

The book does not aim to supercede more traditional historiography for the four nations concerned, but seeks rather to provide an alternative perspective, and in so doing to set new questions and suggest relevant comparisons. There are no separate chapters for individual countries. Rather each chapter considers a topic in the wider British context. Headings include The Aristocratic Nexus, The Expansion of Royal Government, Kings and Princes, Jurisdiction and Conquest: The Reign of Edward I, and Political Communities. The chapter on Kings and Princes begins memorably 'In 1100 the British Isles contained many and varied kings; by 1270 the rulers who had a colourable claim to royal rank had declined sharply in number, and the definition of what made a king had narrowed decisively.' The chapter on Jurisdiction and Conquest allows the Scottish reader to set Edward I's aspirations and objectives in Scotland beside his dealings with the Irish and the Welsh, and also his own subordinate relationship, as lord of Gascony, with Philip the Fair of France. However, whether greater insight leads to a more sympathetic view of Edward is another question.

Dr. Frame is too modest when he suggests that the book can be read as a series of essays. It is a carefully planned, well integrated whole which skilfully explores the two main organising themes set out in the introduction: the impact on the British Isles of the dominant power within them, at first the Anglo-Norman aristocracy, and then the English state; and second, the comparisons and contrasts to be drawn by studying the various component elements and their fate.

Both books here reviewed contain the additional bonus of maps and genealogies attractively set out and a detailed bibliography. They can be thoroughly recommended.

W.D.H. Sellar

***The Mackie Monographs: Scotland and Scandinavia 800-1800*, Grant Simpson ed., John Donald Publishers Ltd., Edinburgh, 1990. 154pp. (Price £20.00).**

Dr James R.M. Mackie of Glenmillan graduated from Aberdeen University in 1932. He pursued a career as a consultant psychiatrist in England but returned to Aberdeenshire on his retirement in 1971 and, when he died in 1982, he left a bequest to the University of Aberdeen for the establishment of the Mackie Symposia for the study of 'Scotland's contacts with other lands and Scotland's history set in a wide international context', as noted in the Introduction to the volume. *Scotland and Scandinavia 800-1800* is the first of the Mackie Monographs and we can look forward to further explorations of Scotland's links with other countries.

The editor, Grant Simpson, opens with a disarming admission that no attempt has been made to produce comprehensive coverage and one can sympathise with the impossibility of being comprehensive in such a limited space while regretting the necessity of selectivity. The volume contains several extremely interesting articles but one has the impression that cohesion is externally imposed by the heavy chronological hand of the editor.

Contacts between Scotland and Scandinavia during the 'Viking' period are dealt with in the two opening chapters and reference is made in the Introduction to the fact that this particular period of contact is reasonably well-researched elsewhere and has, therefore, been given less than its due prominence in the present volume. The biased reviewer does, however, regret the

absence of detailed comparative study of the place-names in the Northern Isles and southwestern Norway.

The task of setting the scene is in the able hands of Magnus Magnusson who conveys a very positive view of the exodus of Scandinavian emigrants across the North Sea to enjoy the 'Golden Age of power and prosperity' in the Northern Isles. Magnusson includes a tribute to the great scholar Snorri Sturluson and I found myself frequently harking back to one of the sentiments he expressed as I read further in the book. He said, of Snorri, that 'He interpreted the past in terms of his own present, as we all tend to do: history is not in the sense of what actually happened, but as a composite perception of the past', and none the worse for that.

Rosemary Power, in her chapter on 'Scotland in the Norse Sagas', ranges over comments made by various saga writers and annalists on parts of Scotland which were within the Norse sphere of influence, drawing a vivid picture of the nature and extent of contact between the Norse and the indigenous inhabitants. The changing nature of that contact, in the centuries from 1300-1700, is ably profiled in Brian Smith's contribution to the volume. He argues fiercely and convincingly against the notion that Shetland society was ever an exact replica of either contemporaneous Norwegian or Scottish society but had its own internally developed legal system and institutions.

In the next article, we move from state to church and from Shetland to Orkney or, more accurately, the Scandinavian Baltic area, as Orkney bishops, finding themselves unable to take possession of their Orkney diocese, became suffragans elsewhere. This is an interesting chapter in the history of the late mediaeval church in the north and one which merits further investigation.

