon Donaldson, *Scottish Kings* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1967) and Fitzroy MacLean, *Scotland: A Concise History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1993).

maintain the Auld Alliance with France, and tried to use these two alliances together to keep France and England from fighting. However, when the Holy League was formed against France in 1511, and the Emperor as well as Henry VIII joined against France, Scotland proved to be the only ally France had. James IV was convinced that Europe's peace depended on maintaining France and not letting it be divided up by the Holy League. James IV attempted unsuccessfully to mediate and war broke out in Europe in 1513. When France found itself in deadly peril, it called for help from Scotland and James IV tried to talk with Henry VIII. Henry replied that he was the 'verie owner of Scotland' which James held by homage to him. The result was the disastrous Battle of Flodden, where James and many of his nobles were killed in what became a massacre. James V became King of Scotland, but he was just a baby. Queen Margaret Tudor became regent, but her weakness and doubtful loyalty meant that once again Scotland was at the mercy of both its own nobles, fighting for individual power, and the English. Eventually, the Duke of Albany became regent in 1515, and he maintained the traditional French alliance, while Henry VIII continued to interfere in Scottish politics.

Mair wrote his history during this turbulent period, and it differs from the other Scottish historians considered in several ways. First, as was noted in an earlier chapter, Mair is definitely a Renaissance historian, the first that Scotland produced. He demonstrates a strong use of critical skills in the evaluation of his materials. He also is a theologian and believes in history as a moral theology, hoping that the errors of the past can serve as a warning. He therefore writes his history in order to point out the problems which occurred in the past, explaining why they occurred, and giving solutions for the

future. Probably the aspect of Mair's history which separates him most clearly from all the other historians discussed in this dissertation is his insistence that the only way for Scotland to succeed is by forming an equal union with England so that the entire island is ruled by one monarch. In light of the history which Mair himself had experienced, this insistence is certainly understandable. Scotland was divided both within and without. Her own nobles held so tightly to their family loyalties that they were unable to work together. The fact that during this period Scotland frequently had monarchs who were under age contributed to the instability of the Scottish government, and this condition would continue with Mary Queen of Scots as well as James VI. England's attitude toward Scotland was also a constant source of stress, taking its toll economically as well as politically. It is no wonder that Mair felt that a lasting peace could only be attained through a union. However, this attitude was in large measure responsible for the unpopularity of his history.

As we saw in chapter II Mair deals with the Arthurian materials in much greater detail than either Fordun or Wyntoun had done. His overall emphasis is similar to that of Fordun, in that Mair also shows Arthur to have been a great warrior and leader, although without a legitimate right to the throne. However, Mair demonstrates a much more analytical approach to his sources than his predecessors did. He attempts to present an unbiased approach, emphasizing for example that while Mordred may have been wrongly denied the kingship, his behavior is far from blameless. Furthermore, Mair always emphasizes how the victories which restore peace are achieved as a result of combined efforts, especially between the Britons and the Scots. Mair also stresses the disasters

which result from treachery and deceit. It was Vortigern's own treachery and deceit which led to the invasion by the Saxons, for instance. Mair has used the Arthurian material to set up the framework for his emphasis on the need for cooperation, good leadership, and above all, unity.

Mair discusses William the Conqueror several times in his work, beginning with his becoming Duke of Normandy.[117] In his first mention of William, Mair states that in the second year of Duncan's reign

> Knoth, the Danish king of the English, died, and was succeeded by his son Harold. The same year Robert duke of Normandy went the way of all flesh, and in his room was chosen William, called the Bastard, a boy of seven years; he had the support of Henry king of the French, who was guardian to the boy. I make mention of this William and his times, because he had no small dealings with the Britons, as shall afterwards be told. (120)

Mair has included all the relevant particulars, even his description of the seven year old William. He becomes Duke of Normandy, supported by the King of France, who becomes his guardian. Mair then returns to the description of Macbeth's murder of Duncan and accession to the throne of Scotland.

Mair recounts the history of Scotland up to the reign of Malcolm, at which point he again mentions William. "In the time of this king Malcolm, William the Bastard took possession of England. Leaving Malcolm, then, for a little, let our narrative turn to this

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[117] The circumstances surrounding William's accession are outlined by Douglas, who notes that there is no "reason to suppose that during his infancy he was ever considered as a possible successor to the Norman duchy" (31).

William" (126). There follows a chapter devoted to William's conquest of England, the details of which Mair says he has obtained from the English chroniclers. William makes a "threefold demand" of Harold, namely "that he shall have Harold's daughter in marriage; or that he shall hold England of Harold; or that he shall try the fortune of war." Harold chooses war, even though he has "but a small following of soldiers, for indeed he was unpopular with the English." There is no mention of any conflicting claims to the throne or any information about the battle itself. William is crowned king of England in London, goes for a while to Normandy, and returns with his wife Maud who is crowned as queen in the second year of his reign. These facts are given quickly with little elaboration. Not surprisingly, the bulk of the chapter is devoted to William's dealings with the Scots. After the crowning of Maud, Mair notes that:

> next he marched against the Scots. But Malcolm the Scot and William made a treaty, as Caxton asserts, on these terms: that Malcolm should hold Scotland of the king of England, and William received homage of him therefore. That this statement is untrue is plain from all the British writers who used the Latin tongue. Homage was rendered indeed for the county of Cumberland, which is situated in England, and which the kings of the Scots held of England, and granted always to their eldest sons, who did homage for that county to the kings of the English. (127)

The issue of whether or not Scotland owes homage to England is of vital concern to both countries. This was one reason for the Scottish historians to deal with Arthur, for instance. While Mair is in favor, and indeed strongly advocates, a union of the crowns of

Scotland and England, he in no way wants this to put Scotland at a disadvantage as a lesser power.

Mair continues with a discussion of the treaty made between Malcolm and William when he notes that

> although Malcolm had made this treaty with William, he all the same often laid waste Northumberland beyond the river Tees. Kings observe a treaty of peace only when they will. After a great slaughter at Gateshead, Malcolm got possession of all those parts, but not of the strong places, nor of the munitions of war. William, king of England, had a brother who was bishop of Bayeux. Him he had made earl of Kent, and he now sent him against the Scots with a great force of Englishmen and Normans. These Malcolm put to rout, and pursued them even to the river Humber. Thereafter duke William sent his son Robert against the Scots, to make war on them. But he never attacked them; nor indeed did he do aught but build a new castle on the Tyne, the better to resist an invasion. (127-28)

Mair spends time on the description of the battles between the English and the Scots because this is of importance to him. In spite of the title of his work as the *History of Greater Britain*, and in spite of his emphasis on impartiality between Scotland and England and his desire for the union of the crowns, his use of details demonstrates his primary interest lies with Scotland.

Mair finds it necessary to bring up the issue of homage once again in this chapter and to deal with it firmly and in great detail. He notes that

> Now it is a thing unheard of, and among the Scots simply inconceivable, that a

> Scot at peace in his own kingdom ever recognised as his temporal superior either the English king or any one else. This may be gathered from the whole past history of the country, for the Scots at all times resisted the inroads in the island of Romans and Britons, and more than once invaded them--witness their historian and fellow-countryman Bede. Now king Malcolm after his accession to the crown at no time had suffered from civil wars in his kingdom, but was held in great veneration by nobles and common people. And the case, which I will now propose, would be altogether parallel: that is, if the French king were to say that the king or kingdom of the Spains was subject to him, simply because the earldom of Flanders, which had its origin in the house of France, was so subject. I grant indeed that king Malcolm was subject to the English king in respect of Cumberland; whether this carries with it or does not carry with it the consequence that therefore Malcolm was unconditionally subject to the Englishman matters not. Yet the kingdom of Scotland was never subject to England, nor the Scot to the Englishman, in respect of the kingdom of Scotland, just as Charles, count of Flanders, is not subject to the Frenchman in respect of the kingdom of Spain. (128)

This is by far the longest discussion of the matter of homage by any of these historians to date. Fordun and Wyntoun would agree with the statements, but they never went to such effort to explain the rationale behind the issues. Mair wants to make the situation extremely clear to his readers so that there can be no doubt as to the independence of Scotland.

Mair concludes his chapter on William by noting that he had three sons and "some

fair daughters." His eldest son was awarded Normandy, the second received the crown of England, and the third received "gold and much furniture" at his death. Mair then notes that William had counted the parish churches in England and found that there were 45,017 of them, since "every village has its parish church, though the village may count perhaps but twenty hearths. In Scotland this is not so; and in this point, as in many others, I reckon the ecclesiastical polity of the English to be preferable to the ecclesiastical polity of the Scots" (129). Mair writes his history with the intention of being fair to all sides, and he is forced here to note that England's ecclesiastical system is superior to Scotland's in many areas. Mair's constant efforts to demonstrate that each country had strengths, as well as weaknesses, will help support his argument that for the good of the island as a whole, the countries need to be united under a common crown.

Mair's treatment of Edward I is much more extensive and detailed than his treatment of William the Conqueror. With William, Mair has restricted his information almost exclusively to William's relationship with Scotland. However, when Mair discusses Edward I, he broadens his scope. In fact, Mair begins with a discussion of Edward's actions in Wales, detailing his treatment of first Llewellyn and then his brother David, until finally "all the Welsh submit to Edward. The Welsh, that is the Britons, had been already conquered by Henry [Henry II] the son of the empress, but not so that they feared to rebel, and indeed they enjoyed some measure of freedom; but under Edward they were forced to make an absolute submission" (176). Edward's ruthless treatment of the Welsh is certainly an indication of what he will try to do in Scotland. Mair goes on in this same chapter to tell of Edward's removal of the Jews, which Mair portrays in a positive light.

He says that it "is plain that kings in their kingdoms, and in each aristocratic polity its leading men, would do well to drive from their midst those obstinate Hebrews, if they would escape the necessity of imposing heavy taxes" (176). According to Mair, the English common people were so grateful to Edward for driving out the Jews that they paid Edward "one penny out of every fifteen." Mair concludes by comparing the Jews to harlots, saying that "I praise, therefore, the explusion from the kingdom of the Jews, for, by the introduction of the undesirable conditions of which I have spoken, they place a stumbling-block in the way of many who are weak in the faith; just as the chastity of other women must run some risk in the neighbourhood of public women of ill renown and a luxurious mode of life" (177).

