

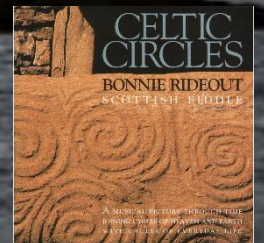
Macbeth's Scotland



BRUCE CRAIG



Pipe Major William Wilson
Eric Rigler, Bonnie Rideout



Introduction

- When James I became King of England after the death of Elizabeth I in 1603, a sense of trepidation had settled over the nation. James was a Scottish king and the son of Mary, Queen of Scots, a staunch Catholic and English traitor.
- In the words of Scottish poet and critic Robert Crawford:
"Macbeth was a play for a post-Elizabethan England facing up to what it might mean to have a Scottish king. England to Elizabethan audiences of the time seemed comparatively benign, while its northern neighbor was mired in a bloody, monarch-killing past. Macbeth may have been set in medieval Scotland, but it was filled with material that was of great interest to England and England's new ruler."
- Today *Macbeth* is considered one of Shakespeare's great tragedies, but his portrayal of Macbeth bears little resemblance to the real 11th century king.
- Was the portrayal of Macbeth as a ruthless and murderous usurper simply for entertainment and dramatic effect, or did Shakespeare have ulterior motives?
- This presentation will compare the Macbeth of Shakespeare's play to the real 11th century king and try to uncover the intriguing political motivations that may have led Shakespeare to rewrite history.
- We will also explore the history, geography, and culture of medieval, post Elizabethan, as well as modern Scotland to facilitate a deeper appreciation of one of the most beautiful and fascinating countries in the western world

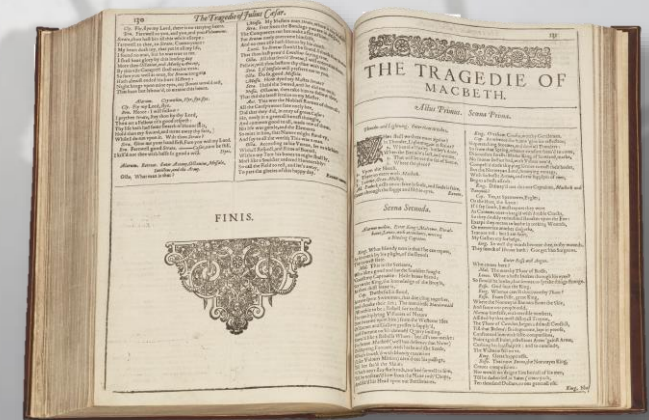


Shakespeare's *Macbeth* – The Scottish Play

- Shakespeare tragedy, believed to have been first performed in 1606 during the reign of James I, the Scottish king who assumed the English throne after the death of Elizabeth I. *Macbeth* represents a clear reflection of the playwright's relationship with his sovereign
- *Macbeth* dramatizes the damaging physical and psychological effects of political ambition on those who seek power for its own sake.
- First published in the Folio of 1623 and represents Shakespeare's shortest tragedy.
- Due to its association with witchcraft, and notable production “accidents”, many in the acting world believe the play is cursed and will not mention the title out loud in a theatre, referring instead to it as “the Scottish play”

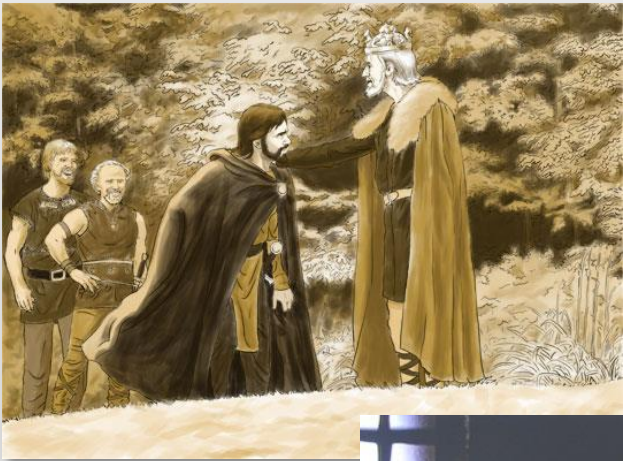
Main Characters

- **Duncan** – King of Scotland
- **Macbeth** – General in King Duncan's army, Thane of Glamis, later Thane of Cawdor, and then King of Scotland
- **Lady Macbeth** – Macbeth's wife and co-conspirator
- **Banquo** – Thane of Lochaber, general in Duncan's army, and friend of Macbeth
- **Malcolm** – Duncan's eldest son and heir apparent to the throne (also Donalbain, Malcolm's younger brother)
- **Fleance** – Banquo's son and direct ancestor of Stewart line of Kings
- **Macduff** – Thane of Fife, loyal to Duncan and Malcolm
- **Ross** – Thane of Ross, a nobleman and Lady MacDuff's cousin. Serves as a messenger
- **Three Witches** – “weird sisters” who prophesize Macbeth becoming King of Scotland, as well as the circumstances of his demise



Macbeth Synopsis - Act 1

Scotland is at war with the allied forces of Ireland and Norway (Vikings). Macbeth and Banquo, returning from victory in battle in Forres against the rebel Macdonwald, come upon three witches who prophesy that Macbeth will become Thane of Cawdor and then King of Scotland. The witches also prophesy that Banquo's descendants will be kings, but not Banquo himself.



Ross greets Macbeth and Banquo and addresses Macbeth as Thane of Cawdor. Macbeth learns that, like Macdonwald, the Thane of Cawdor was also a traitor and has been executed for treason. Duncan had named Macbeth Thane of Cawdor, fulfilling the first part of the prophecy; however, Duncan also names his eldest son, Malcom, as heir to throne, making Macbeth's accession seemingly unlikely.



Macbeth sends a letter to Lady Macbeth informing her of the encounter with the 3 witches and their prophecy. Fearing Macbeth lacks the ruthlessness needed to kill Duncan and assume the throne, she vows to help fulfill the prophecy at whatever cost. Lady Macbeth shares a plan with Macbeth to kill Duncan and blame the guards.

Macbeth Synopsis - Act 2

Duncan is visiting Macbeth's castle in Inverness. Macbeth and Banquo discuss the prophecy and how part of it has come true. After Banquo leaves, Macbeth sees a dagger leading him to Duncan's room. He questions whether he can murder the king but decides to do it.



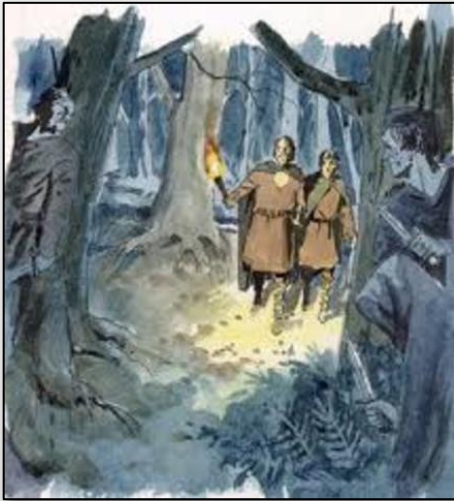
Macbeth tells Lady Macbeth that Duncan has been killed but is horrified by what he has done. He failed to plant the murder weapons on the sleeping guards and was holding the daggers in his bloody hands. Lady Macbeth chastises him and tells him to wipe the blood off his hands while she plants the murder weapons.

Macduff arrives and discovers Duncan's body and blames the guards. Macbeth feigns rage and then slays the guards, thus securing their silence. Duncan's sons, Malcolm and Donalbain fear they will be implicated in the murder plot and decide to flee to England and Ireland, respectively.



Macbeth Synopsis - Act 3

Macbeth becomes King of Scotland but is wracked by guilt and paranoia. Banquo suspects Macbeth in Duncan's murder and muses that his own prophecy might come true. Macbeth announces that he will hold a banquet in Banquo's honor that evening. Banquo informs him that he must ride with his son that afternoon but promises to attend after he returns.



Fearful of the witches' prophecy that Banquo's heirs will seize the throne, Macbeth hires two desperate commoners as mercenaries to kill Banquo and his son Fleance by convincing them that Banquo is the source of their misfortune. As the assassins lie in wait, they are joined by a mysterious third, presumably sent by Macbeth. Banquo is murdered by the assassins, but Fleance manages to flee, thus securing the prophecy.

Later that night during the banquet, Macbeth is informed that Banquo was killed but Fleance escaped. Macbeth, furious by the news, returns to his guests and sees the ghost of Banquo. His visible agitation worries the other guests about his mental state. Lady Macbeth dismisses the guests and tries unsuccessfully to calm Macbeth.



Macbeth Synopsis - Act 4



Witches circle a cauldron adding a series of grotesque ingredients while chanting incantations. They speak with their leader Hecate, goddess of witchcraft, who then disappears. Macbeth then enters and demands answers about his future. The witches complete their magic spell and bring forth a series of apparitions from the cauldron.

The 1st apparition is an armed head that warns Macbeth to beware the Thane of Fife; the 2nd is a bloody child that tells him none born of woman shall harm him; and the 3rd is a crowned child with a tree in its hand that tells him he will be safe until a local forest, Birnam Wood, marches into battle against him. He is also shown a series of 8 kings, with the last holding a mirror, reflecting still more kings holding *two-fold balls and treble scepters*, followed by Banquo, signifying the succession will still come from Banquo.



Secure in the witches' new prophecy, Macbeth orders seizure of Macduff's castle, but Macduff had left for England to meet with Malcolm. All are killed including Macduff's wife and son. At the English court, Malcolm tests Macduff's loyalty; satisfied, he tells him of his plan to lead an army against Macbeth with the help of his uncle Siward, Earl of Northumbria. Ross arrives and informs Macduff of his wife and son's death. Malcolm convinces him to channel his grief to seek revenge and join him in battle to reclaim the throne.

Macbeth Synopsis - Act 5



A conscience-ridden Lady Macbeth walks in her sleep carrying a candle while wiping imaginary blood from her hands. She speaks in her sleep in a manner that betrays her guilt. She is observed by a gentlewoman and doctor who agree not to reveal what they have seen and heard.

