SCOTS, INDIANS AND EMPIRE:
THE SCOTTISH POLITICS OF
CIVILIZATION 1519-1609*

"Thay auctouris is na worth, that sayis all peple far fra the sonne ar barbour and miserable." So declared John Bellenden's translation of Hector Boece's *Scottorum historiae* in 1531, both works being of the greatest intellectual significance for sixteenth-century Scotland. "Na region in the warld" proved to be so blasted "be distance fra the Sonne" that it could not sustain its inhabitants in health, culture and virtue. Despite Scotland's adverse northern location, the realm was a civilized country, and the *Historia* undertook to show that it had been so for a truly immense stretch of time.[1]

The work proved an immediate success. Even though it presented moral exemplars that might appear to sanction baronial revolution, James V sponsored the Bellenden translation, which eventually appeared in print under royal authority. By any standard a major cultural event for the realm, the *Historia* served throughout the century as a touchstone for virtually every Scottish intellectual, irrespective of politics or religion — appealing no less to monarchists than to monarchomachs, to Calvinists like George Buchanan and David Hume of Godscroft as well as to Catholics like David Chambers of Ormond. The late 1520s and early 1530s had been a moment of exceptional self-confidence and creativity in Scotland, and one which Boece articulated with

[1] Hector Boece, *Heir Beginnis the Hystory and Croniklis of Scotland*, trans. John Bellenden (Edinburgh, 1540?, S.T C. 3203), sigs. C5ᵛ, D2ʳ Cf. Hector Boece, *Scotorum historiae a prima gentis origine* (Paris, 1527), sigs BB7ᵛ, ll. 62-4, CC3ᵛ, ll. 62-3

compelling effectiveness. The volume spoke to central problems of Scottish identity and proved extraordinarily validating as a result.

But the underlying concerns which made the *Historia* such a success are more telling than the solutions which it proposed. More than simply being the first history of the kingdom more or less in keeping with contemporary humanist models, Boece's book addressed one of the fundamental preoccupations of early modern Scots: how to conceive of a Scottish civilization. This concern would exercise the Scottish intellect, creatively if at times also painfully, from the Aureate Age to the Age of the Enlightenment.

Here was no simple undertaking. For, among other things, a Scottish civilization necessarily denied traditional European wisdom. To come from the north — in some sense the limits of the world, both physically and mentally — was to come from a very dubious place indeed. The further north one went, the more barbarous became the peoples one encountered, and in Scotland this commonplace seemed validated by the predatory inhabitants of the northern mountains, forests and desolate isles, who were ruled through their militarized kin structures.

To think of the north often enough was to move into the dark margins of the western imagination. For traditionally, from both biblical and classical sources, the north was pictured as quintessentially the place of the primitive, the bestial, the satanic, and it is remarkable how deeply this attitude reached into European consciousness. The prophet Ezekiel had warned of the armies of Gog coming out of the north in the latter days of the world, while Aristotle had spoken of the northern peoples as less intelligent than those of the south, more given to impulse than reflection.

These attitudes enormously exercised early modern Europe. The authoritative work on the northern regions was the *Historia gentibus septentrionalibus* (1555). Written by the Swede Olaus Magnus, it portrayed at length the paganism and witchcraft of the peoples of that region and flatly stated that the Devil had his seat there, mocking the inhabitants "with unspeakable delusions". In contrast, noted Jean Bodin, the south did not so suffer. The Arabs and Moors had found evil demons to be "rare or nonexistent . . . either on account of the abundance of light from which they are thought to flee, or on account of the rarity of air

which cannot sustain them". The Edinburgh physician Patrick Anderson thought the northern peoples "barbarousely simple" and apparently understood the great outburst of Scottish witch-craft in the 1590s within such a socio-climatological framework. Even the jurist Thomas Craig, one of the most articulate defenders of Scotland's legal and cultural autonomy, agreed that barbarism and superficial Christianity characterized the far north — notably Greenland, Iceland and Finland — countries "full of apparitions, ghosts, hobgoblins, and fairies". The young James VI's *Daemonologie* duly noted of witchcraft that "this kind of abuse is thought to be most common in such wild places of the worlde as Lap-land & Fin-land, or in our North Isles of Orknay and Schet-land . . . because where the deuill findes greatest ignorance and barbaritie, there assayles he grosseliest".[2]

The association of devilry with the north had of course formed a part of European literary tradition. Chaucer could write of the Devil dwelling "fer in the north contree", while a specifically northern wind filled Archimago's wings in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. Milton spoke of dancing "With Lapland witches, while the labouring moon / Eclipses at their charms", and his *Areopagitica* opened with reflections on his own "naturall endow-ments haply not the worst for two and fifty degrees of northern latitude" which sought to dispel the ancient prejudice. Even the radical John Webster during the English Revolution dissociated his critique of the universities from northern barbarism and cold stupidity. Both John Mair and Thomas Craig, two of the finest minds of sixteenth-century Europe, felt the need to respond at surprising length to Jerome's troublesome remark about seeing *Scoti* practising that ultimate mark of the barbaric, cannibalism.[3]

[2] Ezek 38:15; Aristotle, *Politics*, vii.7 (1327b-1328a), trans. B. Jowett, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, 2 vols. (Princeton, 1984), ii, p 2107; Olaus Magnus, *Historia gentibus septentrionalibus* (Rome, 1555), trans. Bulstrode Whitelocke, *A Compendious History of the Goths, Swedes & Vandals and other Northern Nations* (London, 1658), p. 51; Jean Bodin, *Method for the Easy Comprehension of History*, trans. B. Reynolds (New York, 1945), p. 118; Patrick Anderson, "Historie of Scotland", National Library of Scotland, Adv. MS. Hist. 56/35.5.3, iii, fo 238; Thomas Craig, *Scotlands Sovereignty Asserted*, trans. G. Ripath (Edinburgh, 1695), pp 121, 359; James VI, *Daemonologie* (Edinburgh, 1597, S T.C. 14364), p. 69

[3] Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Friar's Tale*, l. 1413: *The Text of the Canterbury Tales*, ed. John M. Manly and Edith Rickert, 8 vols (Chicago, 1940), iii, p. 291; Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, II.iii.19: *The Works of Edmund Spenser: A Variorum Edition*, ed. Edwin Greenlaw *et al.*, 11 vols (Baltimore, 1932-57), ii, p. 35; John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, II.665-6: *The Poems of John Milton*, ed. John Carey and Alastair

This great commonplace inevitably informed all political and religious controversy between Scotland and England. It had become a trope standard enough to feature in French political pageantry. At Bayonne in 1565, for example, Catherine de' Medici and her sons celebrated their intended Spanish alliance with a tournament in which two groups of knights were featured. One appeared in the costumes of many nations, ancient and modern, to reflect the homage to Charles IX of the knights of all countries; the other came dressed as wild Scotsmen, demons, Turks and nymphs, thereby demonstrating the monarch's power over the realms of the savage, the mythic and the demonic. Verses for the occasion proclaimed that so long as Philip II and Charles (and his mother) were about, then neither the Spanish nor French flocks need fear the north, with its cold — and, not incidentally, heretical and demonic — mists.[4] A contemporaneous illustration of the *Escossois sauuage*, though not of the Bayonne celebrations,