Mair has then begun his discussion of Edward with the description of two major efforts in his reign. The conquering of Wales serves as a warning to Scotland, while the expulsion of the Jews is given as a positive event in Edward's reign. Mair now returns in his narrative to the history of Scotland, specifically the reign of Alexander II. He concludes that Alexander was a man

> worthy to be a king; piously disposed to churchmen and to the poor; good men he befriended, bad men he had in abhorrence; with an equal balance he dealt justice to all; wherefore it admits of no manner of doubt that at the hand of God, the absolutely just, he received his great reward. Full of danger is the life of kings, and when a king has followed after righteousness, his merit in the eyes of God is great indeed. How difficult are virtue and art you shall see in the second book of the *Ethics*, and what more difficult than to govern aright a great state, and most of all

> a northern state, which has been used to no restraints? Indeed, this man is worthy of all praise. With the English king he had no dealings that were not peaceable. It is part of wisdom in Scottish kings to cherish peace with their neighbours. Of the possessions bequeathed to him by his immediate ancestors he lost nothing, and his reign was marked from first to last by the observance of a most scrupulous justice toward his subjects. I may compare this man then, using no unfairness to others, with the most illustrious kings. (181-82)

In this description of Alexander II Mair is able to make it very clear to his readers exactly what it takes to be a good ruler. He spends more time with Alexander since he is the last example before Mair's own time of a great king of Scotland. The current monarch needs to read this analysis of a good ruler and follow it. The reference to peace with England and the importance of good relations with one's neighbors was of timely importance to Mair's readers as well.

Mair continues with the reign of Alexander III, and one of the most interesting discussions he gives is that concerning the choice of husband for Alexander's daughter Margaret. Mair says that

> I cannot but greatly marvel why the Scots did not give the heiress of their kingdom in marriage to the English king; but they preferred to the Englishman a king of Norway, who lived outwith the island. I will state my opinion in few words. The Scots acted, I must hold, most unwisely in the matter of this marriage. And I lay down this proposition: There was no king whom the Scots ought to have preferred as a husband for the heiress to the king of England. And had the position been

> reversed--had it been the heiress of England for whom a husband was being sought--I hold that there could have been found no marriage for her more suitable than with the king of Scotland. For thus, and thus only, could two intensely hostile peoples, inhabitants of the same island, of which neither can conquer the other, have been brought together under one and the same king. And what although the name and kingdom of the Scots had disappeared--so too would the name and kingdom of the English no more have had a place among men--for in the place of both we should have had a king of Britain. (189)

Mair concedes that the nobles of both countries might not see the advantages to this plan, but ultimately, according to Mair, "the result would have been pregnant with advantage to them" (190). Mair finds that a union of the crowns would result in equal justice, peaceable neighbors, and freedom from invasion by a foreign king. Unfortunately, according to Mair, Margaret was wed to the king of Norway instead, and when Alexander III died, who "in point of goodness, is worthy to be placed alongside his father" (191), followed soon after by the death of Margaret's daughter, the Maid of Norway,

> there arose no little uncertainty as to the rightful heir to the Scottish throne--a condition fraught with dangers always to a kingdom, as shall be shown in the sequel from the history of the Scots and English. But I will begin with the English chroniclers; and afterward I will pass in review what the Scots chroniclers may have to contribute, and declare what I have come to hold as the truth of the whole matter. (191)

As always, Mair will present the information he has and analyze it carefully.

Mair begins by giving Caxton's information and then refuting it. Mair gives the tale as told by Caxton of Edward's choice of Balliol for king, followed by the actions of Wallace, and ending with Wallace's death. Mair then proceeds to discredit Caxton.

> There then you have English Caxton's story, which we have turned from English into Latin. It cannot be said that the man has spared his anvil, but, with all his forging, the result is not improbabilities merely, but a mass of incoherencies as well. For the assertion that the Scots chose, sought, or accepted two kings, one as superior, the other as subject to him, is wanting in every element of likelihood. If the Scots desired that Edward the First should be their king, to what purpose summon him as judge among the three claimants of the crown? And further, it is of all things the most improbable that well-born Scots should choose for their king a man [Wallace] who was a plebeian and quite unknown; for sooner than that would they have chosen one of the three claimants, or one of their own nobles. (194)

Mair then continues his history by "leaving Caxton, then, and his silly fabrications out of the question" and proceeding "to place the history of the Scots in its true light" (194). He gives a great many details about the actions of William Wallace and the effect he had upon Edward and the English. Mair uses Wallace as a starting point to explain Scotland's major difficulties, both then and in his own time, namely the power struggle between the nobles. Mair says that while Wallace was "of no illustrious house, he yet proved himself a better ruler, in the simple armour of his integrity, than any of those nobles would have been." Many of the nobles disliked Wallace, possibly because they "looked upon William as

aiming at the royal power, and that they preferred English rule to William's. That is a feature of nobles generally--to prefer the yoke of a superior to that of an inferior. I fancy, too, that they aimed thereby at weakening the power at once of Edward and of William--which done, the government of the kingdom would revert to them" (199).

Mair continues with Scottish history and the reign of Robert Bruce. He describes the events from the Scottish perspective, frequently criticizing the English chroniclers for their inaccuracies. Edward is mentioned, but only in so far as he is unjustly attacking the Scots. When Mair finally relates the circumstances surrounding Edward's death, he notes that Scottish chroniclers have several things to say about Edward's death, namely that they "saw the soul of king Edward being carried down to hell; and they have many evil things to say of Edward. For myself, I do not place much trust in this sort of fabrication. It is not of yesterday that I have observed how it is the custom of the vulgar Scot to say nasty things about the English, and contrariwise." Mair then stresses the importance of judging people and events independently, without love or hatred to blind one's judgement. Nevertheless, Mair does

> indeed find Edward worthy of censure, inasmuch as, when he had been chosen by the Scots as their neighbour at once and umpire in an abstruse point of law regarding the succession to the throne, he acted wrongly in using this occasion for his own special advantage, in sowing amongst the Scots the seeds of civil war, nay, in giving all care that these same seeds should come to maturity, to the end that when the opposing parties had worn out each of them the strength of the other, or perchance using for himself the support of one of them, he might obtain the

kingdom. (223)

Again, Mair notes, as Fordun and Wyntoun had as well, that Scotland was in a weakened condition because of the lack of unity and the fighting between the nobles for individual gain. Mair emphasizes just how Edward takes advantage of this situation, and he makes it clear that Wallace's successes were directly attributable to his sense of purpose, his commitment to Scotland rather than to his desire for personal gain. Mair has no desire to turn Edward into a primary villain for his readers, because he is trying to heal the division between Scotland and England. He wishes for intermarriage between the royal houses of both countries, as would have occurred for example had the Maid of Norway lived, to provide for the union of the crowns. This is the only way that Mair can see to achieve a lasting peace for his own country, and he finds that peace is one of the most important goals. He spends a good portion of his history in detailing the various evils of war, and he finds no hope for the end to these evils outside of the union of the crowns.

Therefore, Mair uses Arthur, William the Conqueror, and Edward I, not as focal points for Scottish hatred, but as examples of situations where division and quests for individual power and glory led to weakness, chaos, and defeat. Mair's treatment of Arthur focused on presenting a fair treatment of both Arthur and Mordred, discussing the faults and virtues of both. He had stressed that the victories which restored peace had depended on a combined effort from both the Britons and the Scots. This approach to Arthur is continued in the treatment of both William and Edward I. Mair is writing his history not only as a more accurate account of Scottish history, and not only as a means for justifying the union of the crowns of Scotland and England, but also, primarily, as

moral theology and a source of practical lessons. He hopes that his readers, especially those in positions of power, will learn from the examples in his work and be able to turn Scottish history around. As was mentioned earlier, during Mair's lifetime, Scotland was in the hands of various noble factions, fighting amongst themselves to achieve personal gain. The fact that during much of this period Scotland was ruled by various regents acting in theory for underage monarchs contributed greatly to the abilities of the nobles to continue their power struggles. Mair hopes that by reading his history and learning how disastrous these political struggles have been in the past, that the present society might learn to work together for the common good. However, Mair's attempt to show good and evil on both the English and the Scottish sides as well as his constant emphasis on the need for the union resulted in the lack of interest in his work. He did not succeed in getting his readers to realize the lessons he wanted them to learn from his history. Instead, his readers were much more attracted to the work of Hector Boece, Mair's contemporary, who shall be considered next.

Hector Boece

Unlike Mair, Boece enjoyed a great popularity and his history served as the basis for the subsequent histories of both Buchanan and Leslie. This popularity was no doubt due to Boece's strong nationalistic perspective, as well as his use of traditional legends along with moral advice. For example, when Boece details the events surrounding Arthur, he gives a much fuller account than that given by the historians previously considered in this dissertation. His fast-paced and emotional account is very favorable to the Scots and

Picts. As was shown in chapter I, Boece does not actually criticize Arthur, but he does leave his readers with the decided feeling that all the stories surrounding Arthur are not necessarily valid. He also indicates that Arthur is perhaps not as honorable as might have been thought, since, among other things, he allows his nobles to renounce the treaty which he made with Lot. At a time when Scotland was once again experiencing difficulties with England and Henry VIII claimed suzerainty over Scotland, a history which downplayed Arthur and his glorious conquests would receive favorable readings in Scotland.

Boece was a contemporary of Mair, and so lived through the same political situations. The Battle of Flodden and the resulting death of James IV and succession of an underage James V would be firmly in Boece's mind. While his history only continues to the reign of James III, he was very aware of the current situations in Scotland and would treat events in his history from the perspective of the modern situation. Certainly his two translators, Bellenden and Stewart, felt that Boece intended his readers to learn from his moral lessons and his historical information and thus possibly remedy the current situations. Bellenden, in his Preface, states that the "life of princes impellis thair subdittis to imitacioun of thair werkis, wourthy and vnworthy, quhilkis finalie cumis to licht be impulsioun of fortoun, that na thing sufferis to be hid" (15).