Given the witches prophecy, Macbeth feels secure in his remote castle at Dunsinane until he is told that Birnam Wood is moving towards him (oops). Malcolm's army is carrying branches from the forest as camouflage for their assault on Macbeth's stronghold.



As the final battle commences, Macbeth learns Lady Macbeth committed suicide. Macbeth mourns but is more concerned about the approaching army. Confident in the prophecy, Macbeth vows to fight to the bitter end. Macduff finds Macbeth and challenges him. During the fight, Macduff reveals he is the child of a caesarean birth (loophole!). Realizing he is doomed by prophecy; Macbeth submits to his enemy.

Macduff triumphs and brings the head of the traitor Macbeth to Malcolm. Malcolm declares peace and announces he will rename his thanes earls. All exit toward Scone where Malcolm will be crowned King of Scotland.

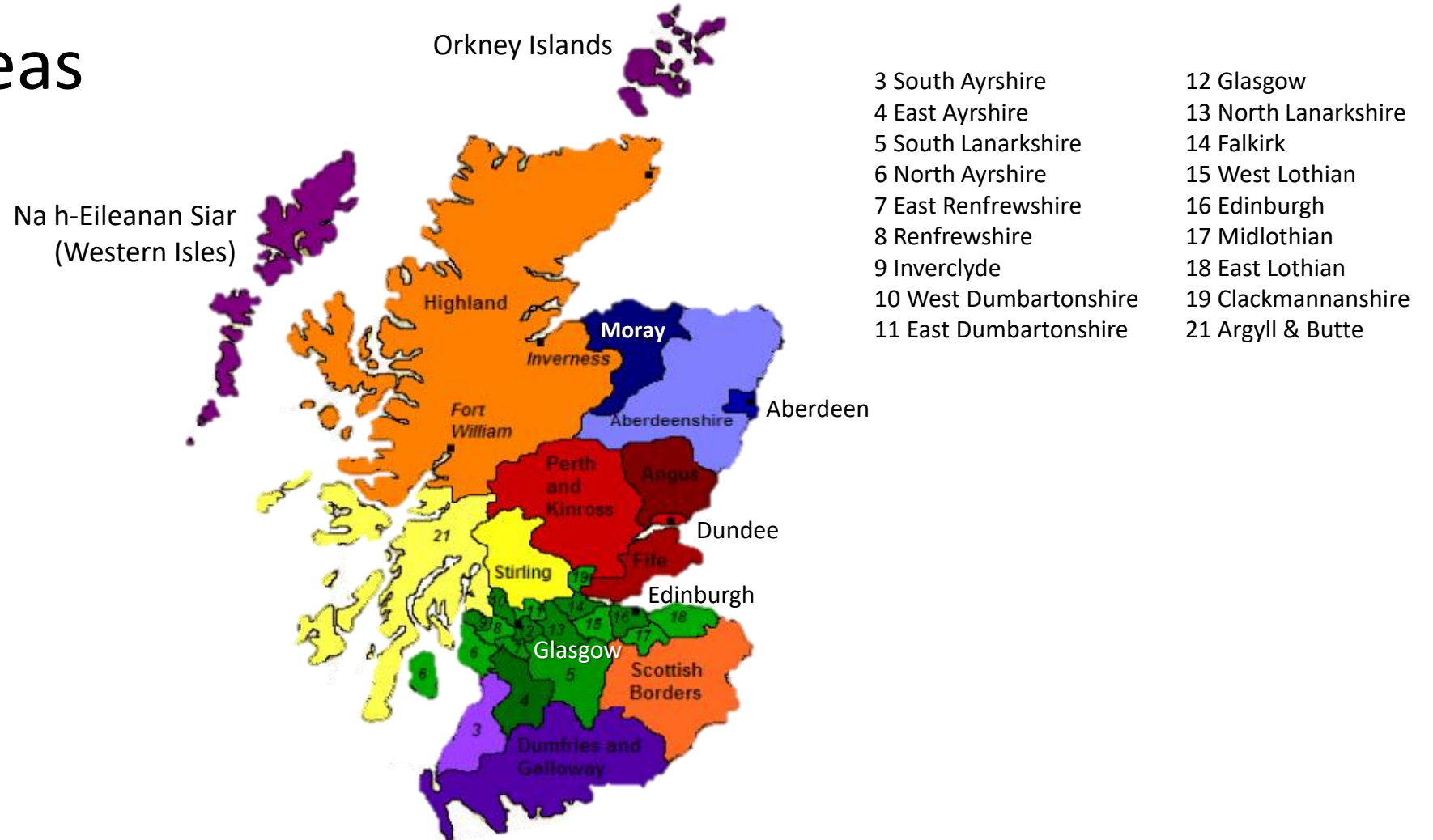


Modern Scotland at a Glance

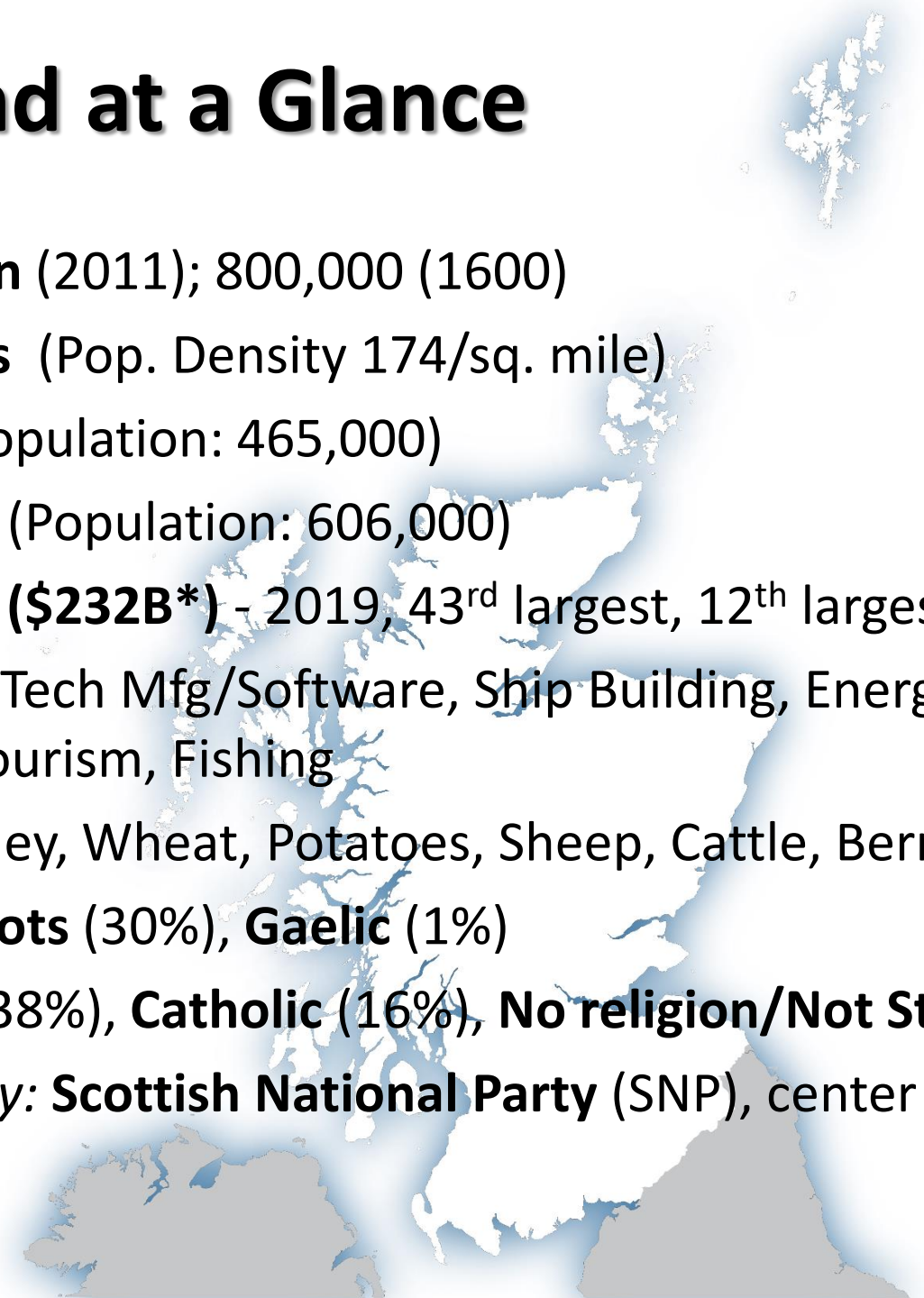


Shetland Islands

32 Council Areas



Modern Scotland at a Glance

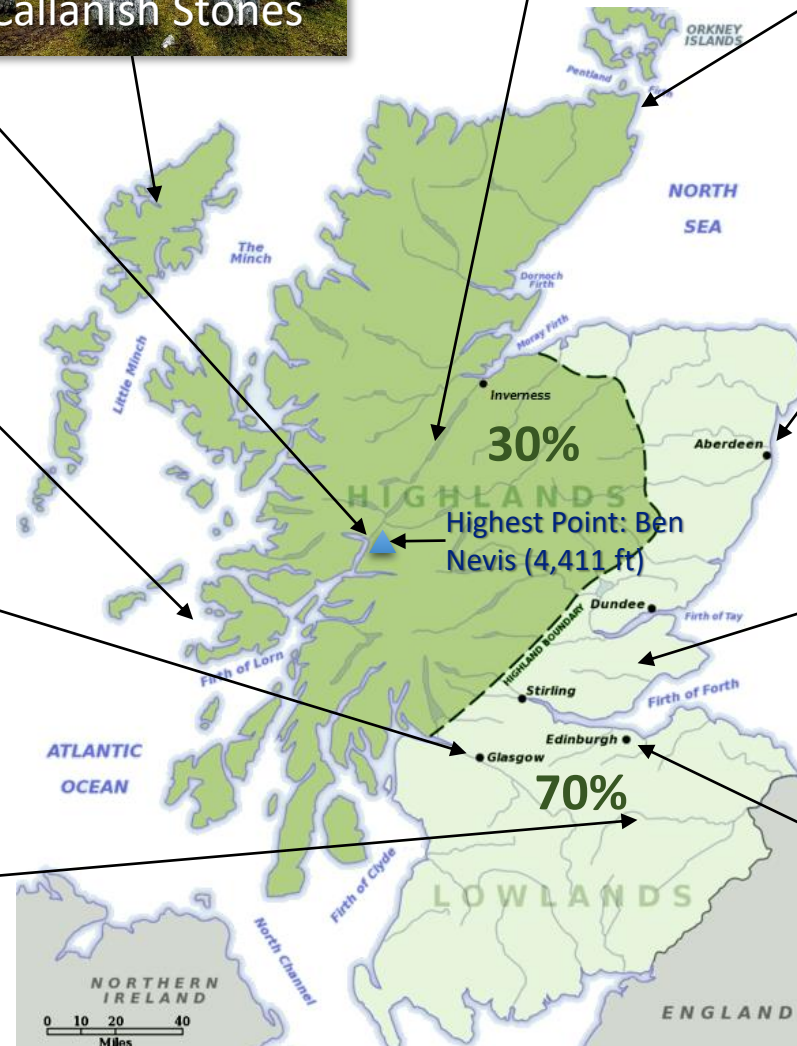
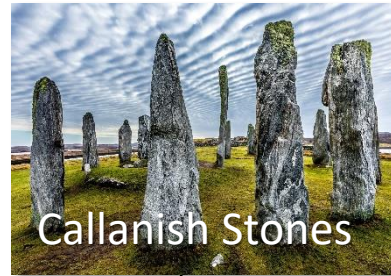
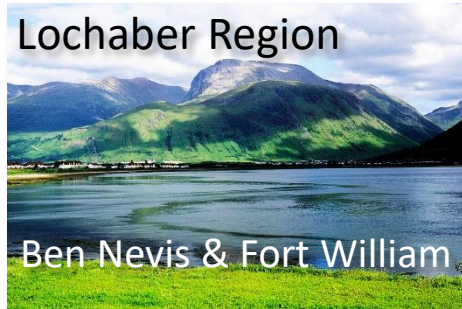
A faint map of Scotland is visible in the background. A blue rectangular box with white text is positioned in the upper right area of the map.

About the size of
South Carolina

- *Population:* **5.3 million** (2011); 800,000 (1600)
- *Area:* **30,418 sq. miles** (Pop. Density 174/sq. mile)
- *Capital:* **Edinburgh** (Population: 465,000)
- *Largest City:* **Glasgow** (Population: 606,000)
- *Economy:* **GDP £167B (\$232B*)** - 2019, 43rd largest, 12th largest in EU
- *Main Industries:* High Tech Mfg/Software, Ship Building, Energy, Whisky, Textiles, Banking, Insurance, Tourism, Fishing
- *Agriculture:* Oats, Barley, Wheat, Potatoes, Sheep, Cattle, Berries
- *Language:* **English, Scots** (30%), **Gaelic** (1%)
- *Religion:* **Protestant** (38%), **Catholic** (16%), **No religion/Not Stated** (44%), **Other** (2%)