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Fowler (London, 1968), pp. 539-40; J. Milton, *Areopagitica: The Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, ii, *1643-1648*, ed. Ernest Sirluck (New Haven, 1959), p 490; cf. the remark in the less well-known digression to Milton's *History of Britain*, iii: "For the Sun which we want, ripens Wits as well as Fruits; and as Wine and Oyl are Imported to us from abroad: so must ripe Understanding, and many civil Vertues, be imported into our minds from Forreign Writings . ." *Complete Prose Works*, v, *1648?-71*, ed. French Fogle (New Haven, 1971), p. 450. See also Z S Fink, "Milton and the Theory of Climatic Influence", *Mod Lang Quart.*, ii (1941), pp. 67-80; John Block Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* (Cambridge, Mass., 1981), esp. p. 85, John Webster, *Academiarum examen* (London, 1653), sig A3, John Mair (Major), *History of Greater Britain*, ed. and trans. A. Constable (Edinburgh, 1892), pp. 32, 40-1, 44-5, 277; Thomas Craig, *De unione regnorum Britanniæ*, trans. C. S. Terry (Edinburgh, 1909), pp. 383-90. Jerome's comment is to be found in *Adversus Jovinianum*, ii·7, in *Patrologia Latina*, ed. J.-P. Migne, 221 vols. (Paris, 1844-64), xxiii, col. 296. Conversely, Amerigo Vespucci commented that if there were any earthly paradise in the world, it had to be in the regions of the south: Bernard W. Sheehan, *Savagism and Civility: Indians and Englishmen in Colonial Virginia* (Cambridge, 1980), p. 19.

[4] "Ny l'Espagnol ny le François troupeau / Craindra le Nord ny sa froide brume." See Roy Strong, *Art and Power* (London, 1982), pp. 106-7; Victor E. Graham and W. McAllister Johnson, *The Royal Tour of France by Charles IX and Catherine de' Medici: Festivals and Entries, 1564-6* (Toronto, 1979), p. 38; see also pp. 36-7, 46, 48, 337, 377. I am grateful to Professor Michael Lynch for drawing my attention to this reference.

In the same year Bastien Pages staged a curiously similar statement in Edinburgh for Mary Stewart. Following a masque, there came "a discharge of fireworks from a mimic fortress, the possession of which was contested by motley bands of Moors, Highlanders, Centaurs, Lanzknechts [Imperial troops best remembered for their sacking of Rome in 1529], and fiends". Here indeed was an assault on the fortress of civilization by forces demonic and savage. See Philip J. Ford, *George Buchanan Prince of Poets* (Aberdeen, 1982), pp 107-8; *Inventaires de la royne descosse douairiere*, ed. Joseph Robertson (Edinburgh, 1863), p. lxxxviii.
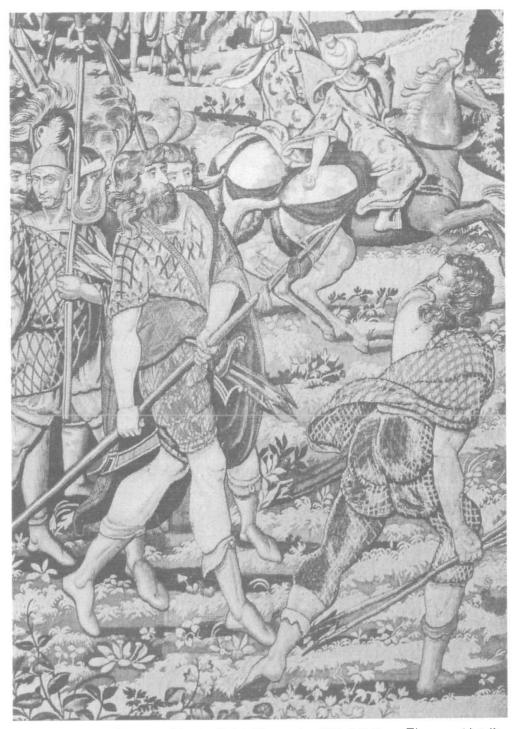
appears in one of the well-known Valois Tapestries. In it a wild Scot joins Moors and other exotics in a mock siege of an elephant. (Plate 1.) The trope became still further articulated, also contemporaneously, in the drawings of Lucas de Heere, which included a barefoot wild Irish couple, painted but otherwise unclothed Picts, a hooded Eskimo and an almost bare-bottomed Highlander — all contrasting sharply with other less exotic and much more recognizably mainstream figures. (Plate 2.)[5]

Like all Scots, Boece had therefore confronted an almost universal predisposition anchored by the weight of truly massive tradition. The problem created by it in no way lessened with the Reformation, for such geopolitical prejudice obviously worked to the disadvantage of northern (and Protestant) princes — as Roman Catholic controversialists quickly recognized. Poetry celebrating the accession of James VI to the southern crown pictured the new king as a great exception to the old proverb that all evil proceeded from the north. Within this context it is easy to see why Paul Grebner's prophecy about the achievements of a great northern monarchy at the end of days was gratefully received by the Elizabethan court, and why its influence was felt throughout the seventeenth century. Nor is surprising that the Scottish scholar and poet James Maxwell undertook a reply "touching the Seate of Sathan" in a work that proved "against the Romaine doctores by Scripture and nature, by theologie and astrologie, by philosophie and history, that the north is absolutely the most divine and excellent, the very seate of God and not Sathan, and the chief receptacle of his Church . . .".[6] And well he might, for religious ritual itself had posited the north as the "region of the pagans". The traditional posture of the priest reading the gospel at mass was facing the north — addressing imaginary heathen. Accordingly, Counter-Reformation literature greeted the entry of Gustavus Adolphus into the Thirty Years War with thoroughly nasty caricatures of savage Livonians, Lapps and Scots sweeping

[5] See Frances A. Yates, *The Valois Tapestries* (London, 1959; 2nd edn, London, 1975), esp. p. 21; Lucas de Heere, *Beschrijving der Britsche Eilanden*, ed. T. M. Chotzen and A. M. E. Draak (Antwerp, 1937). Again, my thanks to Professor Lynch for this reference.

[6] *Northern Poems Congratulating the Kings Majesties Entrance to the Crowne* (London, 1604, S.T C. 14427), K. V. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (London, 1971), pp. 468, 488; B. S. Capp, *English Almanacs, 1500-1800* (New York, 1979), pp 168, 170, 177, 178, James Maxwell, *A New Eight-Fold Probation of the Church of Englands Diuine Constitution . . .* (London, 1617, S T C. 17704), sig. B2ʳ

1. The "Elephant Tapestry" in the Valois Tapestries, Uffizi Gallery, Florence (detail):
a wild Scot (right), wearing strikingly close-fitting trews, joins Moors and other
exotics in the mock siege of an elephant.

