

Symposium marking the quatercentenary of the birth of Queen Anne of Denmark

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On December 12th 1974 the Department of Educational Studies held a symposium to mark the quatercentenary of the birth of Queen Anne of Denmark. Mr and Mrs Basil Skinner arranged the evening, starting with a welcoming buffet supper of soup and smørrebrød and lager. The intellectual fare that followed was equally satisfying.

The chairman, Professor Gordon Donaldson, was the first speaker of the evening. He described Denmark and Scotland in the time of James VI and set the scene for the talks to follow. His own summary of his talk is printed after this note.

John Simpson then discussed the later career of James, 4th Earl of Bothwell, Mary Queen of Scots's third husband. After Mary's defeat in 1567, Bothwell escaped to Norway via Shetland (where his pursuers nearly captured him). His reasons for going to Scandinavia are not entirely clear, but he may, as he later claimed, have hoped to get the king of Denmark-Norway's support in return for promising to return Orkney and Shetland to him. In Norway, Bothwell's problems included the appearance of Anna Throndsen, who claimed she had become his plighted wife during his previous Scandinavian visit. Once taken to Denmark, Bothwell's problem was that he seemed too valuable a pawn in international politics ever to be released again. The horror stories about his final years in captivity may not be true; but the story that the mummified corpse in Faarevejle church is Bothwell's, may well be.

After an informal interlude of slides illustrating Denmark in the 16th Century, Mr E. Cowan gave a lecture at short notice in place of Mrs Larner, who was ill. He spoke on James VI's witch-scare and the Danish connection. He argued that James imitated the Danish custom of identifying witches with peasants in order to isolate political enemies, in particular Francis Stewart, Earl of Bothwell. The latter was himself closely involved with the Catholic faction in Scotland. His well-

known eccentric behaviour, coupled with a spell in Italy, and an association with the Kerr earls of Lothian, who commissioned the painting of a 'witchcraft ceiling' at Prestongrange House in 1581 (now in Napier College), were all sufficient to implicate him further. Although he was not executed, socio-economic conditions in Scotland ensured that the witch-craze took root and grew throughout the following century.

The gratitude and pleasure of the whole audience was summed up in warm applause and a vote of thanks to all the contributors to the symposium.

A Survey of Scoto-Danish Relations

Gordon Donaldson

For many centuries Denmark ruled Norway and also what is now southern Sweden. Thus the timber which came to Scotland from Norway, the iron from Sweden, the corn from the Baltic, and on the other hand the cloth, skins, coal, salt and fish which the Scots exported, nearly all meant links between Scotland and Denmark. The figures for the Tolls collected from ships passing through Öresund show that traffic increased appreciably during the reign of James VI.

Scots who crossed the North Sea to trade formed communities in Malmo, Halsingborg, Helsingor, and Copenhagen. Scottish professional men, including ecclesiastics, also migrated, and, especially from about 1580, Scots began to serve in some numbers in the Danish army. Knowledge of Danish affairs must have been widespread in Scotland, and there is evidence that in the era of the reformation the Scottish protestants studied Danish example and profited by it.

Marriages between the royal houses of countries so closely linked began before Norway came under the Danish crown, when Erik of Norway married first the daughter of Alexander III and then the sister of Robert I. James III married Margaret, daughter of Christian I, and daughters of Christian II were proposed as brides for James V.

Underlying the marriages was a lot of meaningful diplomacy. The cession of the Western Isles to Scotland by Norway in 1266 was on condition that the Scots should pay an annual sum of 100 merks. Though seldom paid, this 'Annual of Norway', inherited by the Danish kings, was not extinguished until the marriage treaty of James III in 1468. That treaty initiated another 'guid ganging plea', in the shape of the pledge to Scotland of the Dano-Norwegian crown rights to Orkney (and, in 1469, Shetland as well). The repeated attempts by the Danes to redeem the islands figured in the negotiations preceding the marriage of James VI and Anne.

James IV, in fulfilment of a treaty with Denmark in 1492, assisted his uncle, King Hans, against rebellious subjects and also against Lübeck. Christian II, again confronted by troublesome subjects, likewise sought and probably received Scottish help. It was, however, a one-sided business, for the Scots asked in vain for Danish help in the campaign which led to Flodden, and again at the time of the English invasions of the 1540s.

When James VI crossed the sea in 1589 to fetch his bride, he spent six months in Danish territory. Anne's brother, Christian IV, was at James's court in London in 1606 and again in 1614, and another brother, the Duke of Holstein, visited Edinburgh in 1598. Danish envoys were in Edinburgh in 1593, and in 1594 Sir Peter Young, the king's almoner, went to Denmark to announce the birth of Prince Henry. Young, who found that the *History of Scotland* published in 1582 by George Buchanan, his one-time colleague as tutor to the king, had found its way to Denmark, where it had been criticised as inaccurate, urged the preparation of a Danish History, and may have been influential in the appointment of a Danish historiographer royal. A Danish edition of the works of Sir David Lindsay (who had been an envoy to Denmark in 1548) appeared in 1591. Among James's companions on his own visit to marry Anne was William Shaw, his master of Works, who no doubt studied the Danish buildings he saw. Certainly some of the architecture of James VI's Scotland was to show signs of being influenced by the work of that great builder, his brother-in-law, Christian IV.