- *Majority Political Party:* **Scottish National Party** (SNP), center left, pro-independence

*\$205B in 2020

Tour around *Scotland*



Union Flag: Old Flags & New Alliances

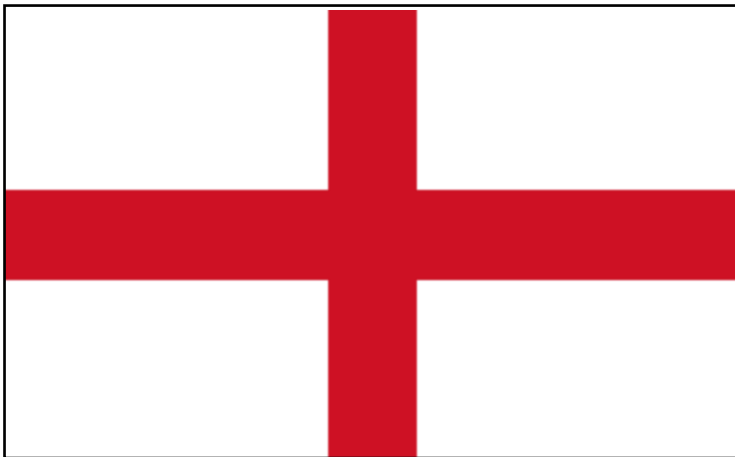


Flag of Scotland (1286)
St. Andrew's Cross

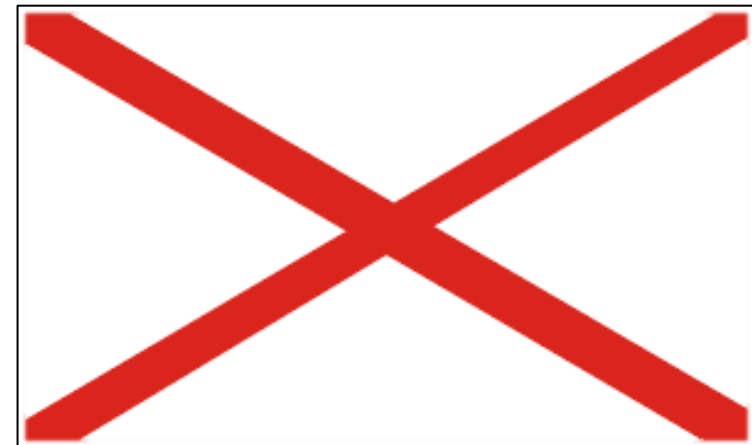


U.K. Flag is a composite of older flags from 3 previously independent countries

Flag of England (1270's)
St. George's Cross



Flag of Unified Ireland (1783)
St. Patrick's Cross



Conflict with England Goes Way Back....

Declaration of Arbroath - 1320

Quia quamdiu Centum ex nobis viui remanserint,
nuncquam Anglorum dominio aliquatenus volumus
subiugari. Non enim propter gloriam, diuicias aut
honores pugnamus set propter libertatem solummodo
quam Nemo bonus nisi simul cum vita amittit.

*For as Long as but a hundred of us remain
alive, never will we on any conditions be
brought under English rule. It is in truth
not for glory, nor riches, nor honours that
we are fighting, but for freedom - for that
alone, which no honest man gives up but
with life itself.*

Sexto Aprilis Millesimo Trescentesimo vicesimo

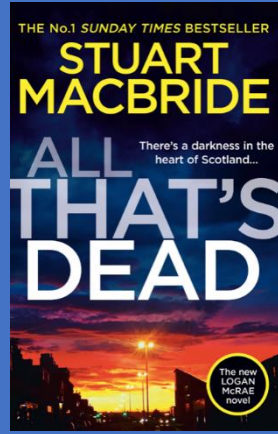
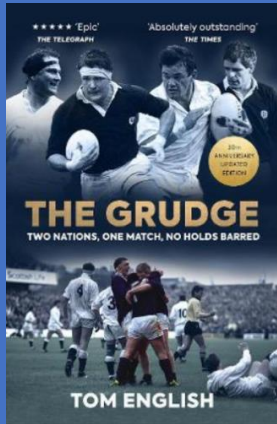
April 6, 1320

A letter from Arbroath

*This is a copy of the diplomatic letter which was
sent from Arbroath Abbey in 1320 and is now
called the Declaration of Arbroath.*

Although dated 6 April 1320, it didn't reach the
Pope until after 16 June. By then Pope John XXII
had issued further documents reinforcing the
sentence of excommunication on King Robert I
and his loyal bishops.

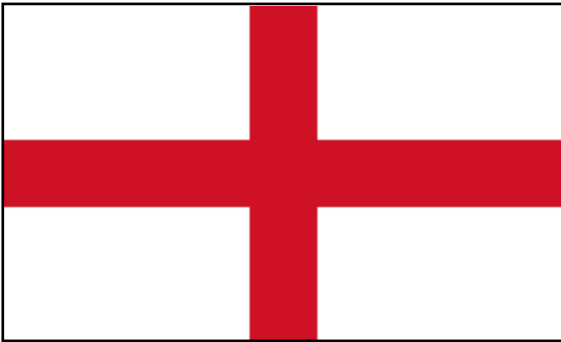
The letter may have been cleverly back-dated by
the Scots to give the appearance of an instant and
heartfelt reply to the Pope's excommunication. Robert I



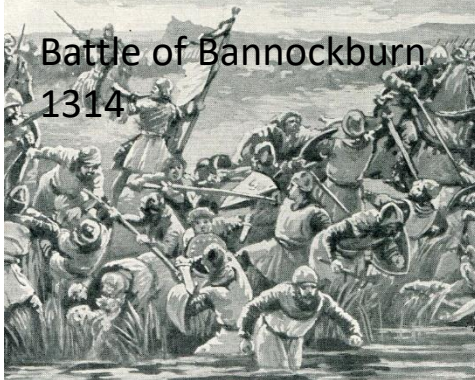
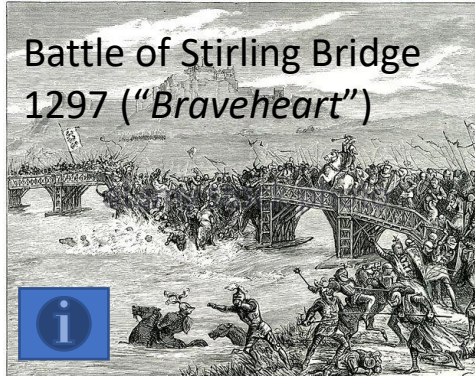
...And it hasn't changed much since
United Kingdom?



