

Penman MA (2012) The Cult of Saints and the Virgin Mary in Medieval Scotland, Book review of: The Cult of Saints and the Virgin Mary in Medieval Scotland, edited by Steve Boardman and Eila Williamson, Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer Ltd, 2010, pp. 226. ISBN:9781843835622, *English Historical Review*, CXXVII (526), pp. 685-687. DOI: 10.1093/ehr/ces101

This is the peer reviewed version of this article

The Cult of Saints and the Virgin Mary in Medieval Scotland, edited by Steve Boardman and Eila Williamson, Boydell & Brewer, 2010, ISBN 9781843835622.

This interesting volume is the second of two essay collections/conference proceedings issued to complement Edinburgh University's AHRC-funded *Survey of Dedications of Saints in Medieval Scotland* and its on-line database project: see <http://www.scha.ed.ac.uk/Research/saints/>. As a whole this endeavour is a worthy Scottish companion to the *Trans-national Database and Atlas of Saints Cults* directed by Graham Jones at Leicester.

Where the earlier Scottish publication offered a variety of case-studies of saints' cults across the Celtic realm, this sequel focuses upon Marian dedications and a (perhaps slightly less) varied range of 'insular' and Universal cults in the later medieval Scottish kingdom. Ten papers are book-ended by valuable methodological and historiographical overviews. Thomas Owen Clancy opens by providing a cautious framework of paradigms for investigating the foundation and development of insular cults (such as that of St Ninian, arguably the most popular of native cults in medieval Scotland): from 'foundational', 'proprietary', 'missionary' and/or 'reliquary' cults enlarged through mechanisms of 'organisational', 'political', 'national/ethnic' and/or 'emigratory' motives; but bearing in mind the complex forces of 'kindred', 'personal'/patronal and genuine 'devotional' influences on cult development. This paper also illustrates the pros and cons of place-name evidence in cult studies and is alive to the possibility of cult fragmentation and localisation into multiple ('fissile') saints. Then to close David Ditchburn presents a thought-provoking revision of Monsignor David McRoberts' post-war model of an increasingly nationalist cult of Scottish saints: this reconsideration highlights Scots' strong veneration of Christo-

centric, Passion and Marian dedications c.1200-c.1560 alongside a popular core of insular saints and makes fascinating use of alternative sources such as peasant and ship names.

Scotland's experience of the Europe-wide late-medieval intensification of the cult of the Virgin is explored in detail in three regional case studies. Mark Hall brings a curator's inter-disciplinary approach to illuminate the depth of Marian veneration in and around medieval Perth, drawing in particular on archaeological evidence (e.g. ampulla from Our Lady of Walsingham) as well as other material survivals (e.g. seals, the Ave Maria bell of c.1340 and a 15th century chandelier depicting Our Lady of the Sun in St John's parish church). Sim R. Innes explores Marian devotion across the Gàidhealtachd, Gaelic northern and western Scotland, sampling both text and sculpture. Then the late Audrey-Beth Fitch surveys royal, noble and urban patronage and extant imagery in associating Jesus and St Mary in the century before the Scottish Reformation (1560), especially through the role of Queens and Queen Mothers.

The foregoing essays are more eclectic than Matthew Hammond's systematic and rewarding assessment of Crown and noble monastic house dedications in the 12th and 13th centuries. This posits a similar shift in this period from dynastic favour for early insular cults - such as those of Columba, Drostan (Deer abbey, Aberdeenshire), Serf (Lochleven priory, Kinrosshire), Andrew and Cuthbert - towards Christo-centric and Marian dedications. Notably compelling is the influence of Canterbury clerics and Scottish royals in the spread of Trinity and Holy Cross dedications (and, as older churches and cults were absorbed by the reformed Orders, co-dedications) through an interconnected *familia* of churches such as those at Dunfermline, Dunkeld, Urquhart, Scone and Holyrood. This might suggest a different Scottish experience in contrast to English and Welsh patterns, as investigated by Alison Binns (1989) who showed that

almost half of monastic dedications c.1066-1216 were to 'native' saints. However, might historical perception of this as a real shift in Scottish veneration be softened by further knowledge of contemporary altar and chapel dedications, relics and liturgy *within* these churches (admittedly hard to confirm from the relative paucity of Scottish evidence), hinting at rather more of a blending of older, insular and newer, reforming universal cults?

Three specific cult studies fill out the collection. Rachel Butter illuminates several of the paradigms outlined by Clancy in exploring St Munnu in Ireland and then Scotland, proposing key roles for the missionary abbey of Iona, Columba's hagiographer Adomnán and the later lordship of the Campbell family for the localised focus of this cult in Argyll, one most readily identified through place-name evidence (four Kilmuns!). Helen Birkett's essay is an enthralling account of the real tensions arising within the otherwise closed-cloistered Cistercian abbey of Melrose around efforts to develop a cult of Waltheof, a 12th century abbot and step-son of King David I: this highlights in particular the role of Jocelin of Furness' new life of Waltheof c.1206-7, in response to a fresh Translation of the saint's uncorrupted body (a unique relic in Scotland), only for the cult to stall by c.1240 when an inspection revealed the corpse in decay. Lastly, Steve Boardman elaborates on his earlier investigation of a short-lived political cult at Lindores abbey in Fife around David Stewart, Duke of Rothesay, the heir to the throne killed to protect the interests of his uncle Robert, Duke of Albany, in 1402. This offers fascinating insights into this potential martyr's association with veneration of the Virgin as well as popular portents (Rothesay was killed c.25-6 March, around the feast of the Annunciation, also aligned with Easter and a reported comet in 1402): there are instructive parallels drawn with political cults

in England (Montfort and Lancaster) and identification of likely ‘martyr narrative’ topos written around Rothesay preserved in contemporary chronicle accounts.

A stimulating collection, therefore, with perhaps just one odd note: only Ditchburn’s paper makes brief use of the project database of Scottish cult dedications, hinting really at its work-in-progress nature. Of the c.88 ‘Scottish’ saints identified in the *Aberdeen Breviary* - the legendary and liturgy for ‘Scottis use’ commissioned/printed during the reign of James IV (1488-1513) and the subject of a thoughtful paper here by Alan Macquarrie highlighting the early lost *vitae* and *miracula* materials this work enshrines - some 33 saints (c.38%) return no record or map location in the database. Clearly there remains ‘a great deal of work to do’ (as Clancy acknowledges) in what is a growth area in Scottish studies: this book represents a project and themes thoroughly deserving of further research investment.