Boece begins his discussion of William the Conqueror with a description of king Harold, who "began to govern the realme in gude iustice, and cessit fra all slauchter, as sendill is sene with tham that vsurpis the croun be wrangwis menis" (166-67). Harold began his reign well, in spite of the fact that he had wrongly usurped the crown from Edgar. He even sent his ambassadors to "Williame, Bastard of Normandy" asking that

William meet with him for the purpose of obtaining William's daughter in marriage, so that "perpetual peace mycht succede betuix thair pepill." However, soon after the marriage and his return to England, Harold changed his purpose and declared his domination over Normandy and "causit his vicious rebaldis to fulȝe [defile] his new quene. And ȝite he was nocht saciatt with this cruelty, bott cuttit hir neyss and eeris, and sind hir agane with ane fischar baitt in Normandy" (167). This resulted in William's arrival with a large army in England where he slew Harold and assumed the crown. Certainly, Harold is not an example of a king the people should admire. Meanwhile, Edgar, realizing that he would not be crowned, sought sanctuary with King Malcolm in Scotland. William demanded Edgar's return to England, which Malcolm refused, and war ensued. Boece makes it very clear that William's request was unlawful and that Malcolm realized that if he acceded to William's request he would find "perpetuall dishonour." As Mair, Wyntoun, and Fordun had done as well, Boece notes that peace was finally established between the two kings, and as a result of this peace "King Macolme sall haif that part of Northumberland quhilkis lyis betuix Twede, Cumber and Stayne Mure, and sall make perpetuall obedience to all Kingis of Ingland for the samyn" (170). The issue of homage has been raised again, and Boece makes it clear that Malcolm is paying homage to the king of England only for that portion of land which actually lies within England's boundaries, and not for his Scottish crown. Boece does not give much more information about William or his dealings with Scotland. He does note, however, that the

> riottus and superflew maneris quhilkis war brocht in this realme by cuming of Inglismen ar of litill comparasoun to sik thingis as ar vsit in our dayis. In thai dayis

> the nature of man was nocht sa ouresett with superflewite as now, for than the pepil eitt bot twyiss on the daye, havand bot twa coursis, bot now the auaricious taist of manis wayme is sa desyrous that na froute growing vnder the hevin be land or sey may be sufficient to satify the hungry appetite of men. (172-73)

Boece obviously is troubled by the modern situation and hopes that his readers will find instruction in reading his history so that they may profit from past examples. Boece makes no more mention of William, except to note that he died, leaving his son Robert as Duke of Normandy, his son William as king of England, and his son Harry [Henry I] with great riches and jewels.

Boece's treatment of the time of William leaves no doubt in his readers' minds as to the importance of having just and fair rulers. Harold is given credit for beginning well, even though his method for obtaining the throne is condemned. However, when Harold becomes cruel and treacherous, it is only fitting that he should lose his crown and be killed. William is likewise condemned when he asks Malcolm to act dishonorably and also when he invades Scotland. The actions of the Scots in defeating William are praised, as is the eventual peace, where Boece makes it apparent that Malcolm is not paying homage to William for Scotland. Thus, Boece has covered all the areas which he is interested in as lessons for his readers. He has stressed that leaders must act honorably and set proper examples, and he has also emphasized Scotland's independence.

Boece's treatment of Edward I is very different from Mair's. Boece begins with the marriage of the Maid of Norway, but he makes it clear that the Scots nobles only agreed to this under the condition that the "realm of Scotland suld be als free in peace and quiete,

but ony subieccioun of seruitude, in his tyme as it wes afoir in the tyme of King Alexander, and gif na successioun followitt betuix King Edward and this Madyn of Norrowaye, the croun sall return to the nerrest airis of King Alexander last decessit" (246). Boece's emphasis demonstrates that he certainly does not share Mair's interest in a union of the crowns and is interested in clarifying the intent of the Scots nobles to keep Scotland free. After all, earlier Boece had taken pains to detail the provisions of the treaty between Arthur and Lot to demonstrate not only Scotland's independence but its rights to the English throne.

Unfortunately, the Maid of Norway dies and at that point, Boece discusses the behavior of the contenders for the crown. "Sone eftir followit grete troubill in Scotland be frendis of King Alexander contending for the croun, to the grete dammage & violacioun baith of the law of God & man, specialie Iohnne Ballioll and Robert Bruse" (246). This power struggle was so great that the nobles feared that "gif thai declarit the tane of thaim king, the tothir suld vsurpe the croun be force" and for this reason "thai remittit the decision of the richt therof to King Edward of Ingland, with powere to contreyne tham baith to stand at his sentence" (247). Boece is clear on the point that Edward was only brought into the discussion on the succession because the Scots nobles did not think they could enforce their own decision. The desire for power was so strong and the lack of respect between the nobles very evident, that no matter what the nobles decided, it would not be enforceable. If the nobles had combined forces to decide the succession in the country's best interest, Edward would not have gained the hold he did.

Boece again differs from Mair in that he spends a great deal of time going over the

actual selection process which Edward uses. The readers hear again about Edward's use of the French legal experts and about the fact that according to Edward's best experts, Bruce should have been chosen. Boece then tells of Edward's questioning first Bruce and then Balliol about their willingness to be subject to him.

> Nochtheless, Robert Bruse, havand mair respect to the liberte of the realme than to ony singular proffitte to put the realme in seruitude, ansuer it that he wald nocht randyr his native cuntre, sen it has bene fre to his dayis, to seruitude of Inglismen. King Edward than assailȝeitt the mynde of Iohne Ballioll, quhilk had sa blynd desyre to the croun that he curitt nocht, sa that he mycht reiose the samyn, quhethir he held it in liberte or seruitude. Finalie, quhen Ballioll had gevin his faith to King Edward to mak him homage, he gat the sentence gevin for him. (248)

This account not only discredits Balliol, but also Edward, who is clearly shown to have rendered a false and corrupt judgment for personal gain. Edward went against all the legal experts he had consulted in order to rule in favor of the candidate who was willing to be subject to him. It is clearly in Boece's interests to relate this information to his readers, just as it is obvious that Mair would not, as it would add further fuel to the discord between the nations which Mair was attempting to stop.

Once Balliol became king, he attempted to break away from Edward by resuming relations with France.[118] To this end, the daughter of King Philip's brother Charles was

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[118] Prestwich recounts information showing that "an insertion was later made in the record of the Great Cause, noting an alleged warning given to Balliol, that if he did not govern satisfactorily the King of England had the right to intervene. The clumsy manipulation of the evidence does Edward's officials little credit, and seems unnecessary –the Franco-Scottish alliance provided ample justification for war" (47).

wed to John Balliol's son. The immediate result of this action was the assault on Berwick by Edward. Boece gives the details in all their horror. He notes that Edward knew he could not take the town by force using honorable warfare, so

> he thocht to assailȝe the samyn be tresoun and slycht, and aid him to raiss his army fra the sege, syne went abowte to ane noghir part, and returnit with fenȝeitt ansenȝeis, baneris and Sanctandrois croce all on thair harnes on the Scottis maner, and send certane lymmaris of Scotland afoir the toun, saying Iohnne Ballioll was cumin with his army in defence of the toun, commanding to haif the portis oppin at his cuming. The fuliche pepill of the toun, reiosing of the cuming of the King, as thai belevitt, oppynnit the portis, and come furth of the toun on all partis, traisting nocht onlie to be deliuerit of the fere of inymyis, bot als to be of pissans to meitt thame with playn batal, gif thair inymyis wald assailȝe tham. (250)

Obviously, the English were able to take Berwick, but Boece gives further details proving not only Edward's deceit and treachery, but also his tyrannical cruelty. Boece tells that "King Edward enterit in the toun with all his army, and slew nocht onlye the soidiouris and weirmen, bot als barnis, wemen and agit personis, but ony reuth, mercy or ransoun, and left na creature of Scottis blude on live within that toun" (250).

Boece continues with the account of Edward's assault on the Scots at Dunbar, telling his readers that "thai war all slayne eftirwart by tyranny of King Edward, nochtwithstanding his promyss" (251). Edward's word, according to Boece, is not to be trusted. He is too desirous of obtaining all of Scotland to allow anything to stand in his way. The stage is now set for Boece to introduce William Wallace, a knight "of grete

stature and corporall strenth abone all vther men in his dayis, with sik prodence and craft of chevelry that nane was fundin peregall to him" (253). Wallace has all the qualities which have been missing from both Balliol and Edward. He is honest and true to the cause of Scotland's freedom, which he puts above his own needs.

Boece continues the history, telling about the envoys Scotland sends to Pope Boniface, as well as Edward's aim to ensure "that na memory suld remane of Scottland" (262) by removing the Stone of Scone and all historical records he could find. Boece tells of the betrayal and death of Wallace as well as the assumption of the Scottish crown by Bruce. He concludes this section dealing with Edward by noting that

> Edward the tyran of Ingland, dredand the Scottis be thir feliciteis to ryiss ilk daye in mair insolence, come with ane mair aufull ordinance in Scotland than evir he did afoir. Nochtheles, at his cuming to the bordouris he fell in ane hevy malady, and decessit suddanlye but ony confessioun or sacramentis of Haly Kirk. It is sayid that in the houre of his deth ane nobill knycht, Schir Williame Banester, fell in ane extasy, and saw King Edward skurgitt and with innovmerabill cumpany of devillis convoyitt to hell. The knycht incontinent fell in ane hevy malady, and couth haif na rest, quhill he was brocht to ane oppin place befoir all the pepill to schaw this visioun as it fell on King Edward, and quhen he had schawin the samyn to the pepill he conualescitt, and perseverit in gude lyfe and pennance to his deth. We can nocht declair quhethir this nerracioun be ane trew history or ane fabill, howbeit the samyn appere trew, for his vnmercifull cruelte wes done aganis Cristin pepill abone the rigour of armys. For quhen he was in his last extremis he commandit

> fyfty barnis quhilkis war takin at Kildrymmy to be slayn, but ony compassioun of thair innocence and aige. (268)

There is no doubt that Boece is using every talent he has to be sure his readers feel nothing but hatred and loathing for Edward. He also wants his readers to realize the perils of evil kings. He does put in a disclaimer that he cannot say for sure that this vision he reports is actually true, but then he goes on to say that it does appear true since even in his last moments Edward was busy ordering the massacre of innocent children. Boece had dealt in the same manner with Arthur and William, putting forth stories whose accuracy could not be substantiated.