Shakespeare's Macbeth: Historical Context



For much of history, Scotland and England were separate countries with separate monarchs in constant conflict



Shakespeare's Macbeth: Historical Context

First Union Flag:1603



- 1603: *Union of the Crowns*, Scotland and England united under a single monarch with accession of James VI, King of Scots to King James I of England
- Shakespeare wrote *Macbeth* cir. 1606 in fealty to King James I, who was a patron of his theatre group
- *Macbeth* is a cautionary tale for those who would threaten the king and reasserts the divine right of monarchs
- *Macbeth* is thought to have been written in response to the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, which was a failed assassination attempt against King James I



How Did a Scotsman Get to be King of England?



House of Bruce



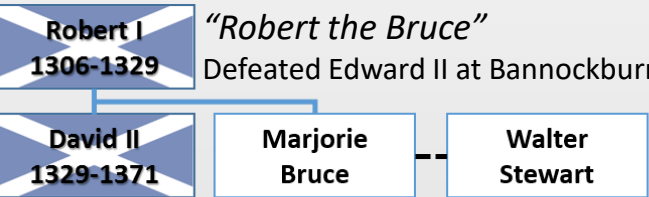
House of Stewart



House of Tudor



Robert I led Scotland to defeat England in the First War of Scottish Independence (1296 – 1328)

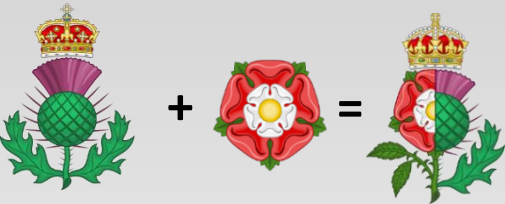


Prophecy Alert!

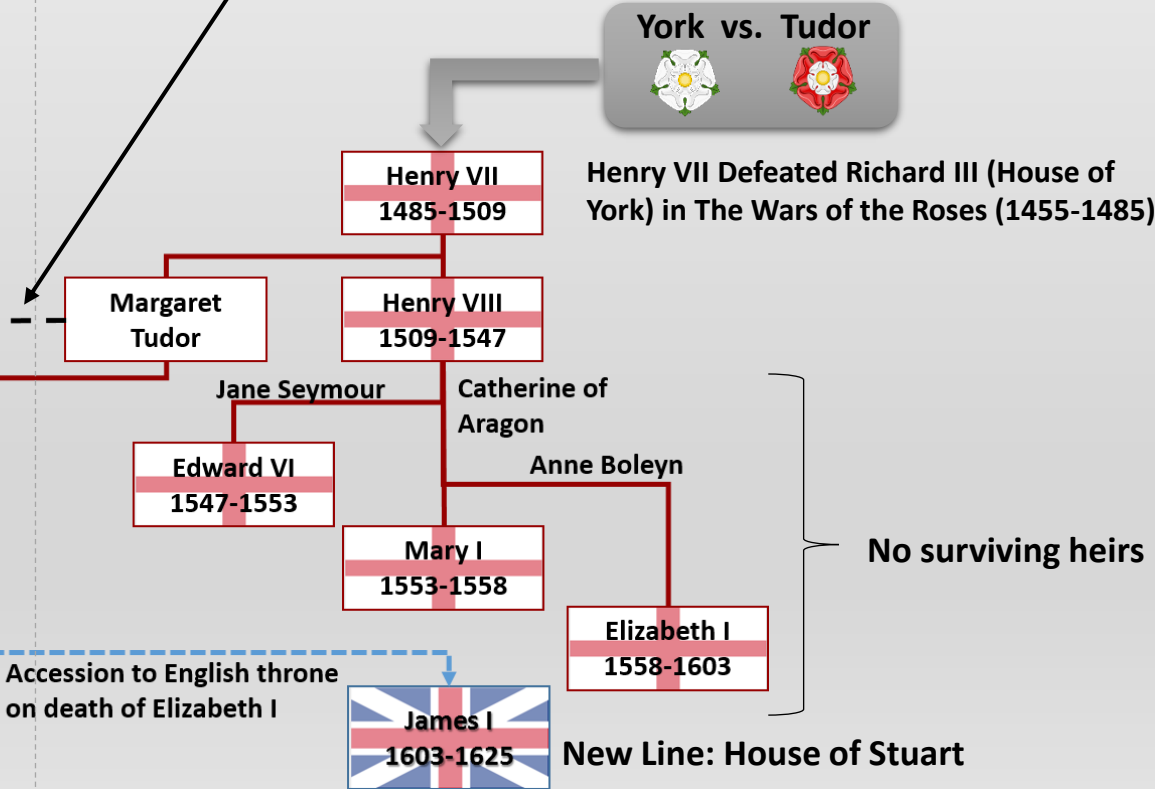
8 Stewart Monarchs prior to James VI



"Mary Queen of Scots"



The Scottish royal bloodline merged with the English royal bloodline with the marriage of James IV to Margaret Tudor in confirmation of the *Treaty of Perpetual Peace* with Henry VII in 1502

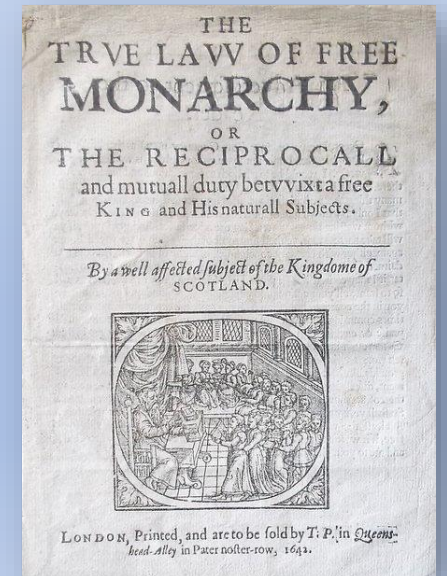


The Divine Right of Kings



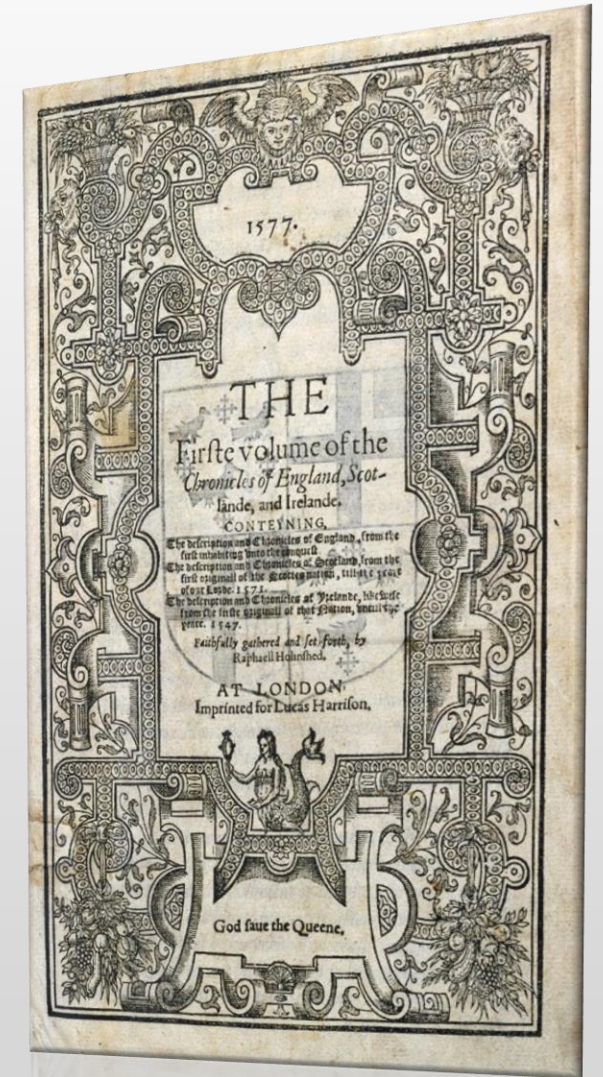
- In 1598, King James VI of Scotland first published his essay on the theory of kingship: *The True Law of Free Monarchy, or the reciprocall and mutuall duty betwixt a free King, and His naturall Subjects*
- In this essay, James uses metaphysical arguments based on scripture to outline the mutual duty between monarch and subjects and to justify the theory of the divine right of kings
- The divine right of kings is the absolutist idea that a monarch's authority to rule comes directly from God and that he or she is not subject to any earthly authority.

- The divine-right theory emerged out of Europe's medieval period and was supercharged by the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century.
- In James' words: *"The State of MONARCHIE is the supremest thing upon earth: For Kings are not only God's Lieutenants upon earth, and sit upon God's throne, but even by God himself they are called Gods."*
- James applied this doctrine in his actions to unite England and Scotland, as well as justify the brutal tactics employed to subjugate the Gaelic speaking Highland clans
- Macbeth's downfall in the play represents the dire consequences of violating the sovereign's divine relationship with God through regicide



Macbeth: Historical Basis

- Shakespeare is widely believed to have used the 2nd edition (1587) of (Raphael) Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* in writing Macbeth
- Shakespeare used Holinshed's Chronicles in other history-based works including *Richard III*, *King Lear*, and *Cymbeline*
- Holinshed's Chronicles was the only widely accessible source of English/Celtic history in Shakespeare's time
- Characters coming uniquely from this work:
 - **Weird Sisters (Witches)** – “creatures of the elderwood....nymphs or fairies”
 - **Banquo** – Thane of Lochaber
 - **Fleance** – Banquo's son and ancestor of the Clan Stewart/House of Stuart line
 - **Macduff** – Thane of Fife, defeats Macbeth in battle
 - **Macdonwald** – Leader of rebel forces
- Although considered historically accurate in its time, by the 17th century it was considered inaccurate and known to contain much folklore and legend
 - Describes Macbeth's encounter with 3 nymphs or fairies
 - Debate as to whether Banquo really existed in history, or was he merely a 16th century invention



Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (1st Edition 1577)