(By permission of the Ministero per i Beni Culturali e Ambientali, Florence)

out of the northern forests to rape and pillage. (Plate 3.)[7] These figures were the pre-social wildmen of traditional Europe, the embodiment of the uncivilized. Their sylvan nature was manifested unmistakably by the leafy branches associated with each figure — and outstandingly by the barefoot Lapp, who appears to be savouring his leaves (symbolizing his barbarity) and is therefore seemingly the most primitive of them all.

Little wonder, then, that Thomas Craig should have devoted such considerable effort to show that the Scottish people had existed long before the fall of the Roman Empire, and that they had "erected a kingdom which owed neither its culture (*literis humanioribus*) nor its prowess in war to its neighbours". George Buchanan's *De jure regni apud Scotos: dialogus* began by seeking to:

> banish the idea from men's minds that in the ice-bound regions of the world men are as far removed from literature, from culture, and from every intellectual pursuit (*a literis, humanitate, omnique cultu*) as they are from the sun. For although Nature has endowed Africans and Egyptians and most other people with nimbler wits and greater mental energy . . . she has condemned no people to be incapable of achieving virtue and glory.

David Hume of Godscroft's rather latinate *cri de cœur* spoke to the need for reflection about barbarism and its meanings no less than of the pain associated with so doing:

> However our Scottishmen, countrie and courage is exceedingly to be commended . . . yet they did spare their prisoners, which (and the like actions) when I consider, I would gladly understand of such as delight to reproach our Nation with all the calumnies they can invent, and amongst the rest, stile [the Scots] barbarous, what is it they call barbaritie? and if crueltie and inhumanity bee not the special points of it? Whereof they shall never read that any Nation were more free, or that ever hath been more courteous, humane, gentle, in peace and in warre, even at all times and in all places. I wish all men would acknowledge the truth as it is: if they will not, yet shall it be truth, and the truth shall never want a witnesse.[8]

Imagining a Scottish civilization or imagining the creation of such a civilization, at once cultured, independent, and yet relevant to

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[7] R. S. Dunn, *The Age of the Religious Wars, 1559-1689* (New York, 1970), p 74. I am grateful to the late Professor Gordon Donaldson for alerting me to the specifically northern character of heathenism implied by traditional Catholic ritual.

[8] Craig, *De unione regnorum Britanniæ*, trans. Terry, pp. 122, 369, Buchanan, *De iure regni apud Scotos: dialogus*, trans. D. H. MacNeill (Glasgow, 1964), p 15; David Hume of Godscroft, *History of the Houses of Douglas and Angus*, 2nd edn (Edinburgh, 1644), p. 103

2. "Escossois sauuage": Lucas de Heere, "Théâtre de tous les peuples et nations de la terre . . .", Gentse Universiteitsbibliotheek, MS. 2466, fo. 77ᵛ. The exceedingly close-fitting trews of de Heere's "Scotsche Hooglander" appear prominently, as they do in the "Elephant Tapestry" (Plate 1). De Heere's work also included illustrations of wild Irish, Picts and an Eskimo, as well as less exotic creatures; its concern for the exotic extended to a drawing of Stonehenge: L. de Herre, *Beschrijving der Britsche Eilanden*, ed. T. M. Chotzen and A. M. E. Draak (Antwerp, 1937). This drawing has also been published in Frances A. Yates, *The Valois Tapestries* (London, 1959).

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Europe, would prove a formidable undertaking indeed within the intellectual matrices of the sixteenth century. It would require nothing less than reinterpreting and re-evaluating the traditional binary opposition of barbarous and civilized.

The fundamental and inescapable model of civility derived from Graeco-Roman antiquity, and the most immediate problem was to imagine the realm within its terms: might there be a classical Scotland or, alternatively, a Roman Britain? Moreover, the antique experience itself offered more than one option, for it might be given either monarchical or republican readings, and the dynamics of "civilization" would acquire differing meanings as a result.

Even so, all the antique categories were inevitably informed by the huge empires recently established by Iberian Europeans in Africa, Asia and, especially, the Americas. A deepening awareness of the vast new pagan worlds of the Americas leavened the idea of the primitive, while a burgeoning global commercial economy both enriched and troubled any concept of civilization.

At least since T. D. Kendrick's *British Antiquity* appeared in 1950, it has been a commonplace to observe that the anglophone image of the American Indian both derived from and shaped the social type created by Englishmen of Scots, Picts and (at least occasionally) the ancient Britons.[9] Subsequently, D. B. Quinn's researches initiated an extensive literature which examined the efforts of Elizabethan Englishmen to understand the Ireland they were in the process of conquering — Elizabethans who almost simultaneously applied these categories to the Indians in North America, whose settlement comprised a closely allied and frequently interwined project. Since the 1970s this kind of study has responded to deepening nationalist preoccupations and acquired a more narrowly Irish focus. Its central concern has been to illustrate how English expansion legitimated itself through the denigration of the local population, and in so doing formed patterns which were subsequently exported across the ocean. The Scottish experience, however, will provide little comfort to easy nationalisms or familiar postures, for Scottish thought went well

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[9] T. D Kendrick, *British Antiquity* (London, 1950), pp. 121-5. Interestingly, Kendrick cites Spenser's reference to Indians in his description of Maleger (*Faerie Queene*, II.xi 21: *Works of Edmund Spenser*, ed. Greenlaw *et al.*, ii, p. 151), but never mentions Ireland.

Lapländer.   Liff   Länder.   Schotländer.

3. Barbaric northerners: Stadt Ulm Stadtbibliothek, E 231. This Counter-Reformation caricature of Gustavus Adolphus's forces portrayed the Swedish intervention in the Thirty Years War as an invasion of Lapp, Livonian and Scottish barbarians sweeping down from the north to rape and pillage. These figures' sylvan character is emphasized by the leafy branches on the Scot's pack, in the Livonian's hat, and, worst of all, apparently being savoured by the bare-footed Lapp. The Livonian is riding a reindeer; the Scot, though in shoes, quite visibly wears animal skins.

(By permission of the Stadtbibliothek)

beyond any such simplistic *Kulturkampf*.[10] Highly significant attempts were made to conceive British kin structures within a classical vocabulary, and much of the Scottish intellectual experience involved such cultural interpenetration and hybridization. The imperialist impulse thus brought with it radical criticism and anti-imperial formulations, and their competition became central to Scottish political life and to much of Scotland's intellectual achievement. Similarly, there also existed a critique of commerce (and of trading societies) in the name of civilization. Commerce might be seen to offer an uplifting *douceur*, but it might also be seen as incompatible with public life and civic responsibility. Critics of imperial monarchy like George Buchanan would quickly become critics of commercial empires as well.

