

Recent Research on the Scottish Wars of Independence

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Four obvious ways to advance our historical knowledge and understanding

- Discover a new original document
- Discover new information in a later manuscript
- Propose a new way to read/explain an existing document
- Develop new research tools that allow you to see and use sources in different way

2. Discover new information in a later manuscript

**Chronicle in Oslo, Schøyen
Collection MS 679**

Manuscript written in early 16th cent

Fos 1v-4r

- **Early British History**

Fos 4r-5r

- **Material on Scottish origins**

Fos 5r-16v

- **List of Scottish kings (to Alexander III) expanded with material on St Margaret's English ancestors**

Fos 16v-17v

- **Descendants of David, earl of Huntingdon; and of Mael Coluim III and Margaret**

Fos 17v-24r

- **Events (chiefly Scottish) 1285–1327** (the 'Schøyen Chronicle')

The appointment of Guardians after Alexander III's death in 1286

In the 'Schøyen Chronicle' (Oslo, Schøyen Collection MS 679, fos 17v-24r)

- *Anno gracie m^o cc^o lxxx^o vi^o ad quindenam post Pascha ordinatum est parliamentum apud Sconam ubi congregati sunt tam maiores quam minores [blank] eiusdem vii custodes videlicet episcoporum Sancti Andree Glasguensis Dunkeldensis, Duncanum comitem de Fyfe, Alexandream comitem de Buchane, Johannem Comyn', Jacobum senescalum Scocie.*
- 'In the year of grace 1286, at the quindene of Easter [28 April], a parliament was called at Scone where greater and lesser men assembled. [] seven guardians, namely the bishops of St Andrews, Glasgow, and Dunkeld, Duncan earl of Fife, Alexander earl of Buchan, John Comyn, and James Stewart.

The appointment of Guardians after Alexander III's death in 1286

In *Gesta Annalia* § 68 (used to be thought of as part of Fordun's chronicle)

- *Regebatur tamen sex custodibus videlicet domino Willelmo Fraser episcopo Sancti Andree, Duncano comite de Fyf, Johanne comite de Buchan, ex parte boreali citra Forth deputatis; Roberto episcopo Glasguensi, domino Johanne Cumyne, et Jacobo senescallo Scocie ex parte australi aque de Forth, constitutis*
- [After Alexander III's death the kingdom] 'was governed by six guardians, namely William Fraser, bishop of St Andrews, Duncan earl of Fife, John earl of Buchan, deputed from the northern region this side of the Forth; Robert bishop of Glasgow, Sir John Comyn, and James Stewart appointed from the southern region of the Forth'

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- ODD** **WRONG**

The appointment of Guardians after Alexander III's death in 1286

In ***Gesta Annalia* § 81** (used to be thought of as part of Fordun's chronicle)

- *Anno Domini MCCLXXXVI, in parlamento tento apud Sconam die secunda mensis Aprilis, per clerum et communitatem totius regni Scocie electi sunt VI custodes, de quibus paulo superius sufficienter dictum est*
- 'In the year of Our Lord 1286, in a parliament held at Scone on 2 April, six guardians were elected by the clergy and community of the whole kingdom of Scotland, about which enough was said a little further up [in *Gesta Annalia*]'

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DATE CANNOT BE RIGHT

(need 40 days to summon parliament after Alexander III's death on 19 March)

The seventh Guardian

- William Fraser, bishop of St Andrews (d. 20 Aug. 1297)
- Robert Wishart, bishop of Glasgow (d. 26 Nov (?). 1316)
- **William, bishop of Dunkeld**
- Duncan, earl of Fife (killed 1289)
- Alexander Comyn, earl of Buchan (d. 1289)
- John Comyn, lord of Badenoch (d. about 1302)

William bishop of Dunkeld

- definitely died sometime between 18 May 1285 and 10 April 1288
- **25 September 1286**: date of the first extant document in the name of guardians (Joseph Stevenson (ed.), *Documents Illustrative of the History of Scotland*, 2 vols (Edinburgh 1870), i. 25)—**only six are named**

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- **Solution: William bishop of Dunkeld died sometime between 28 April 1286 and 25 September 1286**

Why does it matter if there were seven rather than six guardians?

- If there were **six** guardians, with idea of ‘three from north, three from south’, then it looks like they were innovating, and not following any particular model
- If there were **seven**, then the uneven number could be significant:
 - June 1264 parliament in England: government handed to council of **nine**, headed by Simon de Montfort and two others
 - ‘**Community of realm**’: a phrase made famous by baronial reform movement in England 1258–1265
 - Leading Scottish lords participated in baronial war: e.g., Robert Bruce (competitor), John Comyn (father of the guardian)

New insight into the political ideas of Scottish leaders, and where these ideas came from

- Direct link with ideas of baronial-led government that exploded in England in 1250s and 1260s adds new dimension to our understanding of resistance to Edward I
 - Treaty of Birgham (1290) aimed to secure Scottish independence
 - Treaty with France v. Edward I (1295)
 - Rising of 1297
 - Armed resistance 1298-1304

You can read about this at:

- Dauvit Broun, 'A recently discovered chronicle of the Wars of Independence', and 'New information on the Guardians' appointment in 1286 and on Wallace's rising in 1297'
- <http://www.breakingofbritain.ac.uk/blogs/feature-of-the-month/august-2011-a-recently-discovered-chronicle/> and <http://www.breakingofbritain.ac.uk/blogs/feature-of-the-month/september-2011-the-guardians-in-1286-and-wallaces-uprising-in-1297/>