Background: The Birth of Scotland

- Indigenous people of northern and eastern Scotland during the latter stages of the Roman occupation in Britain were called “Picts” by the Romans; Latin for “Painted”, as they painted their bodies.
- After the end of Roman occupation in the 5th century, Gaelic speaking tribes expanded into Argyll and western Scotland and formed the Kingdom of Dál Riata. Romans referred to these people as *Scoti*
- In the 6th century, Gaelic speaking missionaries converted the king of the Picts to Christianity, and by the 9th century the Scots and Picts were united under Kenneth MacAlpin, King of Dál Riata
- The land did not become known as Scotland (*Alba* in Gaelic) until after Kenneth’s grandson, Constantine II, ascended the throne in 900 A.D.
- The MacAlpin dynasty lasted nearly 200 years, which was a period of patchy royal control marked by constant raids from Norse Vikings.
- House of Alpin ended in 1043 with the death of Malcolm II, grandfather of King Duncan & Macbeth. Malcolm had earlier consolidated Scottish power in the southern kingdoms of Strathclyde and Lothian in 1018.
- Duncan and Macbeth were transitional kings prior to the reign of Duncan’s son Malcolm III. Over the ensuing 230 years, Malcolm III’s descendants in the House of Dunkeld brought the remaining northern realms under Scottish control



The Real Macbeth



Historic Figures

- Mac Beatha mac Findláich (Macbeth in English) – *“Son of Life son of Finlay”*
- Born circa 1005
- Father was Findláich mac Ruaidrí (Finlay), Mormaer (Earl) of Moray
- Became Mormaer of Moray in 1032, and married Gruoch (Lady Macbeth), granddaughter of Kenneth III, around 1033
- August 1040: Killed ruling king, Duncan I in battle near Elgin (Forres), Morayshire, and assumed throne
- In 1045 Macbeth defeated and killed Duncan I’s father Crinan at Dunkeld
- For 14 years, Macbeth seemed to have ruled equably, imposing law & order, and encouraging Christianity.
- In 1054, Macbeth was challenged by Siward, Earl of Northumbria, who was attempting to return Duncan’s son (and Siward’s nephew) Malcolm Canmore (later Malcolm III) to the throne
- August 1057, Macbeth killed at the Battle of Lumphanan in Aberdeenshire by forces led by Malcolm Canmore.

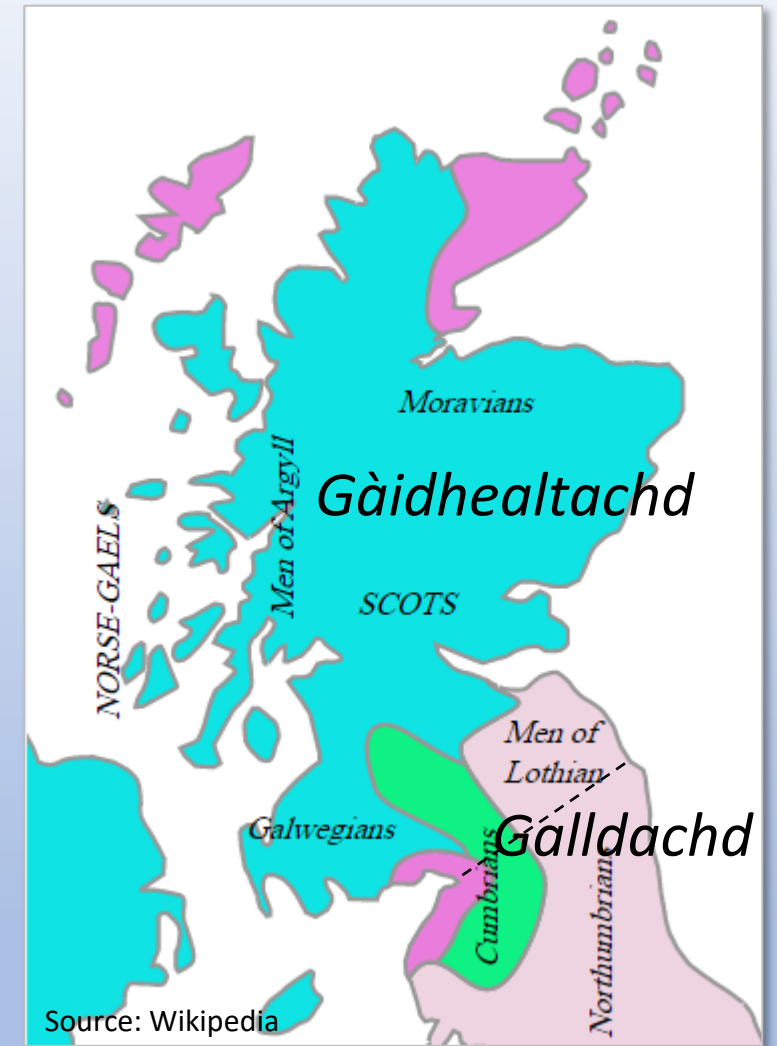


“Shakespeare’s Macbeth bears little resemblance to the real 11th century Scottish king”

What Language did Macbeth Speak?

Dè cànan a bha MacBethad a 'bruidhinn?

- Language spoken in 11th century Scotland during the reign of Macbeth was predominantly an early form of modern Scottish Gaelic known as Middle Irish or Middle Gaelic
- Gaelic is a Celtic language native to Scotland and is similar to, but distinct from, Irish. Both evolved from Middle Irish, but did not become distinct languages until the 13th century
- Gaelic reached its greatest spread in the 12th century.
- During the high and late middle ages, Scotland was divided along language and cultural divisions, not geographic ones.
- Gaelic speaking areas of Scotland: *Gàidhealtachd*
Non-Gaelic speaking areas: *Galldachd*.
- Macbeth's successor, Malcolm III, married Princess Margaret of Wessex, an Anglo-Saxon, who is given credit (blame) for taking first steps in anglicizing the Scottish court
- Margaret spoke no Gaelic, gave her children Anglo-Saxon names, and brought many English-speaking bishops, priests, and monastics to Scotland
- Today only about 57,000 people still speak Gaelic, predominantly in the Northern Highlands and outer Hebrides Islands



Legend: Gaelic English Norse/Gaelic

**Gaelic vs. English Language Division in
12th Century Scotland**

What's a Thane?

“All hail. Macbeth! Hail to thee, thane of Glamis. All hail. Macbeth, hail to thee, thane of Cawdor. All hail. Macbeth, thou shalt be king hereafter!”

Thane or Thegn: Medieval **Anglo-Saxon** term to denote an aristocratic retainer of a king or nobleman, usually in a military capacity, whose services were rendered in exchange for land.



“Thane was the title given to a local royal official in medieval eastern (Lowland) Scotland, equivalent in rank to the son of an earl, who was the head of an administrative and socio-economic unit known as a shire or thanage.



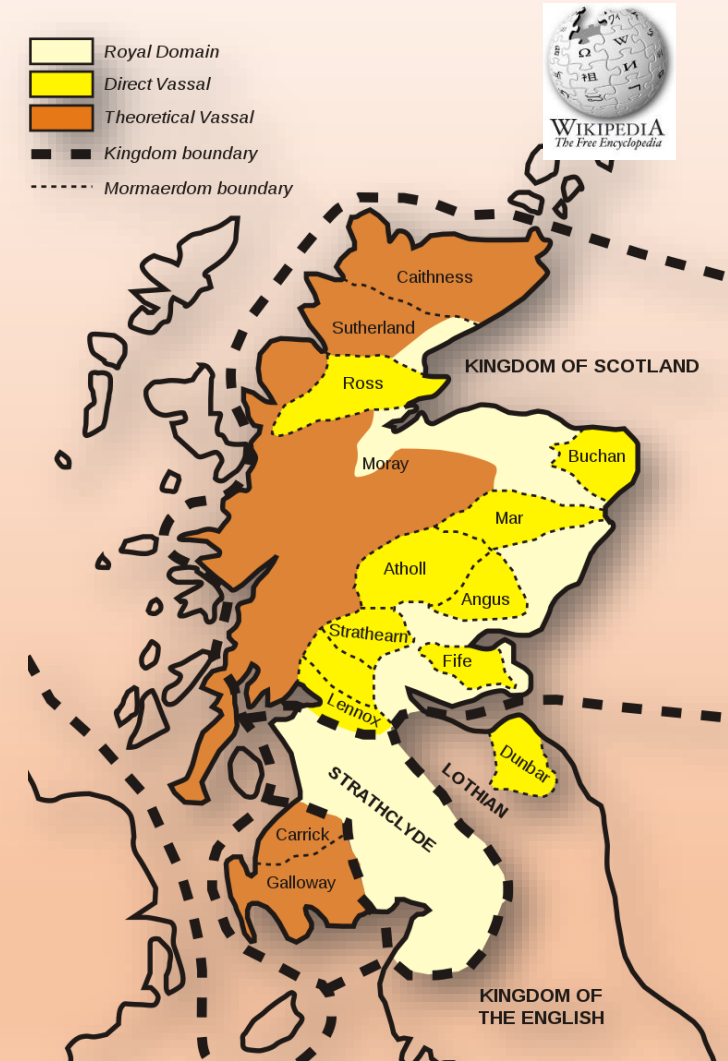
Late Medieval Scottish Peerage

King Dukes Earls Barons		Rí Mormaer Tòisiche	} Gaelic rank during 11 th century Macbeth
(Rural) Lairds Yeomen/Bonnet Lairds Husbandmen Lesser Landholders/Free Tenants	(Urban) Burgesses/Aldermen/Bailies Merchants Craftsmen Workers and Labourers		

Macbeth, Banquo, Macduff, and Ross were technically Mormaer (*maur-may-air*), not thanes, since they were Gaels leading provincial armies in service to the King (Rí). Mormaer was a Gaelic title, equivalent to an earl, that wouldn't have been understood by Elizabethan audiences. The Gaelic word for thane was *tòisiche* (prince, chief, or leader).