Almost from its outset in the late fifteenth century, European imperialism stimulated enormous debate about its purposes, its consequences (both at home and abroad), and even about the legitimacy of the entire undertaking.[11] Scottish intellectuals such as John Mair, George Buchanan and even James VI played prominent roles in these debates. Their arguments never lost sight of the Scottish experience and constantly looked to the problem of imagining civility and culture within their cold northern realm.

I

THE POLITICS OF CIVILIZATION: ROMAN BRITAIN
FROM JOHN MAIR TO JAMES VI

We have Indians at home — Indians in Cornwall, Indians in Wales, Indians
in Ireland . . .   Anonymous (1652)[12]

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[10] D. B Quinn, *The Elizabethans and the Irish* (Ithaca, 1966), esp. ch. 9, "Ireland and America Intertwined", pp. 106-22. John Gillingham, "Images of Ireland, 1170-1600: The Origins of English Imperialism", *History Today*, xxxvii (1987), pp. 16-22, provides the fullest brief statement. The best-known discussion is Nicholas P. Canny, *The Elizabethan Conquest of Ireland: A Pattern Established, 1565-76* (New York, 1976), esp. ch. 6, "The Breakdown. Elizabethan Attitudes towards the Irish", pp. 117-36; see also N. P. Canny, *Kingdom or Colony. Ireland in the Atlantic World, 1560-1800* (Baltimore, 1988); K. R. Andrews, Nicholas P. Canny and P. E. H. Hair (eds.), *The Westward Enterprise: English Activities in Ireland, the Atlantic and America, 1480-1650* (Liverpool, 1978); Sheehan, *Savagism and Civility*, ch. 2, "Ignoble Savage", pp 37-64.

[11] See Anthony Pagden, "Dispossessing the Barbarian: The Language of Spanish Thomism and the Debate over the Property Rights of the American Indians", in A. Pagden (ed.), *The Languages of Political Theory in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 79-98.

[12] "An Eminent Person" [Roger Williams], *The Hireling Ministry none of Christs* (London, 1652), reprinted in Perry Miller, *Roger Williams· His Contribution to the American Tradition* (New York, 1974), p. 200.

Today John Mair enjoys a remarkably high reputation. He is thought of as one of the last great scholastics, a professor of theology and philosophy in Paris who also taught in Scotland. Alexander Broadie has recently reminded us that he was a highly significant thinker whose insights in certain respects anticipate ideas which developed in the Enlightenment. He is often remembered as the teacher of Scotland's greatest humanist, George Buchanan, and if Buchanan later broke with him, Hugh Trevor-Roper has claimed it was in many ways a great mistake to do so. J. H. Burns and others have shown Mair to be a political theorist of moment. He is especially well known in Scotland today for his *Historia Maioris Britanniae*, a work which cut through a great many medieval mythologies, presented a strikingly naturalistic picture of social cause and human relations and, among much else, rejected popular prophecy, portents and the traditions of Merlin. About fifteen years ago I suggested that Mair's *Historia* seemed to link land-tenure and civic virtue in remarkably precocious ways, a suggestion now taken up in compelling detail by Roger Mason.[13]

Only occasionally have historians of Scotland ever qualified their celebration of Mair by noticing his quite blood-thirsty concern to extirpate heresy. But Scottish histories have never recognized him as an apologist for the Spanish conquest of the New World, indeed as an apologist quite specifically for the dispossession of the barbarian. Yet that has been the most immediate, significant and enduring European consequence of his thought, and his reputation with historians of Spain differs considerably as a result.

In 1519 Mair published a commentary on the second of Peter Lombard's *Sentences*; and, as Anthony Pagden has noticed, while

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[13] Alexander Broadie, *The Tradition of Scottish Philosophy* (Edinburgh, 1990), H. Trevor-Roper, *George Buchanan and the Ancient Scottish Constitution* (London, 1966). T D. Kendrick asserts that Mair had "sensible and bravely sceptical views about the medieval legends" and "wasting no words . . sought to smash down the entire top-heavy structure of British and Scottish fabulous history with a few adroit and powerful blows": Kendrick, *British Antiquity*, pp. 65, 78. See also J. H. Burns, *Lordship, Kingship and Empire The Idea of Monarchy, 1400-1525* (Oxford, 1992); J H Burns (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1450-1700* (Cambridge, 1991); Arthur H. Williamson, *Scottish National Consciousness in the Age of James VI The Apocalypse, the Union and the Shaping of Scotland's Public Culture* (Edinburgh, 1979); Arthur H. Williamson, "Antichrist's Career in Scotland: The Imagery of Evil and the Search for a National Past" (Washington Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1974); R. A. Mason, "Kingship, Nobility and Anglo-Scottish Union: John Mair's *History of Greater Britain* (1521)", *Innes Rev* , xli (1990), pp. 182-222.

discussing the legitimacy of Christian rule over pagans he made an extraordinary statement:

> These people [the inhabitants of the Antilles] live like beasts on either side of the equator; and beneath the poles there are wild men as Ptolemy says in his *Tetrabiblos*. And this has now been demonstrated by experience, wherefore the first person to conquer them, justly rules over them because they are by nature slaves. As the Philosopher [Aristotle] says in the third and fourth chapters of the first book of the *Politics*, it is clear that some men are by nature slaves, others by nature free; and in some men it is determined that there is such a thing [i.e., a disposition to slavery] and that they should benefit from it. And it is just that one man should be a slave and another free, and it is fitting that one man should rule and another obey, for the quality of leadership is also inherent in the natural master. On this account the Philosopher says in the first chapter of the aforementioned book that this is the reason why the Greeks should be masters over the barbarians, because, by nature, the barbarians and slaves are the same thing.[14]

Pagden has described how the Spanish monarchy seized on Mair's comment. For here was a justification of the spectacular conquests in the New World which derived entirely from nature. Mair's discussion thus provided a justification untroubled by any consideration of such sensitive matters as claims to right — whether involving the temporal authority of the papacy or of a universal monarchy (ideas which had never proven persuasive in Paris in any case). Here was simply nature, a circumstance inherent in the human condition. The dispossession and enslavement of the Indians were built into the order of things and were for their own good. Mair's emphatic naturalism had led to frightful conclusions.