On occasion, in the course of reading the various articles in the volume, one had the impression that a Scandinavian scholar had been asked to extend his/her research westward to include Scotland and vice versa in an eastward direction. No such problem afflicts the two juxtaposed articles by Rikke Agnete Olsen and Geoffrey Stell who each examines 'Kings, Nobles and Buildings of the Later Middle Ages' in her/his own country and leaves the comparison largely to the reader. The resultant overview of 'the architecture of power politics' – to borrow Stell's phrase – rewards study.

Further consideration of related material might have led the editor to break the tyranny of chronology and juxtapose articles on trade and soldiering. David Ditchburn, Mackie Research Fellow in Aberdeen, contributed an excellent chapter on Scandinavian trade with Scotland in the Later Middle Ages which gains from being read immediately prior to Arved Lillehammer's chapter on trade contacts between Scotland and the Stavanger area in the 17th century. The validity of Ditchburn's conclusion that trade between the two areas was limited only by the lack of exchangeable merchandise is borne out by the vigorous 17th century exchange of goods between Scotland and the Stavanger area when the Scottish market demanded 'Boards, Beams and Barrel-Hoops'. Similarly, Alf Åberg's chapter on Scottish soldiers in the Swedish armies (16th & 17th centuries) can be read in conjunction with Göran Behre's 'Gothenburg in Stuart War Strategy 1649-1760'. Åberg's article is disappointing from a Scottish point of view in that although we are given the names of the Scottish mercenaries who joined the Swedish forces and told where they fought, they remain shadowy, unfleshed characters whose motives in enlisting are unclear. Göran Behre's Scots, on the other hand,

refugeed to Gothenburg after the Jacobite risings and Behre outlines the subsequent fluctuating and ultimately unfruitful negotiations between Sweden and the Jacobites.

The volume concludes with two very different chapters on 18th century contacts. John Simpson pursues some intellectual contacts between Scotland and Scandinavia. It is invidious to select from a selection, but Thomas Telford, who planned and helped to construct the Göta Canal, is one of the notable people mentioned. Simpson ends with a tantalising glimpse of intellectual traffic flowing in the opposite direction – from Scandinavia to Scotland – and one hopes that he will pursue the topic in future.

Lee Soltow's study of 'The Distribution of Private Wealth in Land in Scotland and Scandinavia in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries' is impressively detailed, particularly for the Scandinavian countries. It forms a fitting conclusion to a very stimulating volume which whets the appetite for more investigation of links between Scotland and its Scandinavian neighbours.

Doreen Waugh

R.P. Fereday: *The Orkney Balfours*. Tempus Reparatum Monographs (series editor: John W. Hedges), *Tempus Reparatum* Archaeological and Historical Associates Ltd., 4 Cyprus Terrace, Oxford OX2 8AT, 1990 303pp.

Ray Fereday dedicates his book to the memory of the late Evan McGillivray, former Orkney County Librarian, and in his introduction, William P.L. Thomson also draws attention to McGillivray's foresight in preserving 50,000 documents, then at Balfour Castle, from the flames. Although the appointment of an Orkney archivist came after his retirement, Mr McGillivray was also influential in this, and the Balfour Papers remain a jewel in the archive's crown. Just how lustrous a jewel, and thus how just the dedication, is shown by Dr. Fereday's book.

At the end of his previous major work *Orkney Feuds and the '45*, Ray Fereday left William Balfour of Trenaby and other Jacobitically-inclined Orkney lairds hiding in caves from Government troops. Now the Balfours move to centre stage, and we are shown the gradual repair of William's fortunes and the growth of the family's influence in the person of William's second son, Thomas Balfour of Elwick. The story is an extraordinarily rich one. Both played a significant role in the Orkney politics of the time. William helped to engineer the end of the earl of Morton's influence and served, with increasing disenchantment, Morton's successor as superior Sir Thomas Dundas of Kerse. There is fascinating detail of his protracted and difficult period as factor to the Dundas estates in Shetland. He and Thomas Balfour were in turn involved in events leading to the Dundases' political eclipse in the North. The confident and optimistic Thomas married well, built up large estates and entertained curious dreams of military glory which collapsed in humiliation when his Orkney and Shetland Fencibles were forcibly disbanded.

But there is much more to it than that; around these two major figures circled a host of others. There are Thomas's brothers – John, the Nabob who held the markers of the Rajah of Tanjore, and David, the Edinburgh lawyer; his sons – the rakish Edward, killed in action in the