The nature of Boece's history would ensure its popularity at Mair's expense. Mair does not include information about the atrocities committed on either side of the battlefield because he is interested in explaining the causes of the wars and doing his best to prevent further battles and bring about a lasting peace which will be in everyone's best interest. Boece has written his history, as was noted earlier, in the style of Livy, in order to inform his readers, especially his European audience, about the real history of Scotland. The continuing nature of European politics, with each nation trying to play off alliances to maintain its own power and prevent any one nation from becoming overwhelmingly powerful, would also have worked in Boece's favor. If he can discredit England, and raise Scotland in the eyes of European nations, then the Scottish/French alliance will grow in strength at England's expense. Given Boece's dislike of England, this would have been preferable in his eyes.

Boece also is determined to educate with his history. Time and again he provides

moral examples and sermons to explain to his readers the value of proper conduct. As was noted in one of the quotations given earlier in this chapter, Boece was concerned that his present day society was less moral than past societies. He has dedicated his work to James V who was born in 1512 and ascended to the throne when he was little more than one year old. He was nine years old when Boece's history appeared, and hence at an appropriate age to begin learning the lessons which are found within the history. Boece earnestly desired that James learn just how important it was for him to have a "cleyn lyfe" as an example to his people. There is nothing that "pepill followis with moir imitacioun, or kepis in moir recent memorie, than werkis of nobill men, of reassoun thair besynes suld be moir respondent to vertew than of any vther estatis, quhen moir triumphant glorye and preeminence bene randrit to publik than priuatt personis" (15). Boece intends that James V learn the importance of setting a noble example for his people.

It is no wonder that Boece has written the history that he has, in light of the political situation within Scotland especially since the death of Alexander III. The power struggles among the Scots-Norman aristocracy and its resulting factions, coupled with the number of times there had been either no monarch or no monarch old enough to rule, had produced a climate whereby the nobles were in a position to put their own interests ahead of those of the country as a whole. This resulted in political chaos and weakness which England was able to make use of over and over. Unfortunately the situation would continue to worsen. While James V became king as an infant, he did manage to rule as an adult, and in fact was the last adult male king of Scotland for almost fifty years. However, when he died, his heir, Mary Queen of Scots, was only 6 days old, and again Scotland was

ruled by nobles fighting for personal political gains. The entire tone of Boece's history is highly nationalistic, and Boece no doubt hoped it could become a rallying point, focusing Scottish energy on defeating the English and not themselves. All of his materials, from his expanded account of the Saxons and the early emphasis on Scottish-English animosity discussed above through his treatment of Edward, are focused on unifying Scotland in a nationalistic fervor.

George Buchanan

Buchanan was born near the end of James IV's reign and he was seven years old when James IV died and the infant James V succeeded to the throne in 1513. He then lived through until the reign of James VI. He saw the devastating effects which the succession of infants, James V, Mary, and James VI, had upon Scotland. As was noted in chapter I, Buchanan had supported Mary Queen of Scots early in her reign, but then became one of her biggest enemies. Eventually, he was appointed as tutor to James VI in 1566, a position which he held for at least fourteen years. Buchanan's history was published in the year of his death, 1582.[119]

Certainly, Buchanan wrote his history during a particularly turbulent period in

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[119] I. D. McFarlane, "George Buchanan and European Humanism," *The Yearbook of English Studies: Anglo-French Literary Relations Special Number* 15 (1985): 33-47, comments that the fact that Buchanan is mainly remembered as a "turncoat opponent of Mary Queen of Scots" is certainly unjustified. His other claims to fame have been overlooked because of the decline in classical studies and comparative lack of interest in Neo-Latin Renaissance literature. However, "Buchanan is in fact a fine example of the Scotsman who goes abroad, returns home having put Scotland on the cultural map of Europe, and, as a man in tune with cultural developments, remains a figure whose achievements continue to impress long after his death" (33).

Scottish history. James VI had succeeded his mother Mary Queen of Scots, who was actually still a force in Scotland's politics even from her confinement in England at the hands of Elizabeth I. Thus, there is not only the matter of a government of regents, but also the continual threat or promise of the restoration of Mary. All of this political maneuvering takes place within the context of the Scottish reformation,[120] since Mary, although willing to support Scotland's change to Protestantism, was herself a firm Catholic. Her religion would remain a major issue in the political situation within Scotland.

As explained earlier, Buchanan had followed the same overall outline which had been used by both Boece and Fordun in the presentation of the Arthurian materials, stressing the importance of freedom, love of country, and reformation of church life. However, unlike Boece, Buchanan is less apt to play openly on his readers' nationalistic sentiments. Instead, Buchanan spends more time discussing the merits of various kings no matter what country they come from. Vortigern's treachery is discussed at length, because

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[120] The importance of the Reformation in Scotland's political actions may be noted from an earlier proposal made to Henry VIII in 1542 which proposed a union between England and Scotland on religious grounds, in order to rid Scotland of the old faith. According to "A Proposal for Uniting Scotland with England, Addressed to King Henry VIII., by John Elder Clerke, a Reddshanke [1542]," eds. W. Scott, D. Laing, and T. Thomson, *The Bannatyne Miscellany* (Edinburgh: Bannatyne, 1827), "we have in the following treatise, the project of an union betwixt England and Scotland, addressed to Henry VIII., who is therein counselled to invade his deceased nephew's kingdom, and is assured of conquest by aid of the disaffected Highland chiefs, who are represented as so many 'true hearts,' devoted to the King of England, from learning his beneficence towards the Irish, who resembled them in language and manners." John Elder, a clergyman who had studied at St. Andrews, Aberdeen, and Edinburgh, and who at the time of writing, was an exile in England "proposed to get rid of Popery by sacrificing the independence of his country" (3-4).

Buchanan needs to make it clear that such actions are not fitting for a monarch, but as was discussed earlier, he focuses on the issues of deceit and does not stress the nationalities involved. Since he is writing his history at least in part to instruct the current king of Scotland, he stresses the nature of kingship in his discussion of the Arthurian materials. He capitalizes on the mistakes of earlier kings, whether British or Scottish, as opportunities to instruct the present monarch. Buchanan also uses Arthur as a model to help his readers see the importance of freedom, love of country, and proper worship. These issues will remain central to Buchanan's entire history.

Buchanan repeats even more definitively the legends set forth by Boece, and his account of the early kings of Scotland has a very practical point. He details numerous rebellions against wicked rulers, describing as well their deposition and murder by their own nobles. He wishes to emphasize the nature of kingship and the responsibility of the monarch to rule well. If the monarch fails, then he or she is subject to removal. This is exactly what happened during Buchanan's own lifetime.

Buchanan has arranged his history very tightly around the reigns of the Scottish monarchs. Events outside of Scotland are discussed according to their impact on particular monarchs. Buchanan's discussion of William the Conqueror takes place within the context of the reign of Malcolm III. Malcolm was closely connected to English royalty, since he had married Margaret, Edgar's sister. Buchanan actually has very little to say about William's accession to the throne, noting that "on the death of Edward, Harold, the son of Godwin, usurped the throne, who dealt favourably with Agatha the Hungarian, and her children. When, however, he was overthrown by William the Norman, Edgar, to

avoid the cruelty of the latter, resolved to return with his mother and sisters, to Hungary" (150). Buchanan has left the entire focus on Edgar, with the information about the Norman conquest and succession of William given as a clause in a sentence where Edgar is the main subject. This is natural, since Edgar is Malcolm's brother-in-law.

Buchanan continues with the information about William's efforts to have Edgar brought back to England from Scotland, where he was granted hospitality by Malcolm after a shipwreck. Buchanan then gives his readers a description of William's personality. "William, who then reigned in England, was, upon the lightest occasion, very cruel against the nobles, whether of English or Danish extraction." William threatens war with Scotland unless his demands for the return of Edgar to England are met. Malcolm "looking upon it as a cruel and faithless thing to deliver a guest and kinsman, and one too against whom his very enemies could allege no crime, to his capital foe to be put to death, steadily determined to suffer any thing rather than so disgrace himself" (150). Of course, war ensues and eventually peace is restored with Edgar going to England, but receiving a large revenue from William. Scotland, likewise, is confirmed in its possession of Cumberland "on the same terms as his [Malcolm's] ancestors had done" (150). Buchanan makes absolutely no mention of any homage owed by Scotland to England, either for the crown of Scotland itself or for Cumberland.

Buchanan makes no further reference to William except to say that "whilst Malcolm was thus busied in correcting the public manners, William, king of England, died" (152). Buchanan keeps his focus firmly on the Scots and their actions. It is Scottish monarchs who will provide the necessary examples to his readers. William died while

Malcolm was busy "correcting the public manners; for being devout and pious himself, he invited others, by his example, to a modest, just, and sober life." That is all the information that Buchanan's readers require. He gives no explanation for the succession of William over Harold, refusing to tell of Harold's injustices and treachery which led to William's conquest of England. Buchanan would much rather spend his time discussing Malcolm's reign and the events therein. He only mentions William because of the war which ensued as a result of Edgar's arrival in Scotland. Buchanan maintains a clear and consistent focus on Scotland's history.

Buchanan's treatment of Edward I begins with his coronation during the reign of Alexander III. He notes that upon the death of Henry III, king of England, Edward I succeeded him, "at whose coronation Alexander and his wife were present; but in returning, she died soon after. David, the king's son, and also Alexander, who was but lately married to the daughter of the earl of Flanders, followed her to the grave shortly after, and thus made a continuation of mourning and funerals. Margaret also, the king's daughter, departed this life, who left behind her a daughter by Hangonan, king of Norway" (169-70). Soon after this, Alexander himself died, and the people were able to see "what great calamities would befall the kingdom upon his decease" (170).

Immediately, according to Buchanan, Edward seized the opportunity afforded him by the tenuous state of the Scottish throne. Edward, "knowing that his sister's grandchild, who was the daughter of the king of Norway, was the only surviving person of all the posterity of Alexander, and that she was the lawful heiress of the kingdom of Scotland, sent ambassadors thither, to desire her as a wife for his son" (170). It is at this point that

Buchanan comes as close as he ever would to Mair's position on the union of the crowns. He notes that the Scots were not averse to this marriage. Relations between Scotland and England were more cordial than ever under the reigns of Alexander and Edward. Furthermore,

> the ancient hatred seemed no way more likely to be abolished than by uniting both nations, on just and equal terms, into one. For these reasons the marriage was easily assented to; and, by the consent of both parties, it was agreed that the Scots should have their own laws and magistrates, till the offspring of the marriage should come to govern the kingdom; but that if there should be no such issue, or they should die without coming to the crown, the kingdom of Scotland should go to the next of kin to the blood-royal. (171)

Boece had also mentioned the marriage arrangements, but did not point out the advantages of the union or the fact that it was the only hope for peace between the two countries. In any case, the Maid of Norway was soon dead, with the resultant problems over the Scottish succession.