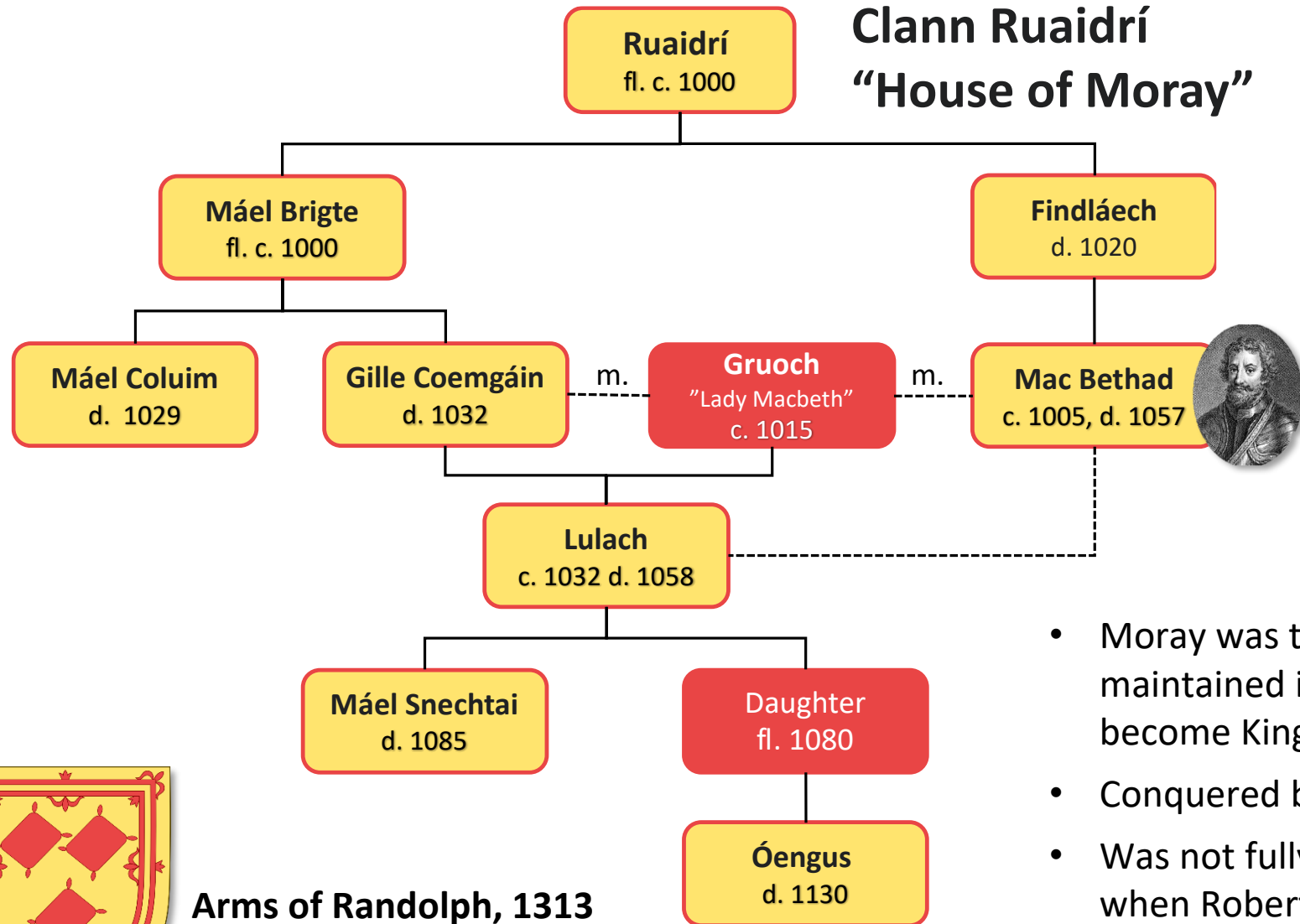
The *Mormaer*

- Mormaer was a Gaelic title in early Medieval Scotland, ranked just below King (Rí) , which meant “Great Steward”
- From the 10th to late 12th centuries, Mormaer were the leading figures within the various provinces of the Kingdom of *Alba* (Gaelic for Scotland)
- Mormaer also held military, judicial, and fiscal roles within their respective provinces, or Mormaerdoms.
- They were responsible for raising and leading the army of the province and for providing protection to those within the province
- Unlike the rank of earl in later Middle Ages, the role of the mormaer was not hereditary in nature, and they were often the most powerful member of the most powerful kin group within the province.
- Mormaer were typically elected by the heads of represented kin families through a system known as Celtic Tanistry, which originated in Ireland
- The mormaer’s power was not absolute, and he had to work in cooperation with regional *tòisiche*, bishops, and lesser chiefs of local kin groups (clans) to exercise his power

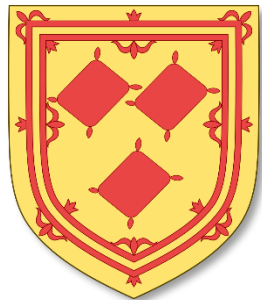


**Mormaerdoms in 13th Century
Scotland**

The Mormaers of Moray



Medieval Province of Moray



**Arms of Randolph, 1313
Earls of Moray**

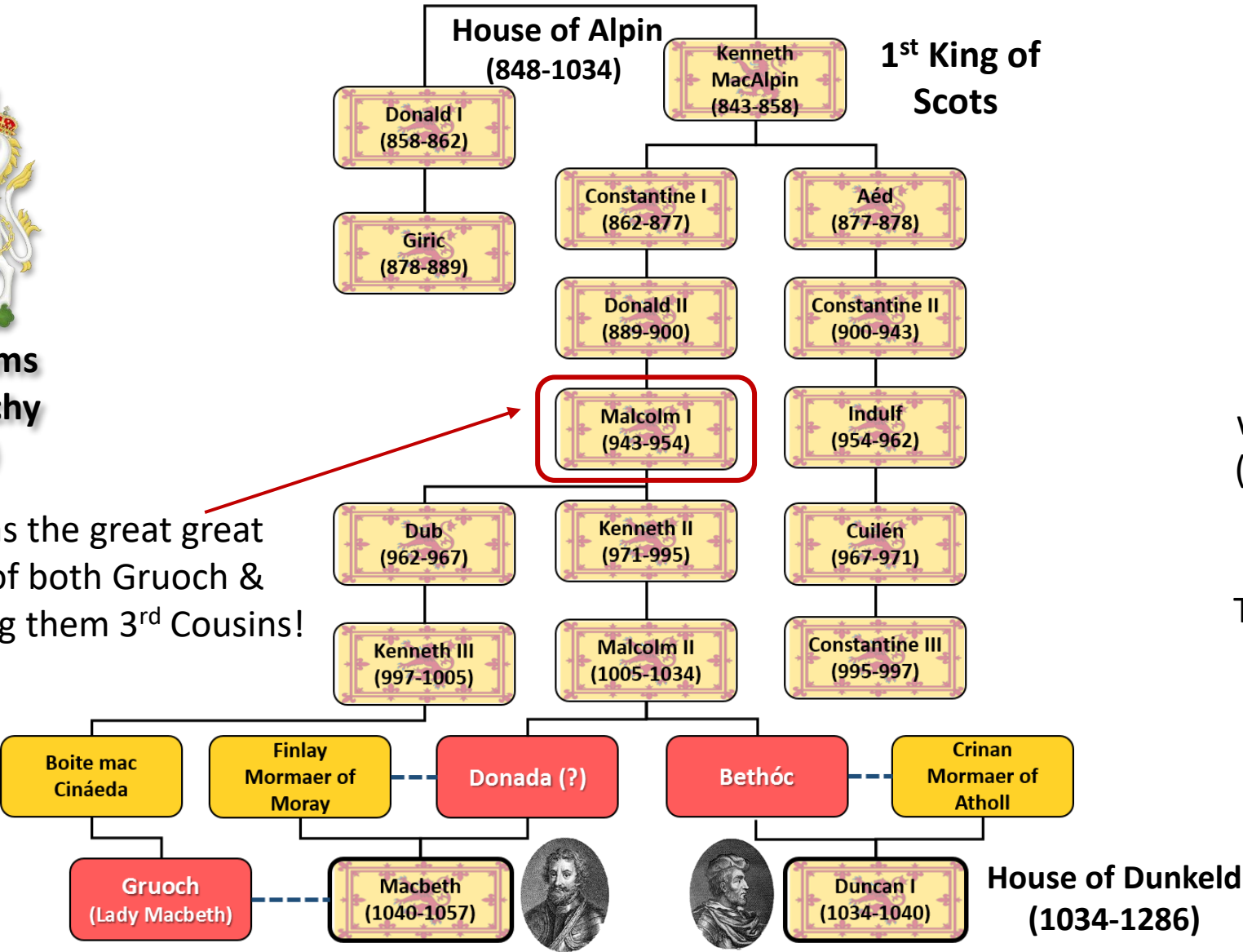
- Moray was the territory of the northern Picts who maintained independence when Kenneth MacAlpin became Kings of Scots in 844
- Conquered by David I, son of Malcolm III, in 1130
- Was not fully integrated into Scotland until 1312 when Robert I created the earldom of Moray, installing his nephew Thomas Randolph as 1st Earl

All in the Family: Macbeth's Royal Lineage



Royal Coat of Arms
Scotland Monarchy
(James VI 1603)

Malcolm I was the great great
grandfather of both Gruoch &
Macbeth making them 3rd Cousins!



Macbeth and Duncan I were cousins!