Mair has played a dubious role in Spanish intellectual and political history. But his comments on the New World turn out to be more relevant to Scotland than might at first appear. Mair was talking about people *both* "on either side of the equator" *and* "beneath the poles". Indians and northerners possessed a common character. This equation finds no basis in Ptolemy and is simply Mair's — a conflation which, as Pagden notes, the

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[14] John Mair, *In secundum librum Sententiarum [Petri Lombardi]* (Paris, 1519), fo. 187ª, cited and trans. Anthony Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 38-9. The references are to Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, ii.2, ed. and trans. F. E. Robbins (London, 1940), p. 123; Aristotle, *Politics*, i.2-4 (1252b-1253b), trans. Jowett, in *Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Barnes, ii, pp. 1987-9. My discussion in this paragraph derives from Pagden's trenchant comments

Indians' great defender, Bartolomé de Las Casas, was quick to point out.[15]

If Mair's geography seemed very odd indeed, the northerners he had in mind became clear enough with the publication of his *Historia* two years later. In it Mair drew a severe distinction between the wild Scots (*Scoti sylvestres*) of the Highlands and the householding Scots (*Scoti domestici*) of the Lowlands. The two groups spoke different languages and, for Mair, were completely different peoples:

> In dress, in the manner of their outward life, and in good morals, for example, these [wild Scots] come behind the householding Scots — yet they are not less, but rather much more, prompt to fight; and this, both because they dwell more towards the north, and because, born as they are in the mountains, and dwellers in forests, their very nature is more combative.[16]

Visibly, Mair had no doubt as to which kind of person and life was better. The Lowlanders — presumably by having households and thereby, apparently, the capacity for self-rule and independent judgements of value — had control of the government "and direction of the kingdom".[17] They understood better (or at least not as badly as the Highlanders did) "the nature of a civil polity". Perhaps inevitably, great antipathy existed between the two groups: "Our householding Scots, or quiet and civil-living

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[15] Pagden, *Fall of Natural Man*, pp. 216-17 n. 61. Alexander Broadie blandly observes that "[t]here were a number of Spanish philosopher theologians who were close to Mair . . . and the story of his 'Spanish circle' is an interesting one yet to be written": Broadie, *Tradition of Scottish Philosophy*, p. 22. This is also noticed by Vincent Muñoz Delgado, who briefly describes "el grupo español de la escuala de Juan Major en Paris" ("the Spanish group in John Mair's circle in Paris") and his influence at Salamanca: "Sus obras de lógica en el primer período de Paris se hacen en buena parte con colaboración de españoles" ("the works on logic of his first period in Paris were, in considerable measure, composed in collaboration with Spaniards"). V Muñoz Delgado, *Lógica hispano-portuguesa hasta 1600 notas bibliográfico-doctrinales* (Salamanca, 1972), pp. 72-3, 76, 80-1.

Mair's odd geography seems to recur in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*. Tamora, the barbaric queen of the Goths (a people identified in the sixteenth century with Scandinavia, as Shakespeare surely knew), connects in every sense with the black Moor Aaron. In a scene (V.iii) visibly drawing inspiration from Seneca's *Thyestes*, Tamora inadvertently practises cannibalism, while Aaron's contrapunctual punishment is death by starvation: William Shakespeare, *The Complete Works*, ed. Peter Alexander (London, 1951), pp 899, 901.

[16] John Mair, *Historia Maioris Britanniae, tam Angliae quam Scotiae, per Ioannem Maiorem, nomine quidem Scotum, professione autem theologum . . .* (Paris, 1521), fos XV[b]-XVI[a]; Mair, *History of Greater Britain*, trans. Constable, pp. 48-9.

[17] Mair, *Historia Maioris Britanniae*, fo. XVI[a]; Mair, *History of Greater Britain*, trans. Constable, p. 49

people — that is, all who lead a decent and reasonable life — these men hate, on account of their differing speech, as much as they do the English".[18] Only the Lowlanders lived under the governance of reason (*sub rationis habena*). Only the Lowlanders, it appears, truly possessed a civic capacity — a quality they shared with that other British people, the English.

Nevertheless, Highlanders themselves came in two varieties. Some held enough property in livestock to fear its loss, and would therefore "yield more willing obedience to the courts of law and the king".[19] Such people could be coerced, even if they did not live "under reason". But not all Highlanders would respond to coercion:

> The other part of these people delight in the chase and a life of indolence; their chiefs eagerly follow bad men if only they may not have the need to labour; taking no pains to earn their own livelihood, they live upon others, and follow their own worthless and savage chief in all evil courses sooner than they will pursue an honest industry. They are full of mutual dissensions, and war rather than peace is their normal condition. The Scottish kings have with difficulty been able to withstand the inroads of these men.[20]

Here we have the direct inversion of civilization. Here too we have Indians as they would begin to emerge in the travel literature of the sixteenth century. Even if Mair never stated it explicitly, it is hard to see how, on this view, any policy other than extirpation could reasonably be adopted by the Scottish government. Clearly the Highlanders are inherently a source of trouble within political Scotland. Although he saw them as divided amongst themselves, their chiefs eagerly follow "bad men" — presumably ill-affected Lowlanders. Yet Mair's fears ran deeper still: there exists the constant threat of encroachment of the Highlanders (and of barbarity), an intrusion which has been resisted only with difficulty. These are not fanciful and distant exotics, but real people posing a clear and present danger, and British civilization seemed far from secure.

Mair was by no means the first Scot to contrast primitive Highlanders with sophisticated Lowlanders. It had long been a standard trope to characterize the two regions in this way, as

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[18] Mair, *Historia Maioris Britanniae*, fo. XVIᵃ; Mair, *History of Greater Britain*, trans. Constable, p. 50.

[19] Mair, *Historia Maioris Britanniae*, fo. XVIᵃ; Mair, *History of Greater Britain*, trans. Constable, p 49.

[20] Mair, *Historia Maioris Britanniae*, fol. XVIᵃ; Mair, *History of Greater Britain*, trans Constable, p 49

socio-cultural differences between them deepened during the later Middle Ages and, perhaps more important, became increasingly coterminous with linguistic division. Vernacular verse had often enough portrayed Highlanders as crude, thieving layabouts who "will nevir wirk".[21] As early as the later fourteenth century Johannes de Fordun's *Chronica gentis Scotorum* distinguished the southern people as being "of domestic and civilized habits, trusty, patient, and urbane". Highlanders and the peoples of the isles contrasted strikingly: "[they] are a savage and untamed nation, rude and independent . . . ease-loving".[22] Although Mair followed Fordun in his description of the two cultures, the differences between their perceptions are profound. Fordun could still speak of the Highlanders as "faithful and obedient to their king and country, and easily made to submit to law, if properly governed".[23] For Mair the divide had become a racialized, unbridgeable chasm — one which drew inspiration from the peoples of the New World and their experience at the hands of Europeans.

At the same time Mair did not seek to idealize conditions in lowland Scotland and in England. He was painfully conscious of the destructive and destabilizing effects on the realm of Scotland's (and presumably England's) all too powerful magnates — typified in the previous century by the house of Douglas.[24] But if lowland Britain faced grave problems, nevertheless — and in stark contrast to the Highlands — it also possessed great promise, which Mair was capable of articulating in highly idealistic language. The south was capable of social change. The British aristocracy (*nobiles Britanni*) might well behave irresponsibly and might well need to have their children educated properly for their responsibilities,

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[21] "How the First Helandman of God was maid / Of ane Horss Turd in Argylle, as is said", in *The Poetry of the Stewart Court*, ed. Joan Hughes and W. S. Ramson (Canberra, 1982), p. 314. The poem is discussed by Mason, "Kingship, Nobility and Anglo-Scottish Union", pp. 196-7.