Buchanan stresses the difficulties caused by the divisions between the nobles, especially between the Balliol faction and the Bruce faction. The issue of the succession could not be decided in Scotland because "there was not a sufficient party in the kingdom to compel both sides to stand the award. On this account, Edward of England was almost unanimously chosen to be the arbitrator of this important point." However, Buchanan lets his readers know that while this choice looked good on the surface, since Edward was thought to be a faithful arbitrator and his father had been such a loving father-in-law to

Alexander, the reality of the situation was quite different. Buchanan writes that

> the English king had a private design, which was that of bringing Scotland under his dominion, though he managed it very covertly, and imparted his scheme only to a chosen few. The thing was thought feasible enough, as the kingdom was divided into two factions; but to make the way more intricate, and to cover the fraud the deeper from every eye, he raised up eight other competitors, besides Bruce and Balliol, that he might the more easily bring over one or more to his party, during the contention of so great a number. (173)

This is the first mention by any of the Scottish historians that Edward was responsible for bringing in more contenders for the crown,[121] and while the accuracy of Buchanan's claim is open to question, it fits with his portrayal of Edward and his designs on Scotland. Buchanan definitely shows Edward as more grasping and devious than any of the earlier portrayals. He is not just taking advantage of the dissent and bickering among the Scots nobles; he is actually adding fuel to the debate.

Buchanan mentions, as had several of our other historians, that Edward solicited legal advice from France, but again Buchanan puts a different emphasis on this action. He says that Edward consulted with the best French experts, knowing that, "as this class of men are seldom, if ever, of one opinion, he should draw something out of their answers

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[121] Roberts notes that actually "thirteen 'competitors now presented themselves as contenders for the Scottish throne. Nearly all were descended from the great Anglo-Norman families whose grandfathers or great-grandfathers had married daughters of the Canmore dynasty and more especially the daughters of Earl David of Huntingdon, younger brother of William the Lion. They agreed with the four surviving 'Guardians' of Scotland that Edward I of England should act as the adjudicator of their claims" (116).

which might make for his purpose" (173). Buchanan credits Edward with soliciting the opinions of various leading Scots as to their willingness to "put themselves under the power and jurisdiction of the English, which, as was alleged, their ancestors had frequently done." When this offer was refused, Edward went to Bruce, letting him know that the 24 judges were going to decide in favor of Balliol, and

> promised him the crown of Scotland, if he would put himself under the patronage of the king of England, and be subject to his authority. Bruce answered him ingenuously, "That he was not so eager of a crown, as to accept of it by abridging the liberty which his ancestors had left him." Upon this reply, he was dismissed, and John Baliol sent for, who, being more desirous of a kingdom, than of honest methods to come by it, greedily accepted the condition offered him by Edward. (174)

Much of this same information is to be found in the other four historians already discussed, but Buchanan intensifies the portrayal of Edward as devious and calculating. It is difficult to say whether Buchanan has additional sources which allow him to make this reading of Edward, or if he is attributing to Edward reasoning and deductive skills which would become more prevalent in later politicians.

In any case, Buchanan continues with the next event, namely the renunciation of the homage to England and the renewal of the treaty with France, including the marriage of Balliol's son into the royal family of France. Again, the facts are the same as those given by other historians. However, Buchanan does add interesting information, namely that it was the decision of the Scottish council of the estates that the homage to England

had been extracted from Balliol against his will and that furthermore, even if Balliol had "been consenting thereto, yet it neither obliged him nor the kingdom, because the covenant was made by the king alone, without the consent of the estates; whereas the king could do no act relating to the rights of the nation, without, much less against, their advice" (175). None of the other earlier historians discussed had indicated that the power of the king was in any way limited by the need for the consent of the estates. Buchanan seems to be adding additional weight to the decision to renounce the promise of fealty made to Edward, and he also seems to be mentioning powers of the nobles which others have not indicated were held during this period. Buchanan raises the issues of the power of the nobility and the relationship between it and the monarchy because of the relevancy to his own times and his desire to prevent the restoration of Mary Queen of Scots. Buchanan's concern for the nature of Scotland's government may be seen not only in his history, but also in his dialogue *De iure regni apud Scotos* which was originally written to "justify the deprivation of the Queen's authority on grounds that had their roots in Scots history but also in natural law; and to support the steps that could be taken towards the accession of the Regent Moray in her stead" (McFarlane, *Buchanan* 392). Roger A. Mason states that

> Buchanan wrote both his brief tract *De Jure Regni apud Scotos Dialogus* (published in 1579) and his much longer historical work, the *Rerum Scoticarum Historia* (published in 1582), to justify the revolutionary upheavals that occurred in Scotland in the 1560's. Moreover, as an apologist for resistance and tyrannicide and an advocate of elective, limited monarchy, Buchanan was a major contributor

to the development of a radical political ideology in sixteenth century Europe. (*"Rex Stoicus"* 9)[122]

Buchanan uses both his short dialogue and his lengthy history as vehicles to explain his views on government. His *Dialogue* was written in response to the deposition of Mary Queen of Scots, an act which also resulted in a great concern for the year-old James VI. The education of this young king, as Mason notes, was "of serious import both at home and abroad. It was, moreover, a task for which Buchanan seemed particularly well suited. After all, not only was he (at least after 1560) an undoubted Calvinist, but he was also a pedagogue of considerable repute and a humanist of international standing" (10). As was noted in chapter I, Buchanan felt this responsibility very keenly, determined to teach the young king by providing him with suitable examples from the past. His telling of the history of Edward's actions in Scotland would serve as an excellent example of a number of ideas which Buchanan wished to teach his readers.

Buchanan continues by noting that now "Edward, who was of an impetuous and irascible disposition, fired by this loss, breathed nothing but fury and revenge." Edward attacks Berwick, and again his ruse of pretending to be Balliol's army is told, but this time

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[122] Buchanan's influence was more far reaching than the immediate politics of Scotland. According to Eugene R. Purpus, "The Dialogue in English Literature, 1660-1725." Diss. University of California at Los Angeles, 1943, "from its [*De iure regni apud Scotos*] publication in the middle of the sixteenth century on through the Restoration, George Buchanan's plea for recognition of the privileges of the government of Scotland was frequently reprinted" (175), influencing English politics as well. Brown notes further that "'De Jure Regni apud Scotos,' an exposition of his political creed, and of what he understood to be the constitutional relations of prince and people in Scotland" has a motive identical with that of Milton in his 'Defence of the People of England'–the justification of his countrymen in the eyes of Europe; and the sum of its political teaching is simply that the prince exists by the will and for the good of the people" (xxxiii).

Buchanan adds another twist to the story, saying that Edward had the rumor of Balliol's arrival spread by "some Scots of Bruce's party." The ability of the English to play off the Scottish factions against each other is again evident, with the result that "Edward followed with his foot, and made a miserable slaughter among the people of all orders" (175). Afterwards, when Robert Bruce asked for the crown, Edward went back on his promise, saying, "What, have I nothing else to do, but to win kingdoms for you?" (176). Instead, Edward left his own men in charge in Scotland while he headed back to France to make war there.

Buchanan now announces the change in Scotland's fortunes when William Wallace takes charge. Buchanan notes that

> when the nobility had neither strength nor courage to undertake great matters, there presently arose one William Wallace, a man of an ancient and noble family, but who had lived poorly and meanly, as having little or no estate. The actions of this man, however, during the present contest, not only surpassed the expectation, but even the belief, of all the common people; for he was of a bold spirit, and vigorous constitution. (176-77)

Buchanan finds that at last the Scots have someone they can rely upon, who is working for the good of the nation and not for individual power. Soon the people, "observing that the nobles, either out of fear or indolence, were tardy in the management of affairs, proclaimed Wallace regent of the kingdom; and, in virtue of this election, he directed things as a lawful magistrate, and the substitute of Balliol. He accepted this title not out of any ambition, or desire to rule, but because it was given him by his countrymen out of

pure love and good-will" (177).

Wallace's successes were met by rumors spread by his enemies "that Wallace openly affected a supreme or tyrannical power" (178). The nobles would easily believe these rumors since they themselves were frequently interested only in grabbing personal power. However, when Bruce meets with Wallace to determine just what Wallace is fighting for before he agrees to join forces with Wallace, Buchanan portrays Wallace as responding that

> I never proposed any such end of my labours, as to obtain the kingdom, of which my fortune is not capable; neither doth my mind aspire so high; but when I saw my countrymen, by your slothfulness, to whom the kingdom doth rightfully appertain, destitute of governors, and exposed, not to the slavery only, but even to the butchery of a cruel enemy, I had pity on them, and undertook the cause which you deserted; neither will I forsake the liberty, good, and safety of my countrymen, till life shall forsake me. You, who had rather choose base servitude with security, than honest liberty with hazard, may follow and embrace the fortune which you so highly esteem; as for me, I will die free in my country, which I have so often defended, and my love to it shall remain as long as my life continues. (179)

In this one speech, Buchanan has validated his primary message about what type of ruler Scotland needs and where a ruler's loyalty must remain. He also has portrayed Edward as someone who not only put Scotland into slavery, but butchered the inhabitants as well, and Bruce as a person who allowed Edward to attack Scotland when he deserted the cause of Scotland's freedom.

Buchanan continues in his attack on Edward by demonstrating that Edward was interested in more than merely gaining a military victory over Scotland. According to Buchanan, Edward wanted to

> root out the very memory of the nation, by abrogating their old laws, and modelling the ecclesiastical state and ceremonies, according to the manner of England. He likewise caused all histories, leagues, and ancient monuments, whether left by the Romans, or formed by the Scots, to be destroyed; and he carried away all the books, together with the teachers of learning, into England. Besides this, he sent also to London an unpolished marble-stone, wherein it was vulgarly reported and believed, lay the fate of the kingdom; neither did he leave any thing behind him, which on the account of its celebrity, might excite generous minds to the remembrance of their ancient fortune and condition; or excite them to any true greatness of mind. Thus, having broken their spirits as he thought, as well as their forces, and cast them into a servile dejection, he promised himself perpetual peace from Scotland. (181)

This is certainly the strongest statement by any of the Scottish historians concerning Edward's actions in Scotland, but it was noted earlier that one of the reasons for Fordun's history was his fear that Scottish history would be forgotten or only written by the English once Edward had succeeded in removing all the historical documents. This is the reason Fordun himself gives for scouring the entire countryside for historical evidence to use in writing a true history of Scotland. Succeeding historians, namely Wyntoun, Mair, Boece, Buchanan, and Leslie, also feel the need to be sure that Scotland's history is told

accurately and completely. Each of these historians had used major historical figures and events to locate Scottish history in a wider historical context, thus legitimizing it. The Arthurian material was especially important in this context, since it gave the current conflicts with England an historical background. While each of these Scottish historians has a different vantage point and each emphasizes different events, they are all interested in making sure that Scotland's past will not be forgotten, as Edward, according to Buchanan, had hoped.