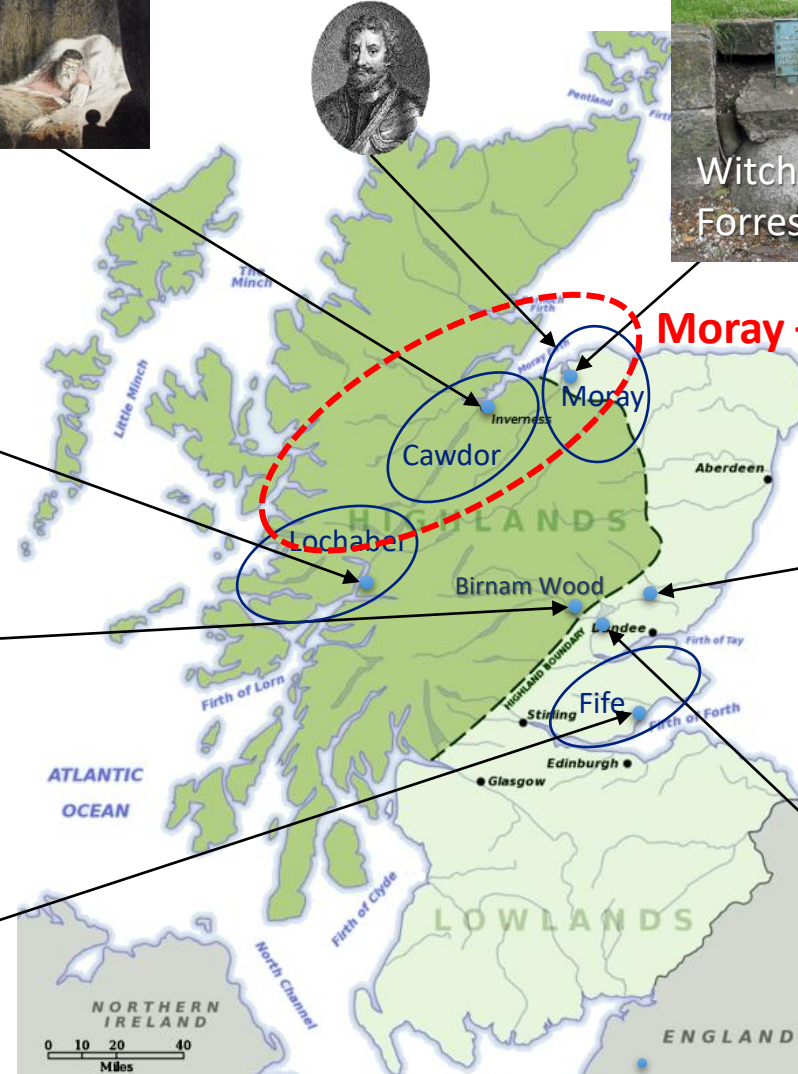


Royal Standard
(13th Century)

Prior to Malcom III,
Kings were “elected”
within the royal families
(tanistry), often through
force, rather than
granted by birthright.
There were 2 competing
branches within the
House of Alpin, with
many monarchs
changing hands by war
or assassination

Macbeth's Place in the World

At the beginning of *Macbeth*, Macbeth, Thane of Glamis, & Banquo, Thane of Lochaber, are returning victorious from a battle near Forres with the allied forces of Norway (Vikings) & Ireland and the rebel Macdonwald, who is loyal to the traitorous Thane of Cawdor



Moray – 11th Century



***Macbeth*: Confusing Mix of Fact & Fiction**

Shakespeare's <i>Macbeth</i>	Historical Macbeth
Macbeth is given title Thane of Glamis	Macbeth was Mormaer (Earl) of Moray. Glamis was a 12 th century thanage within the Mormaerdom of Angus
Duncan is portrayed as strong, wise, and elderly king, with two grown sons, Malcolm and Donalbain	Duncan I was young (age 39 at death) and considered to be a weak and ineffectual ruler. His sons were ages ~9 and ~8
Macbeth stabs Duncan in his sleep in Inverness	Macbeth kills Duncan in battle near Elgin & Forres, in Moray
Macbeth kills the rebel Macdonwald in battle	In Holinshed's Chronicles, Macdonwald, knowing he would be executed, retreats home and kills family and himself
Macbeth has no legitimate claim to throne	Both Macbeth and his wife, Gruoch, were descendants of Kenneth MacAlpin, 1 st King of Scots; Macbeth was also grandson of Malcolm II and cousin of Duncan I
Macbeth is a tyrannical & evil leader corrupted by his lust for power and rules for only one year	Macbeth was considered a wise king with strong leadership qualities and ruled successfully for 17 years
Banquo is a noble and loyal man, resisting evil, in contrast to Macbeth	In Holinshed's Chronicles, Banquo is shown as exact opposite and was an accomplice in Duncan's murder.
Macbeth is defeated by forces led by Malcom and his uncle Siward at Dunsinane, and is killed by Macduff who severs his head and presents to Malcolm in 1041	Macbeth is ambushed by forces led by Malcom in battle at Lumphanan in Aberdeenshire in 1057, and is mortally wounded in the process (Siward had previously died in 1055)
Malcom assumes throne after Macbeth's death	Gruoch's son from previous marriage, Lulach, assumes throne, but is assassinated by Malcolm 7 months later

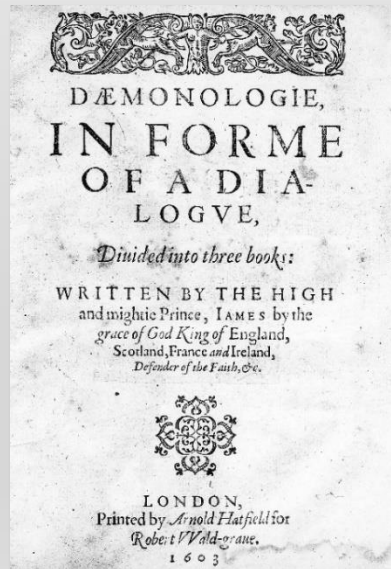
Witches & Witchcraft in *Macbeth*

"By the pricking of my thumbs, something wicked this way comes"

- The three witches, or weird sisters, came from Holinshed's Chronicles, but were altered, partially to instill trepidation in the audience, and partially to please James I
- Holinshed's depiction portrayed them as nymphs or fairies, which were regarded as goddesses or enchantresses in nature, and possessed a great deal of youthful beauty.
- Shakespeare transforms the weird sisters into ugly, androgynous hags, with a distinctly more sinister role



"Double, double toil and trouble; Fire burn and cauldron bubble" Act IV, I



Daemonologie, In Forme of a Dialogue, Divided into three books: By the High and Mighty Prince, James (VI of Scotland)

- Shakespeare depiction of the weird sisters was likely heavily influenced by two sources:
 1. **Daemonologie** – book on demonology and black arts written by James I (VI) in 1597, to justify persecution of witches in Christian Society
 2. **Discoverie of Witchcraft** – skeptical expose on witchcraft by Reginald Scot in 1584, arguing persecution was un-Christian and irrational
- Scot's *Discoverie* provided vivid descriptions of the witches, while James's *Daemonologie* was a source for many quotes, incantations, and rituals attributed to the weird sisters.
- James was obsessed with the threat posed by witches. He attended the North Berwick witch trials, which were the first trials in Scotland under the Witchcraft Act of 1563, and personally supervised the torture of women accused of being witches

Women in Medieval Scotland

“Bring forth men-children only, for thy undaunted mettle should compose nothing but males”

- Medieval Scotland was a patriarchal society, with women having little or no legal standing. Only widows were able to own land and represent themselves in law.
- In literary source, women were often portrayed as passive subjects for love and inspiration for great deeds of knights. However, in both Hollinshed’s and Shakespeare’s story, women, represented by the witches and Lady Macbeth, play a more scheming and beguiling role by manipulating Macbeth into usurping the Scottish throne.
- The only women for who biographical details exist from the Middle Ages were members of the royal houses of Scotland, either as princess or queen consorts (wives of kings)
- The first queen consort recorded as “queen” was princess Margaret of Wessex (England) who wed Malcom III around 1070. She had great influence over Malcolm, and did much to anglicize the Scottish court
- Only one reigning Scottish Queen in this period, the uncrowned and short-lived Margaret (died age 7), Maid of Norway (1283-90) Granddaughter of Alexander III, the last monarch from the House of Dunkeld
- Girls of nobility were taught in nunneries, which were few and far between prior to Queen Margaret, who brought English monastics to Scotland
- Woman of nobility usually married young, as early as age 12, whereas rural women often left home in their teens to be domestic servants, postponing marriage until their 20’s.



Lady Gruoch seeking the protection of Macbeth.



St. Margaret of Scotland, first King’s wife (Malcolm III) to be recorded as “queen” (1070-1093)

What's for Dinner?

"Sweet remembrance! Now good digestion wait on appetite, And health on both!"

In Act III, Macbeth invites his Lords and Lady Macbeth to a royal banquet, where he sees Banquo's ghost sitting in his place. While Macbeth was freaking out, what was everybody else eating & drinking?

There are not many written records from the 11th century as to the type of food that would have been eaten, but it probably did not vary significantly from the late middle ages where more records exist.

Scotland's temperate climate, abundance of indigenous game species, and proximity to the ocean provided an abundance of food for Scottish nobility:

- Wild game: venison, boar, rabbit/hare, grouse/pheasant
- Domesticated animals: lamb/mutton, cattle/beef
- Seafood: herring, salmon, haddock
- Haggis: pudding made from sheep's pluck (minced heart, liver, and lungs) and stuffed in its stomach with oats, suet & spices
- Dairy: various cheeses
- Fruit: various wild berries
- Bread/Porridge: from oats or barley
- Drink: beer, ale, mead (alcoholic drink distilled from honey), distilled spirits (modern Scotch whisky only goes back to the 15th century)



Macbeth seeing the Ghost of Banquo,
Theodore Chasseriau 1854



Scottish Clan System

- The Scottish clans were a system of family groupings, which began to emerge in the 11th century, about the time of Macbeth and Malcolm III
- The word clan comes from the Gaelic *chlann* or *clann*, which means children or descendants. Clans had chiefs who took on responsibility of governance & security of the clan. In Gaelic, *ceann-cinnidh* - 'head of the kin'
- The Scottish clan system was built around relationships, unlike the English feudal system, which was a social hierarchy built around ownership of land.
- Members of a clan were not necessary all related to the chief's family; they may have simply taken on the chief's name as a declaration of loyalty in exchange for access to clan security and resources.
- In the Highland region, clan loyalty was often stronger than loyalty to Scotland. Many brutal battles were fought between clans over land, cattle, or sleights to clan honor. The Clan Donald, in the outer Hebrides and western mainland, even established their own kingdom independent of Scotland.
- Clan system began a prolonged decline during the reign of James VI/I as he sought to assimilate the unruly Gaelic culture into civilized Lowland Scots. It then totally collapsed after the Jacobite rebellion of 1745, and the subsequent Highland Clearances of the 18th and 19th centuries.