[22] "[D]omestica gens est et culta, fida, patiens et urbana"; "ferina gens est et indomita, rudis, et immorigerata . . otium diligens": John of Fordun, *Chronica gentis Scotorum*, ed. and trans. W. F. Skene, 2 vols. (Historians of Scotland, i, iv, Edinburgh, 1871-2), i, p. 42 (text); ii, p. 38 (translation). The passage is discussed by Mason, "Kingship, Nobility and Anglo-Scottish Union", p. 196.

[23] "Regi tamen et regno fidelis et obediens, necnon faciliter legibus subdita, si regatur": Fordun, *Chronica gentis Scotorum*, ed. and trans. Skene, i, p. 42 (text); ii, p. 38 (translation).

[24] And possibly in England by their sometime allies, the Percys.

but they were still cultured people (*humani*).[25] Their followers might well support them out of a misplaced solidarity derived from "habit" and the traditional claims of blood and kindness. But these people — lesser gentry and large tenants — were by no means humble retainers and servants. They showed no obsequious deference. They maintained their own arms and were effective soldiers. They did not labour in the fields but instead guided and governed their *familia* (or *oikos*), sounding at moments like the classical citizen who at once rules and is ruled.[26] On Mair's telling, these people — simply called "farmers" (*agricolae*) — almost sound as though they might potentially merge military with political virtue. That is, they might almost seem to possess the autonomy to make judgements of value as well as the moral and physical strength to translate them into action. Even where they clearly did not possess such independence, Mair suggested that they might do so with the introduction of heritable feu-ferm land-tenures — a transformation in landholding which was in fact taking place and would expand rapidly throughout the century. The British future might well be pregnant with hope.

Consequently, for Mair, a deep scar ran across the face of the island called Britain. To the north lay pastoral agriculture, darkness and barbarism. To the south lay a different agriculture, one practised by potentially independent farmers who, in appropriate circumstances, might possess the capacity to become political beings and whose exercise of military virtue could stabilize a united greater Britain. The history of greater Britain pointed to a more civic and even a more egalitarian world. But the peoples of the north were no part of it.

Mair's students and followers would exert no more than a marginal influence at most within the political cultures of either Scotland or England. His real successor — at least in his views about Indians and Highlanders as well as about the greater Britain with which they linked — appeared much later in the person of James VI and I. James's outlook was a good deal more classicist than Mair's, on the one hand, and yet also at the same time much more explicitly, even stridently, hierarchical. His frequent appeal

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[25] "Nobiles Britanni humani": Mair, *Historia Maioris Britanniae*, fo. XV^a (marginal note); "[t]he British nobility are a civilised nobility": Mair, *History of Greater Britain*, trans. Constable, p. 47.

[26] Mair, *Historia Maioris Britanniae*, fo. XV^a; Mair, *History of Greater Britain*, trans. Constable, p 47.

to natural law was at once more coarse and simplistic and, as a result, more compelling. He imagined his kingship in the form of Constantine the Great's, and in that of the other Christian Roman emperors, about whom Mair had little to say. The king certainly did not seek to imagine feuars and freeholders as citizen-soldiers in the way Mair seemed on the threshold of proposing. Yet James did insist that a civic sense was vital to the realm, indeed decisive to the survival of the British monarchies.

During the summer months of 1596 it was widely expected that a second armada would be launched against the British Isles, and James urged his subjects to prepare for it. The Spaniards had of course been spectacularly successful in the New World, and the king thought he understood how this had occurred and what would prevent similar success closer to home. The inhabitants of the Americas had lacked a civic sense, and this fundamental lack made them savage and left them vulnerable: "Lett us abhorre the beastlie Indians, whose unworthie particulars made the way patent of their miserable subjectioun and slaverie to the Spaniards; and lett us prease to resemble the worthie ancient Romans, who not onlie preferred their commoun weal to their owne particulars, but even their owne proper lives".[27] The distinction was vital. For the evident absence of the *respublica* — and, in its place, the narrow commitment to the kindred — was the root-cause of Indian barbarity and, with the exception of their ignorance of Christianity, the prime defect in Indian society. When the king thought of the Indians, as he later did in *A Counterblaste to Tobacco* (1604), he found them barbarous, beastly, wild, godless and, most significantly, "slavish": "shall wee, I say, without blushing abase our selues so farre, as to imitate these beastly *Indians*, slaves to the *Spaniards* . . . ?" "The pockie Indian slaues" seemed to provide the archetypal political contrast with civilization.[28] The king's dichotomy was of course far from original. If tribal particularity had destroyed the Indians, they were not the only example of its consequences: the Roman conquest

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[27] David Calderwood, *The History of the Kirk of Scotland*, ed. Thomas Thomson, 8 vols. (Wodrow Soc., Edinburgh, 1842-9), v, p. 391

[28] James VI and I, *The Workes of the Most High and Mightie Prince James*, ed. James Montague (London, 1616, S.T.C. 14344; London, 1620, S.T.C. 14345), pp. 214, 215, 220.

of the ancient Britons had long been understood in broadly sim-
ilar terms.[29]

Precisely the same social categories were applied to
Highlanders, Borderers and "the barbarous Ilismen" of the Outer
Hebrides. The king's remarks presaged a decade-long effort to
establish royal authority and public law in these regions, one
which sought the "plantatioun" of the large island of Lewis with
Lowlanders and the "extirpatioun" of its current inhabitants.
The undertaking would succeed in spectacularly kidnapping
many of the chiefs, but it completely failed to establish viable
settlements and ended in compromise — the 1609 Statutes of
Iona. The crown's official pronouncements referred untiringly to
"the barbarous and deteastable form of living of the present
inhabitants" who acknowledged neither God nor king and who
lived in poverty, in godlessness, and in the violent criminality of
the blood-feud. At particularly angry moments the king could
speak of them as "barbarous cannibals" and of their manner of
living as "lascivious" — imagining them exactly like the inhabit-
ants of the Americas at their most uncivilized — but the real
issue always remained social identity and the politics associated
with it.