Edward works again at playing the Scots nobles off against each other, but eventually they come together long enough to make Bruce king. However, even this agreement does not last as Comyn tries to betray Bruce, and Bruce ends up killing him. Wallace himself is also betrayed and turned over to the English for his grisly execution. Buchanan calls Wallace

> the most famous man of the age in which he lived, and who deserved to be compared with the most renowned captains of ancient times both for his greatness of mind in undertaking dangers, and his wisdom and valour in overcoming them. In love to his country he was second to none for, when others were slaves, he was alone free; neither could he be induced by rewards, or moved by threats, to abandon the public cause in which he had once embarked. His death was the more to be lamented, because he was not conquered by his enemy, but betrayed by his friend [Sir John Menteith],[123] who had little reason to be guilty of so treacherous

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[123] Roberts notes that Wallace was "handed over to the English by Sir John Stewart of Menteith, keeper of Dunbarton Castle, who despite later condemnation was honour bound to do so" (124).

an action. (182)

Wallace exemplifies those characteristics which Scotland desperately needed in its leaders, and he is betrayed by the same petty power politics that were to cripple Scotland and keep it from finding the united leadership of its nobles. Buchanan may be hoping that in detailing Wallace's story, he will help his readers realize the errors made in the past and find a better way in the future.

Buchanan relates no specifics about Edward I's death. He does not recount the visions and prophecies which Boece had given so colorfully. Instead, Buchanan notes only that "Edward, being busy in preparations for war against Scotland, died within a few days at Lancaster, leaving the crown to his second son Edward" (184).

Buchanan has written his work in order to document Scotland's history and provide moral and political lessons for James VI and other readers. Beginning with his emphasis in the Arthurian materials on the subjects of kingship, freedom from homage, and religious reform, Buchanan has constantly provided his readers with example after example of good and bad kings. He has demonstrated the nature of rebellion and the part it has played in ancient Scottish tradition. Buchanan's description of Edward I and his well-thought out deceptions and deliberate use of power politics in order to gain domination over Scotland are an attempt to make it abundantly clear to James VI and other readers that this treachery is not to be condoned. Buchanan provides a stirring nationalistic example of just what a model leader should be in his portrayal of William Wallace. The contrasts between Wallace and Edward are given most dramatically.

Buchanan wrote his history with Scotland's present situation clearly in mind.

Scotland had been faced with a series of regents, which provided for the ruthless quest for power on the part of the nobles. Betrayals, changes of allegiances, murders, and treachery abound. Buchanan uses every aspect of his history, especially the portrayal of the times of Arthur, William the Conqueror and Malcolm, and Edward I to demonstrate the dangers of current court politics, no doubt with the hope that James VI especially will be able to turn the situation around, so that the dreams of those such as Wallace may finally come to fruition.

John Leslie

The last of the historians to be considered in this chapter is Leslie, who was very closely associated with Mary Queen of Scots, serving her in a variety of capacities, always as a trusted advisor. He wrote much of his history while accompanying her into her confinement by Elizabeth I. Leslie was active in several attempts to free Mary and restore her to the throne of Scotland, and his history is definitely directed towards Mary's restoration.

Earlier I demonstrated that Leslie's account of Arthur was very different from those of the other five historians considered. Leslie does not mention Mordred and only makes a passing reference to the issue of Arthur's right to the throne. He makes no reference to Arthur's birth, illegitimacy, age, or anything relating to his ascendancy. He does agree with Boece and Buchanan about the lack of veracity concerning Arthur's European victories, but he gives credit to Arthur for being a notable warrior, with a courageous spirit and honorable actions. His mention of the Round Table is probably due

to his having seen it in person, during his stay in England during Mary's imprisonment. Obviously, Leslie feels that Arthur deserves to be mentioned because of his courageous spirit and the deeds he did, and Leslie also finds it necessary to clarify the errors surrounding the stories of Arthur's great conquests, but otherwise Arthur's story does not bear on his overall theme. Like Fordun, Leslie actually spends much more time discussing the reign of Vortigern, emphasizing his treachery, but Leslie also describes the religious life of the Britons, condemning the action of turning to pagans for assistance. He turns his focus on his vivid portrayals of the disaster faced by the Britons with the religious persecution. This emphasis on the moral and religious behavior of society will continue as Leslie deals with first William and then Edward.

Leslie first mentions William the Conqueror with a brief account of how he obtained the throne. "In this meane tyme, Herald efter the deith of Edward, invadet the scepter of Jngland, exludeng Edgar rychtuous heire, bot be William duke of Normandie Herald is ouircum, and schott out of the Realme, and slane. Now Jngland is occupiet be Wilȝeam of Normanie bastard" (I: 310). The important point for Leslie is that Harold had obtained the throne unlawfully and so he in turn is overcome. William's possible rights to the throne are never discussed. Instead the focus turns to Edgar, who seeks refuge in Scotland, and whose sister then marries Malcolm. Leslie discusses William's reaction to Edgar's welcome in Scotland. According to Leslie, when William heard the news of Malcolm's marriage to Edgar's sister, "he commandet to pas out of Jngland all Edgar his freindes and of his kin: of quhome sprang vp Lindsay, Vaus, Ramsay, Loual, Toures, Prestoun, Sandelandis, Bissatt, ffoulis, Wardlaw, Maxwell, and mony vthiris of grett

nobilitie, that tyme cam first in Scotland: quhilkes houses all war decoret be king Malcolme with large landes, as this day may be seine" (I: 311). Leslie even discusses the rise of the house of Leslie at this time.

Leslie not only keeps his focus clearly on Scotland, but he includes information which he may think is of more interest to his readers. In explaining Edgar's arrival in Scotland, he includes more specifics about who else arrived with Edgar and what the fate of these families was, thus giving a more personal focus to his history. In fact, Leslie continues in this particular section of his work to include further genealogical history, mentioning those families which came at the time from Hungary and France. He then returns to William, who "is now grettlie offendet that Edgar is defendet be his nychtbour of sik a maner, quhairfor he prepairis to invade Malcolm: Bot quhen he sies na prosperitie in his enterprise, he makes a bande of peace with Malcolme: on this conditione, that Edgar, freindes and fauourers, sulde returne to Jngland without iniure or harm. Cumbirland and Westmuirland is granted to Malcolme on this conditione, that na Scott craue ony thing to hurt the authoritie of Normandie" (I: 312). Leslie makes no mention of homage of any kind, merely noting that the Scots are not to harm the authority of William in Cumberland or Westmoreland. Furthermore, it is William who decides against the war because it would not be likely to gain him anything.

Leslie returns to the events in the reign of Malcolm, with no further mention of William except for his death notice. "Wilȝeam of Normandie king of Jngland, now dies, thrie fatt patrimonies he leiues in Testament to his thrie sones: to Robert, the Dukrie of Normandie; to Wilȝeam, the Kingdome of Jngland; to Henrie Beauclerk his haill Thesaur,

quhilke was gret, and his houshald geir, quhilke was rich and illustre, out of mesour" (I: 315). Thus, Leslie devotes even less effort to an accounting of William than any of the other five historians. Instead, he uses the events surrounding William and his relations with Scotland as an opportunity to explain the rise of the prominent noble families which would become increasingly important to Scottish history. Already some of the future troubles can be foreseen when Leslie recounts the coming to Scotland of certain nobles with Edgar, and then their subsequent return to England, with lands and loyalties in both countries.

Leslie devotes more space to the account of Edward I, but that is only natural as the events of Edward's reign had much more impact on Scotland's history, and, further, these events are more recent. Leslie begins with the choosing of Edward as the mediator in the dispute between Balliol and Bruce. Leslie notes that

> xxiiii Scotis and Jnglis vpon this counsell ar appoynted to meit in Beruik, quhair the king cumis to decerne this cause. efter lang conferring, on baith handis, quhen hame he returnes, he sendis to the men of law in ffrance, for thair counsel in this controuersie: bot Langschankis craftilie of diuerse laweris collecteng diuerse sentences, intendes to concent and gyue him the authoritie, quha ony maner to him will submit him selfe. Quhairfor the king alluret with fair promises, and trett with the sueit wordes of the Bailie, decernes that the Realme be committet to him: for Jhone Balie vndir thoume had promiset that gif the king walde croune him, he soulde be all meines possible, conforme to his power, make ryche the realme of Jngland, diminishe the libertied of Scotland, agment largelie the kingdome of

> Jngland, and of his fidelitie make ane athe, to knawe him for his superiour evir and ay. (I: 342-43)

Leslie deals with the entire selection process quickly and succinctly. He does not give mention of Robert Bruce's speech saying that the crown of Scotland did not mean so much to him that he would forfeit Scotland's freedom for it. Leslie does mention Edward's underhanded craftiness in asking enough French lawyers for an opinion that he was bound to get sufficient different ideas to allow him to choose whomever he wanted. Boece and even Buchanan had indicated that the French lawyers had decided in favor of Robert Bruce, but Leslie gives no such indication. Certainly this account is much less emotional than Boece's or even Buchanan's.