Scottish Clan System – Early History

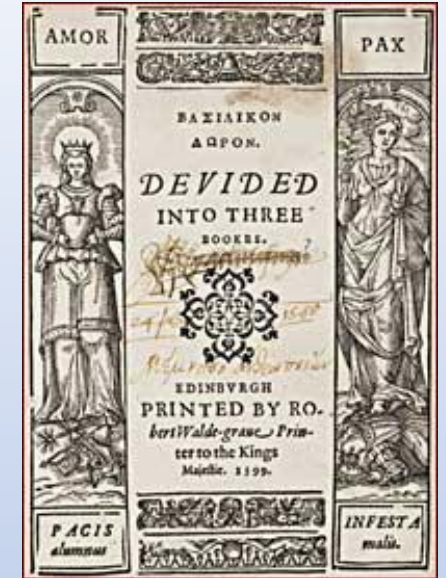
- The Scottish Clans evolved from Gaelic, Pictish, and Norse Viking cultures during the first millennia AD. It was during this period that Christianity and Gaelic language began to spread throughout the northern and western parts of Scotland to become the dominant religion and language
- Around the 8th century, regional alliances began to form among the Scots and Picts due primarily to security concerns from constant Norse Viking raids.
- These alliances formed the early clans, which were led by a king or chief who was elected by the family heads (Celtic tanistry). The geography of the Highlands and coastal regions created many isolated enclaves, which encouraged local political development, independent of central royal control
- After the death of Macbeth and subsequent reign of Malcom III, a recognizable clan system began to emerge. Malcom's wife, Margaret, an Anglo-Saxon, convinced him to abandon existing system of tanistry and adopt the English feudal system in the Scottish court, which transferred rights and land ownership through eldest male birthright (primogeniture).
- Shakespeare acknowledges this in the final scene of *Macbeth* where Malcom tells his kinsman and thanes that they will "*henceforth be earls, the first that ever Scotland in such honor named*"
- Thanks to Margaret's initiatives, the Malcolm dynasty also ushered in Old English, and later Scots, as the dominant language of the Scottish court and Lowland regions.
- The differences in language & culture, and political independence of the clans set the stage for ongoing conflict between the powerful Gaelic speaking clans and the English-speaking Royal courts
- Attempts by Scottish monarchs to bring the Clans under heel reached a tipping point with the accession of James VI to the Scottish throne in 1567 (1583), and then English throne as James I in 1603

“Civilizing” the Clans

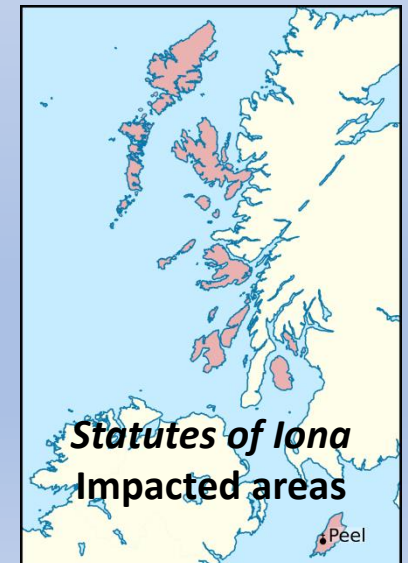
- There was long standing effort by the Stewart Kings to impose tighter control on the clans, but it wasn't until after James VI gained full control of the government from the regents in 1583 that the task began in earnest.
- In 1597 James VI wrote his political manifesto, *Basilikon Doron* (“Royal Gift”), where he described 2 types of Highlander: barbarous but capable of reform; or ‘all-utterly’ barbarous and beyond redemption.

Key Actions

- Outlawed tanistry and forced Highland chiefs to make frequent court visits to Edinburgh
 - Held Clan Chiefs personally accountable for their follower's behavior under pain of heavy fines and legal proceedings
 - **Instituted ‘Plantations’** – planting of Lowland colonies among the Highland clans to reform and civilize those so inclined and root out and remove the more stubborn type
 - **Statutes of Iona 1609** – restricted the carrying of pistols and muskets and sale and importation of wine & whisky, banned traveling bards, and compelled eldest child of clan chiefs and gentry (owners of > 60 head of cattle) to be educated in the Lowlands.
 - **Education Act of 1616** - classified Gaelic as an “Irish language” and principal cause of barbarity and incivility in the Highlands and prohibited it from being taught in schools
 - He declared bearing the surname “Macgregor” a capital crime in order to subdue one of the more troublesome and “irredeemable” clans.
- While the death of Macbeth may have heralded the rise of the clans, the reign of James VI/I arguably marked the beginning of their end



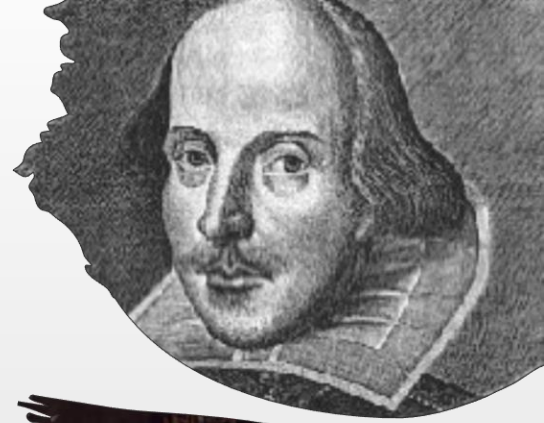
Title Page *Basilikon Doron*



Summary - Why *Macbeth*?

Why did Shakespeare write *Macbeth* and why did he specifically write a largely fictional portrayal of the real 11th century Scottish king?

- In Shakespeare's time everything had its place in society, reflected in concepts such as feudalism & primogeniture, and the Divine Right of Kings. *Macbeth* was an assurance to James I if this is disturbed, then there will be dire consequences.
- Duncan's natural place is to be king and succeeded by his sons. Macbeth's ambition, and that of his wife, encourages him to murder Duncan and usurp the throne and so upset this natural balance. Macbeth's ruthless portrayal further validated James I prejudicial views of Gaelic culture and by extension, the Highland Clans.
- Macbeth's seeming invincibility, as prophesized by the evil witches, is in fact his fateful and inevitable downfall. *Macbeth* as such serves as a warning to those who would challenge the Divine Right of Kings. This warning was also thought to be an attempt to further dissuade attacks against James I after the failed Gunpowder Plot of 1605.
- Shakespeare also altered the history of Macbeth for political reasons. According to Scottish history of the time (from the English perspective), Duncan was not a good king and his overthrow by Macbeth and Banquo led to stability in Scotland. Shakespeare needed to alter this history to appease James I, who also claimed ancestry from Banquo.
- To the English, the end of Macbeth's reign also marked an inflection point in Scottish history. His successor, Malcolm III, through his marriage to the later sainted Anglo-Saxon Princess Margaret, helped usher Scotland out of the dark ages by initiating the anglicization of the Scottish court, culminating with a Scottish monarch on the English throne 500 years later.





Macbeth's Scotland - Conclusions

- The real 11th century King Macbeth bears little resemblance to the Macbeth of Shakespeare's play. Macbeth's seizing of the Scottish crown in 1040 was well within the norms and customs of the time and there is no indication of any associated controversy in the contemporaneous records
- Macbeth's reign was also marked by 14 years of relative peace and stability until 1054 when he was faced with an English invasion, led by Siward, Earl of Northumbria, and then later killed in battle by the future Malcom III in 1057
- Shakespeare's unflattering portrayal was largely based on the available histories of the time, which were written several hundred years after the fact from a highly biased English perspective. Biases which persist even to this day within both England and Scotland.
- Shakespeare's further alteration of history was likely due to three factors:
 1. To create a compelling story that would appeal to English audiences
 2. To appeal specifically to King James' interests and sentiments, and to assuage his fears of his own assassination
 3. To avoid political controversy that might offend James, the Scottish patron of his theatre group
- Even though *Macbeth* was written for King James I, it's really for all of us. Regardless of its historical inaccuracies, the themes of triumph over evil, greed, ambition, and tyranny are as relevant today as they were in Shakespeare's day.

Macbeth's Scotland Final Thoughts

- *Macbeth* is one of Shakespeare's great tragedies and its enduring popularity can be tied not only to its vivid depictions of murder, betrayal, ambition, and revenge, but also to its close association with Scotland and Scottish history.
- An understanding of Scottish history, politics, and culture of both medieval Scotland at the time of Macbeth, as well as the post Elizabethan period in which it was written, can lead to a deeper understanding and appreciation of the play and of Scotland itself.
- It is hoped that this presentation helped with that understanding and will lead to further interest in Scotland and "the Scottish Play"



CE 175



APPENDIX

BRAVEHEART

Most Inaccurate Historical Movie of All Time?

Battle of Stirling Bridge in *Braveheart* (shown here) had no bridge or river. Both the bridge and River Forth played vital roles in the historical Scottish victory.

The use of compact pike formations (schiltrons) to counter the English cavalry was actually used successfully by Robert the Bruce at Bannockburn, not Wallace at Stirling Bridge (albeit Wallace did use them unsuccessfully at Falkirk)

Painted faces were a tradition of the the 4th and 5th century Picts, not 13th century Highlanders

Tartan Kilts were not worn in 13th century Scotland. The kilt wouldn't appear until 300 years later

Sir William Wallace was a Knight and part of the Lowland gentry (lesser nobility), not a Highland commoner

And *Braveheart* was a name given to Robert the Bruce posthumously not to William Wallace



Witches Stone, Forres, Scotland



Macbeth's Scotland



BRUCE CRAIG



Pipe Major William Wilson
Eric Rigler, Bonnie Rideout