The latter were decisive. Trade, wealth and security would all
derive from them. Public order and civility would permit "lawfull

[29] See, for example, James Henrisoun (or Harryson), *An Exhortacion to the Scottes
to Conforme to the Vnion betwene Englande and Scotlande* (London, 1547, S.T.C 12857).
The classical sources indicated clearly that the Britons, if initially under the rule of
kings, had degenerated into "faccions and sedicions of Prynces and great men" and
"were so diuided in themselfs, that to resist an vniuersal peril, scarsely twoo or three
countreys at the most, would agre together so fighting in partes, at last the whole
was ouercome. And by this meane was Britayne fyrste subdued, & made tributarie
to the Romayns, vnder whome it continued in fourme of a prouince, vntill the tyme
of great Constantine the Emperour, by whome it was restored to libertie". Henrisoun
implies — without stating directly — that the Scots and Picts (and perhaps the Britons
too) were barbarous nations like the Goths, Vandals and Huns: *Exhortacion to the
Scottes*, printed as an appendix to *The Complaynt of Scotlande*, ed. James A. H.
Murray, 2 vols. continuously paginated (Early Eng. Text Soc , extra ser., xvii, xviii,
London, 1872), pp 216, 217, 219. Thomas Craig saw the education of the ancient
Britons by the Romans as directly analogous to the education of American Indians
by the Spaniards "But it is evident from Tacitus that there was no use of letters in
Britain before Caesar; for he relates that, at the time of his father-in-law Julius
Agricola who was Domitian's legate in Britain, the British youth began to be instructed
in Roman letters (as the Americans are now by the assistance of the Spaniards)":
Craig, *Scotlands Sovereignty Asserted*, trans. Ripath, pp. 36-7. It is not uncertain what
the implications of this assertion might be for Craig's claim in his *De unione regnorum
Britanniae* about Scottish *literis humanioribus* (see n. 8 above). This work does, in any
event, take a rather grim view of Roman Britain: *ibid.*, p. 215.

traffique and handling in these bounds" — in the outer isles, that meant fishing — hitherto prevented "be reasoun of thair barbaritie".[30] In suggesting that the civic spirit would lead to trade and, in addition, that the latter was integral to the civilizing process, James veered in directions unanticipated by Mair. Over time a growing preoccupation with commerce would create a more complex idea of civilization, and if the policies of "plantation" and "extirpation" failed (as in the event they did), there might emerge more highly articulated alternatives.

No one specifically accused Islesmen or Highlanders of being "slavish", but servility would result directly from their attitudes and behaviour. Devoid as they were of public spirit and uninterested in the welfare of the realm, they inherently constituted a major problem for Scotland's security, stability and liberty. But was it simply a Highland problem? Mair had seen barbarism pressing in from the fringes of Scottish society, a barbarism made all the more dangerous by the instability and selfishness of aristocratic *viros malos* who populated the Lowlands. There always had existed the possibility that barbarism could find comfort within the walls of civilization. One might easily imagine, even on Mair's telling, that the Highland line would turn out to be less indelible than originally proposed, and that the Highland problem was at least in some ways a Lowland problem also. At moments, now well remembered, James seems to have seen these problems as broadly embracing the entire realm: if the danger of tribalism and kin rivalry occurred "specialie in the Bordouris and Heylandis" and characteristically in America, it nevertheless informed all political life in ways that distressingly distanced Scotland from its European neighbours — and thereby from civilization. Accordingly, he went on to urge the reform of "the long disordered state of our countrie" through the elimination of kin identities and the "pulling out by the root the whole disordered deidlie feeds and bloodie inmiteis within our realme, a barbaritie whereunto this onlie countrie has ever beene miserablie

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[30] *The Register of the Privy Council of Scotland*, 1st ser., ed. J. Hill Burton and David Masson (Edinburgh, 1877-98), 14 vols., vi, pp. 130, 255, 420 and *passim*; vii, pp. 84-5, 88-9, 99, 204, 435, 525 and *passim*; viii, pp. 59-61, 72, 73, 93-4, 502, 737, 766-7. As is the case today, the cry for law and order and the denunciation of crime could themselves assume blood-curdling tones. The government could at times speak of the need "to extirpat and rute oute" particularly violent clans (and to supplant them with "civile people") and looked forward to "the full exterminatioun of sic a vermine": *ibid.*, vii, p 525; vi, p. 825.

subject, as an abuse not known or named in anie other civill countries of the world . . .".[31] The sentiment acquired lasting prominence when it reappeared four years later as James's well-known injunction to his son in his *Basilikon Doron*: "And rest not, vntill yee roote out these barbarous feides . . . their barbarous name is vnknowen to anie other nation: For if this Treatise were written in either French or Latine, I could not get them named vnto you but by circumlocution".[32] His personal advice to the prince followed naturally enough: "ye must be of no surname nor kinne, but equall to all honest men".[33] More generally, the king would continually urge "the laudable example of this thair nightbour cuntrey and other civile placeis".[34] Scotland emerged in the sixteenth century as a highly articulate culture, but one that appeared, at least to many contemporaries, to have retained social attitudes which had long disappeared elsewhere in Europe.

II

THE *TRIBUS* MADE CIVIC: GEORGE BUCHANAN AND CLASSICAL SCOTLAND

From the later years of Henry VIII's reign, and more especially during the subsequent Somerset Protectorate, the impulse to an Anglo-Scottish union — that is, to a greater and imperial

[31] James VI, proclamation, Jan. 1596, cited in Calderwood, *History of the Kirk of Scotland*, ed. Thomson, v, p. 390. Only the reform of such barbarism could save Scotland from the Indians' fate, for only then would Scotsmen see beyond the particularist claims of their kindred to the defence of the realm: "having once our whole kingdome by this meanes brought fullie under our obedience, and in peace and quietnesse among themselves, we might be the more able to resist the commoun enemie, and all as one bodie, not onlie defend our so ancient liberteis, but might likewise concurre with our nighbour of England, for preserving of this yle from the tyrannie of strangers".

[32] James VI, *Basilikon Doron*, in *The Political Works of James I*, ed. C. H. McIlwain (New York, 1965), p. 25. As James noted in a very well-known passage, one of the great problems of the nobility was their maintaining "their servants and dependers in any wrong, although they be not answerable to the lawes (for any body will maintaine his man in a right cause) and for anie displeasure, that they apprehend to be done vnto them by their neighbour, to take vp a plaine feide against him; and (without respect to God, King, or commonweale) to bang it out brauely, hee and all his kinne, against him and all his: yea they will thinke the King farre in their common, in-case they agree to grant an assurance to a short day, for keeping the peace: where, by their natural dewtie, they are oblished to obey the lawe, and keepe the peace all the daies of their life . .".

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 33

[34] *Register of the Privy Council of Scotland*, 1st ser , ed Burton and Masson, vii, p. 466.

Britain — frequently appealed to the memory of Constantine the Great. The first Christian emperor, Constantine had cast out Satan's public kingdom, established the true church and instituted Christian society. From various mythologies, these events of such monumental importance to human history could be imagined as emanating from late antique Britain and as directly involving the British dynasty and its people.