Leslie continues with the recanting of Balliol's oath of fealty to Edward, followed by England's attempt to woo France away from Scotland. However, Balliol succeeds in reaffirming the French alliance and even marries his son into the French royal family. At this point, Leslie notes that

> quhen Edward of Jngl. vndirstude that the Balie had stopet the way of freindschip betueine him and ffrance, his harte was hetlier inflamet to reuenge, than afor, and with a grett armie, in haist he invades Beruik, and takes it throuch a trayne. Jn quhilk Victorie thay war sa cruell, ferce, Wod, and Wilde, that thair handes with the blude of all in that toune thay littid, spairing nather women or babs. Of this happie success thinking him selfe sa proud King Edward he wald cum farther benn, as we speik, or farther in Scotland. (I: 344)

Each of the historians has dealt with Edward's capture of Berwick, but Leslie's account is

more ordered than either Boece's or Buchanan's. He recounts Edward's killing women and children, and his taking the town by a definite strategy, but there is no mention of the treachery told of by Boece and Buchanan, the pretending to be John Balliol, or the use of Bruce's men to help in the deception. Leslie wants to be sure that his readers know that Edward had attacked Berwick out of anger stemming from Balliol's success with France, and he also wants to be sure his readers remember Edward's cruelty. However, at a time when Mary Queen of Scots was in the custody of the English and when diplomatic efforts were still actively trying to secure Elizabeth I's willingness to release Mary, Leslie would not want to write a highly inflammatory history against the English. He has to be content with giving a few details which he can be reasonably confident will bring the entire event to his readers' minds.

Leslie discusses the Battle of Falkirk, and in so doing introduces William Wallace with no background information given at all. Leslie then mentions that

> eftir lang weiris and sair slauchtir on baith sydes, Scotland began to dekay: and suirlie had vttirlie dekayet and cum to nocht, gif Wallase selfe, of quhome we now spak, had nocht with a meruellous fortitude, a worthie Wichtnes and Woundirfull, restored the scotis to libertie, quhilke sa far was brocht vndir; and ouirthrawne with grett force the Jnglise power, sa hich vprisen throuch our humilitie. (I: 345-46)

Leslie continues to narrate how Wallace freed the Scottish towns which had been captured by the English. He then mentions that Wallace achieved all this even though he was

> bot of the mid ranck of nobles, a knichtis secund sone; nethir throuch stipend,

> quhen his ryches was bot small; Nethir throuch ony publick office, he being bot ane priuat persone; bot only throuch his vertue, his mychtie spirit, his zele, and hett feruour in him to defend his cuntrie, and throuch his meruellous maniris baith Noble and Notable, he Wanted na men of Weir, in a schorte space. Quhairfor at last with all consentis he is chosen chief capitane to defend his Natioune. (I: 347)

Leslie tells how some nobles were jealous of Wallace and unable to endure his successes. In the end, Wallace is delivered by a traitor to Edward, after which he is executed. Leslie notes that he will not write any more about Wallace, since "because, of his Worthie actes, ar writne nocht small bot verie gret volumis" (I: 348), and so he returns to relating the events surrounding Edward, beginning with the judgement of Pope Boniface against him in favor of the Scots.

Leslie finishes his discussion of Edward with a recounting of the events leading to the crowning of Robert Bruce after his assassination of the traitorous Comyn. Finally, Edward attempts to conquer Scotland again only to die on its borders.

> Bot oft followis, that quha intendes cruellie to gar all man die, deith grippis him first be the back; for how sune he w^{t} his oste cam ouer the Scotis bordour he dies, quhen doubtles he wassted and wracket had Scotland throuch and throuch, gif God of his gudnes had nocht vthirwyse preueinet his counsel, full of crueltie and tyrannie. His hatred was sa hett bruning against the scotis Natioune, that in his deith he appoynted the noble menis sones, quha with him war plages, all to be hanget, quhilke sum of his cruell counsellouris, with all expeditiounne did, and diligence. (II: 2-3)

Leslie conveys to his readers the extent of Edward's cruelty as well as his lust for dominion over Scotland. The execution of the hostages is yet another example of Edward's tyrannical cruelties. However, Leslie keeps his descriptions short and avoids the use of inflammatory or highly nationalistic rhetoric such as was used by Boece and even Buchanan. Again, this can be accounted for not only as a difference in styles, but also as a difference in purposes. Leslie had more to gain by keeping relations open with the English as he was still hoping to negotiate Mary's freedom. Buchanan had no such desire, and in fact opposed any attempt to put Mary back on the throne.

Leslie has slightly different reasons for writing his history than those of the previous five historians. He does want to provide an accurate history of Scotland, documenting all the events in its history, and he comes much closer to his own times than any of the other historians, who deliberately stopped far short of their own eras. He also continues the tradition of writing history as moral theology, hoping that he can instruct his readers. He wants to provide both knowledge and virtuous examples so that his present day readers may avoid the mistakes made in the past. However, his political agenda differs from the other historians considered in this dissertation, and in fact, his insistence on the restoration of Mary as well as a return to Catholicism was probably at least as unpopular as Mair's insistence on the union of the crowns, which of course was seen in Leslie and Buchanan's time as nearly accomplished. Both Leslie and Mair are writing from minority positions, and this influenced their popularity as well as their effect upon their readers.

Leslie stresses the importance of good leadership, and again he makes use of the

obvious contrast between Edward and Wallace, as well as the differences between William the Conqueror and Malcolm. Arthur gets relatively little mention but serves as another example of strong able leadership. Leslie also emphasizes the dangers of treachery and individual power plays. He downplays the actions of Robert Bruce until he actually becomes king, but does note that Bruce did not have Wallace's constancy of purpose or sense of dedication.

Both Buchanan and Leslie emphasize the fact that their readers need to return to the past for a stronger sense of morality. Certainly the political situation in Scotland had deteriorated in the years during which these men were living, and the problems of factional politics which were evident during the time of Edward I had only grown as a direct result of the number of years when Scotland was ruled by regents. The abuses in the church had also reached the point where Scotland finally underwent its own reformation, but the resulting problems still remained to be dealt with. Buchanan and Leslie, from opposite perspectives, try to address the civil and religious chaos prevalent in their own society, by writing histories which they hope will help their readers see the errors of both the past and present, and to search for examples from the past for models of right conduct. Leslie devotes more space proportionately to the necessity for religious reforms, which fits with his stated reason for writing.

Conclusion

This chapter has looked at all six historians in an effort to discern just what social and political functions they thought their histories might serve. There are some striking similarities in that each of these men felt the need to write a history of Scotland, either by itself, or in the case of Wyntoun, in the larger context of world history, because they felt that both Scotland itself, as well as the world at large, were ignorant on the subject of Scottish history. Scotland's story had only been told by outsiders with little knowledge or sympathy for Scotland. Therefore, each of these men sought to redress the balance and provide solid documentary evidence concerning Scotland's past.

In addition, these six historians also hoped that their histories would prove to be of educational value. Each hoped that the examples from the past, both good and bad, would serve as models for their present societies. Sometimes these educational hopes were more general, as in the case of Fordun, Wyntoun, and Mair. Sometimes these hopes were directed very specifically at the Scottish monarch, such as the cases of Boece and Buchanan. In fact, Buchanan was actually James VI's tutor and certainly expected his history to be of educational value. His court position may have been a factor in making his work so popular.

Finally, all of these historians firmly believed that their history would further the political cause of Scotland, however they defined that cause. Again, sometimes these aims were more obvious, as in the cases of Mair and Leslie, where definite political actions were hoped for. Mair firmly expected Scotland to see the benefits of the union of the crowns. Leslie never gave up hope for the restoration of both Mary and Catholicism.

However, the other four historians also had political reasons for writing, most obviously the cause of Scottish independence as well as the desire to see Scotland united and not fractured by the self-seeking nobles and their power struggles.

CONCLUSION

In this dissertation I have examined the works of six Scottish historians written over a period of over two hundred years from approximately 1385 until 1596. These historians wrote during a critical period in Scottish history, a period which was marked by political unrest, struggles for power, and a growth of nationalism.

Chapter I of this dissertation examines the ways each of these six historians viewed the task and role of the historian. The backgrounds of the six varied. Wyntoun never traveled or had access to sources outside his own area. Fordun was able to travel around Britain and Ireland, and hence found more sources and more perspectives. Mair, Boece, Buchanan, and Leslie all studied abroad as well as at home. For Mair and Boece, the European experience was restricted to France, but Buchanan added Spain to his travels as well as the ordeal of his imprisonment by the Inquisition. Leslie traveled even more widely and served as Queen Mary's ambassador to Queen Elizabeth. He was a confidential agent for Mary, and visited the courts of France, Spain, and Germany. He also spent considerable time in Rome as the nuncio to Emperor Maximilian.

In spite of the differences in background among these historians, they each felt compelled to write a true and accurate history of Scotland. They found that such an account was either missing or in need of revision. Fordun was the first to write, and he was reacting directly to the actions of Edward I, especially the removal of historical

documents from Scotland. He therefore began by searching the British Isles for historical information, and he obviously undertook his task as historian with the utmost seriousness. He worked diligently at finding sources and presenting all the available information. He does not possess the critical skills to evaluate the validity of these sources, but he does make every effort to present information to his readers for their consideration. He is honest with his readers, admitting when he is unable to reconcile his authorities, allowing his readers to decide which to believe and which to discard.

Not surprisingly, Fordun's near contemporary Wyntoun approaches the task of the historian in much the same way as Fordun. He was unable to travel as Fordun had done, but fortunately St. Andrews had a number of available sources for his use. Wyntoun is unique among all these historians in that he wanted to write a world history and place Scotland firmly in the time line of world chronology. It is ironic that the least traveled of these historians is the one who chooses to write the world history. However, his task is still the same in that he wants to put forth an accurate account of Scotland's history so that his readers could see where Scotland fit in overall world chronology. Wyntoun uses the same approach to disparate sources as Fordun, namely putting forth all the information he can for his readers. When he runs into discrepancies which cannot be resolved, he states this honestly for his readers and leaves the final determination up to them. Both Fordun and Wyntoun use an approach to history which requires their readers to evaluate sources.

Mair's history is the only one which purports to be impartial and unbiased. Mair finds that his task as an historian involves presenting the history of all of Britain as impartially and honestly as possible. He is able to use critical thinking skills to evaluate his

sources. Mair finds it important to place Scotland's history on the same footing as English history. He does not wish to denounce England or unjustly praise Scotland, but he realizes that there have been many more accounts written about English history than Scottish. Those historians who have mentioned Scotland have not, for the most part, given full or accurate accounts. Since Mair ultimately is hoping for a union of the two crowns, he sees one of his tasks as putting Scotland's history before his readers so that they will realize that it is every bit as ancient and vital as England's.

Boece, Mair's contemporary, was determined to write a history of Scotland which would be read by Europeans so that they could realize the importance of Scotland's history. Europe's view of Scotland, according to Boece, needed clarification. Boece is not interested in giving citations for all of his sources, nor in demonstrating his ability to evaluate those sources critically. Boece finds that his task as an historian is to write a clear, concise, readable, and in the end highly nationalistic history of Scotland which will capture the hearts and imaginations, as well as the minds, of his readers.

Buchanan and Leslie follow the pattern set by Boece. However, both Buchanan and Leslie were much more active politically than any of our previous historians. Buchanan spent many years as a tutor to several members of the Scottish royal family, and in fact wrote his history to instruct James VI. Leslie served as an ambassador for Mary Queen of Scots. Both historians found that the task of the historian was to set forth the past history of Scotland clearly and honestly, so that this past history would provide suitable examples to instruct present day readers.

After discussing the tasks and roles of the historian, chapter II of this dissertation

examines the ways in which each of these historians selects and views the Arthurian materials which he presents. This particular topic was chosen because English historians, especially since Geoffrey of Monmouth, had made so much of the Arthurian story, which had grown in details and importance. The same trend may be noticed among the Scottish historians, in that the amount of materials presented tended to grow with the later historians. More than this, though, the study of the Arthurian period provides a comparative case study of each historian's interests and focus.

Fordun stresses the nature of kingship, especially the lawful assumption of the crown. He is interested in how monarchs are selected, especially when the circumstances are unclear. He is also concerned with treachery and its effects upon history. His emphasis on Arthur is that Arthur was not lawfully king.

Wyntoun chooses a very different focus for his retelling of the Arthurian period. Wyntoun seems more concerned with national sovereignty, not just how kings are selected. He discusses Arthur's refusal to submit to Rome's claims of sovereignty, demonstrating the rightness of Arthur's actions and the ultimate destruction caused by Rome's unjust claims.

Mair greatly increases the amount of space devoted to Arthur, but he attempts a more analytical approach to the accounts of Arthur. Mair also attempts to show more perspectives to the events, demonstrating that while Arthur had no right to the crown, he did rule well, and that Mordred, although wrongly denied the kingship, was far from blameless.

Boece builds still more information into his account of Arthur, and his emphasis is

strongly nationalistic and biased. He seeks to emphasize the fact that Scotland was fully independent, possessing great strength. Boece also stresses that Scotland had tried to assist the Britons against the Saxons, but that their assistance was met with treachery and treason. The treaty between Arthur and Lot is discussed in great detail, and the treachery involved in Arthur's breaking this treaty is of paramount importance for Boece.

Buchanan follows the basic outline given by Boece, but with less openly displayed nationalism. He is concerned instead with discussing the nature of kingship and portraying examples of both good and bad monarchs. Since Buchanan is interested in finding models from the past to serve as examples for his readers to follow, he is able to use Arthur as one such model to help his readers see the importance of freedom, love of country, and proper worship. While Buchanan devotes more space to Arthur than might seem necessary in a history of Scotland, he spends less time on Arthur than either Boece or Mair, possibly because the story itself was lessening its hold on readers' imaginations.

Finally, Leslie has the briefest mention of Arthur. He discredits Arthur's European victories, but he recounts information concerning the Round Table and Arthur's knights. Leslie gives Arthur credit as a notable leader, with a courageous spirit and honorable actions, but overall Leslie has little interest in telling his readers about Arthur, again reflecting the decline in Arthur's popularity among historians in both Scotland and England.

Using the information discovered about each of these six historians' approaches to Arthur as a starting point, chapter III examines how each of these men felt history should serve society as a whole. The emphasis of this chapter is on determining the social and

political functions of history as understood by each of the historians under study. The historians' views on Arthur is compared to the opinions expressed about both William the Conqueror and Edward I to see if any conclusions can be drawn concerning the ideas these historians had about the uses of history.

Fordun feels the primary use for his history is to provide his readers with a full and accurate accounting of the history of Scotland, including details which had hitherto gone unnoticed or misrepresented. He is determined to correct the English accounts of Scotland's history in a number of particulars. Fordun also feels a strong responsibility to instruct his readers, especially in matters relating to the nature of the monarchy. He hopes that modern leaders can learn from past mistakes and hence improve conditions in Scotland.

Wyntoun also finds that the primary use of his history is to provide a world chronology which accurately reflects Scotland's history and importance in the overall picture. In addition, Wyntoun is determined to explain Scotland's current political difficulties by providing a detailed genealogical history designed to demonstrate the influence of family loyalties and their effects on Scottish politics. Wyntoun hopes that his readers will be able to see the importance of unified actions rather than divided loyalties. He wants them to realize how the errors of the past led to present difficulties so that they might work together to enable Scotland to achieve national independence and prosperity again.

An accurate portrayal of Scotland's past is foremost in Mair's need to write his history. Too often the English accounts have overshadowed or neglected the Scottish

achievements. Mair wants to tell both sides so that his readers will realize Scotland's long and honorable history. He has the further aim of writing his history to support the cause of the union of the crowns. He hopes that one use of his history will be to enable his readers to see the importance of a united Britain rather than separate nations. This union is important to Mair because it is the only way he sees for achieving his primary goal, namely peace. He hopes that his history will serve as a vehicle to guide the leaders of both countries to a solution for the chronic political unrest which has existed for so long.

Boece finds that the most important use for his history is to educate his readers. He provides moral examples and sermons to emphasize the value of proper conduct. His work is dedicated to James V with the hopes that he will become the kind of king his people can admire and look up to. Boece is determined to use his history to give James V proper examples so he in turn may become a noble example for his people.

Buchanan has similar ideas about the uses of his history, which he dedicated to James VI with the hope that it would teach him the lessons to be learned from history about the importance of strong leadership. Buchanan feels that his history will provide the necessary moral and political lessons so that Scotland's political and economic situation may be turned around. He demonstrates the dangers of current court politics with the hope that the dreams of those such as Wallace may finally be realized.

Finally, Leslie too writes a didactic history. He is primarily concerned with the nature of religion in Scotland and is pushing for a return to Catholicism and an end to the corruption within the church. Like Buchanan, Leslie feels that the past had a stronger sense of morality, and if he can help his readers see where the errors were made, that the

situation in Scotland could be corrected. He emphasizes the importance of strong leadership and the dangers of treachery.

It is evident then from this examination of the six major Scottish historians writing from 1385 until 1596, that in spite of their differences, they were alike in thinking that history could change the world. Each of them wrote with a strong sense of mission, the sense that what they were writing was necessary and could make a difference. Each of them felt that it was important to be honest and complete in his coverage of Scottish history.

The sense of mission or importance is felt strongly in all six of these histories. Fordun begins by saying that he is attempting to combat the biased nature of the information currently available about Scotland, since it had been written primarily by English historians. He is very concerned with preserving the historical records of the past and is appalled by Edward I's actions in gathering up and at times destroying valuable information. Fordun feels so strongly about the importance of his work that he undertakes his own personal mission to travel all over Britain in search of historical records. He then writes his history with the certainty that once his readers understand what has gone on before they will be able to improve present day conditions.

Each of the five succeeding historians likewise has a strong conviction about the importance of his work and the positive effect it will have upon not only individual readers but the nation at large. Wyntoun will ensure that Scotland takes its rightful place within world history. What Scotland has done will become known to the world at large. Similarly, his Scottish audience will learn just how the events in Scotland relate to and

indeed affect the events of the world.

Mair is determined that once his readers have fully understood his history they will understand the importance of a unified government for the island. This union must be accomplished between equals. Mair is certain that he can teach his readers that both Scotland and England have long honorable histories and that they are equally strong and independent. However, for the sake of peace, the two nations must come together under one crown. This is to be a union, though, and not a submission of one nation to the other. Mair must make Scotland's strengths as well as its long history of independence very clear to his readers so that this union may be accomplished.

Boece is equally determined to change his world with his history. He is very concerned with the way in which various noble leaders have taken advantage of the numerous periods of regency or interregnum to further their own power. He is concerned with the deterioration of moral values in his own time. He is convinced that he can stir up feelings of nationalism and pride in his readers so that they will be able to work together to build Scotland into the nation Boece envisions. He wants James V and indeed all the nobles to profit from the reading of his history so that they can achieve a better present and a glorious future.

After spending much of his life as a teacher to royalty, Buchanan now writes his history at the end of his life, determined to leave behind a legacy which will shape the future. He has written his history specifically for James VI to provide the necessary lessons which Buchanan is getting too old to teach personally. Buchanan also sees the dangers plaguing Scotland from the vast number of regencies and the power politics of the

individual nobles in furthering their own ends. He feels compelled to write a history which will teach his nation and his sovereign how to live. He will provide examples from the past and show his readers where the dangers exist so that the future will be better.

Leslie also is driven to write his history in order to change Scotland. He wants to reform the religious life of the nation as well as the political, and in fact to renounce the Scottish reformation and return the nation to Catholicism. He provides sermons and examples of exactly how the situation has deteriorated and what his readers need to do to turn the situation around. Leslie deals with the issue of factionalism as well, which he personally witnessed first hand on numerous occasions as the Scottish nobles dealt with Mary Queen of Scots. He exposes the errors of the past and provides examples of those who have ruled wisely with the hope that these examples will change the course of events in Scotland for the better.

Therefore, each of these men was driven to write a history which he felt would make a difference. These histories were not written just to preserve information from the past, but rather to make a significant difference for the present and the future. This fact is proven by the way in which each of these historians has dealt with the periods of Arthur, William the Conqueror, and Edward I. Were these historians successful in their goals? Certainly Leslie did not succeed in undoing the Reformation. The union of the crowns did occur, but not the way Mair envisaged. The striving for personal gain in political power at the expense of larger goals does not seem to have changed in the centuries since these histories were written. These historians probably are not alone in saying that history should change the present, but these six all seemed to feel the power of history very

strongly. They may not be alone, but it is noteworthy that Scotland's six major historians from this period all had the same vision about the power of history. They were not primarily interested complete and accurate representations of the past. In spite of their differences concerning specific goals, they were united by their determination to change Scotland's future by explaining its past. Overall, it would be difficult to say that these historians succeeded in changing the present or the future on a grand scale, but there is no way of telling how many individual lives they may have influenced. Certainly the examples they have provided and the lessons they tried to teach have an enduring relevancy. The passion and vision which they convey through their histories does live on.

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