As the successors to that dynasty (and, through incorporation, those people), these mythologies gave the idea of Britain and, still more, of Constantinian Britain a distinctly Anglocentric bias. Brutus, refugee leader from ancient Troy and eponymous conqueror of Britain, created the original kingdoms; Constantine was his direct heir, while King Arthur was nothing less than Constantine redivivus. This Anglo-Welsh mythology had an exceedingly long history, and for much of that time it had been used to assert the superiority of the southern crown.[35]

This long-standing *locus* of contention softened and assumed new shape at mid-century when Protestant Englishmen and Scots began to imagine their realms as integrated into a latter-day Britain which would restore the true faith in the last age of the world, just as the British Constantine had established it at the outset of the Christian era. Such a Britain could easily turn out to be simply an expanded England. Yet the notion could also possess greater plasticity: Britain might mean a fusion of both kingdoms in terms ultimately different from either of them. A new Britain could well carry with it programmes of far-reaching religious and political reform.[36]

[35] There now exists a large and growing literature concerned with these themes from both the English and the Scottish perspectives See esp. Williamson, *Scottish National Consciousness in the Age of James VI*; Arthur H Williamson, "Scotland, Antichrist and the Invention of Great Britain", in John Dwyer, Roger A Mason and Alexander Murdoch (eds.), *New Perspectives on the Politics and Culture of Early Modern Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1982), pp. 34-58; R. A. Mason, "Scotching the Brut: Politics, History and National Myth in Sixteenth-Century Britain", in R. A Mason (ed.), *Scotland and England, 1286-1815* (Edinburgh, 1987), pp 60-84; Kendrick, *British Antiquity*, Hugh A. MacDougall, *Racial Myth in English History: Trojans, Teutons and Anglo-Saxons* (Hanover, N H., 1982); W Matthews, "The Egyptians in Scotland: The Political History of a Myth", *Viator*, i (1970), pp. 289-306; Marjorie Drexler, "Fluid Prejudice. Scottish Origin Myths in the Middle Ages", in Joel Rosenthal and Colin Richmond (eds.), *People, Politics and Community in the Later Middle Ages* (Gloucester, 1987), pp 60-76

[36] And from the outset such idealistic Scots found themselves attracted to the idea of such a transformed state. Within an apocalyptic framework, virtually inescapable with Constantine and potentially a part of any British configuration, an altogether new order might be imagined, and there may well exist surprising continuity between

But not all sixteenth-century Scots looked to either imperial Rome (whether Constantinian or Augustan), however reformist, or, for that matter, to the apocalyptic expectations which were so often associated with it. A surprising number of Scottish intellectuals cast their gaze instead on Livy's Roman republic. Hector Boece is thought to have appropriated his paradigm of luxury and corruption from Livy's *Ab urbe condita*. His Latinity was widely regarded as the best since Livy's; and it was surely no accident that, shortly after translating Boece, John Bellenden undertook a translation of Livy for James V. George Buchanan read selections from Livy to Queen Mary "daily after her dinner". Hume of Godscroft quite specifically modelled on Livy his great history of the house of Douglas, eventually published as a general history of Scotland.[37]

At the same time it is hardly surprising that these writers have precious little to say of either Constantine or Augustus. Most suggestive are Buchanan's few, but breathtakingly negative remarks. Constantius Chlorus achieved nothing worthy of notice other than fathering Constantine by his concubine Helena — a son, as Buchanan dryly comments, "who afterward succeeded to the empire". Thereafter Constantine is barely noticed, except in passing as a source of disaster to Britain. Throughout the corpus of his *Rerum scoticarum historia*, nearly everyone who bears that name seems to go down to ignominious defeat: whether British, Gaulish, Scottish or Danish, they almost always emerge as patent

(n 36 cont)

Scottish radicals like James Henrisoun and James Hope; between Scottish aspirations for the apocalyptic British monarchy in the mid-sixteenth century and for the apocalyptic British republic in the mid-seventeenth century — indeed from an imperial Constantinian Britain to an imperial post-Constantinian Britain. See Arthur H. Williamson, "Union with England Traditional, Union with England Radical: Sir James Hope and the Mid-Seventeenth-Century British State", *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, cx (1995), pp. 303-22.

[37] Roger A. Mason, "*Rex stoicus*: George Buchanan, James VI and the Scottish Polity", in Dwyer, Mason and Murdoch (eds.), *New Perspectives on the Politics and Culture of Early Modern Scotland*, p. 28; John Bellenden, *Livy's History of Rome*, ed. W A. Craigie, 2 vols. (Scot. Text Soc., xlvii, li, Edinburgh, 1901-3), Arthur H. Williamson, "A Patriot Nobility? Calvinism, Kin-Ties and Civic Humanism", *Scot. Hist. Rev*, lxxii (1993), pp. 4-9; David Chambers, "La Recherche des Singularitez plus remarquable   .", in his *Histoire abbregée de tous les roys de France, Angleterre et Escosse, mise en ordre par forme d'harmonie* (Paris, 1579), fo. 31ᵃ. Regarding Buchanan's attitude to the apocalypse, see Arthur H. Williamson, "British Israel and Roman Britain. The Jews and Scottish Models of Polity from George Buchanan to Samuel Rutherford", in Richard H. Popkin and Gordon M. Weiner (eds.), *Jewish Christians and Christian Jews* (Dordrecht, 1994), pp. 97-117; for Hume of Godscroft's attitude, see Williamson, "Patriot Nobility?"

failures. Even Scotland's Constantine II, traditionally a hero, gets no more than a mixed review.[38] The prospects for a latter-day Constantine might therefore promise to be very dim indeed. For Buchanan, successful kings epitomized civic virtue. They encouraged and required it of their fellow citizens. The most outstanding of these, inevitably, was Robert I, who bore no comparison to any emperor but, on the contrary, to the heroes of republican Rome who saw beyond personal interest for the public good: Cato the Younger, Marcus Brutus and Marius.[39]

The central objective of the Scottish humanist undertaking — whether the Erasmian humanism of Boece, the Calvinist humanism of Buchanan, or the specifically Presbyterian humanism of Hume of Godscroft — was to imagine traditional Scotland within the terms and values of classical political virtue. Thus the ancient kin structures would become revalued rather than devalued. The medieval *gens* of Fordun became the classical *tribus* of Buchanan. Mair's radical disjuncture between Highlands and Lowlands would heal, as the barbaric tribes became transvalued into patriot dynasties. A synthesis of rustic simplicity, Stoic ethics and, eventually, Calvinist austerity would underwrite Scottish public-mindedness. Such a Scotland would be dominated by a selfless aristocracy whose political capacity derived from an autonomy made possible by the kindred.[40] Scotland would knit together as a classical aristocratic republic, one whose principles, Buchanan stressed, bore immediate relevance to all of sixteenth-century Europe.

But Scottish political virtue was not simply analogous to the Roman variety. It had also been contemporaneous with it. Here was an ancient tradition, integral to the entire course of Scottish experience, and like that experience laying claim to a vast antiquity which linked it to the classical world. Scotland had, of course, long before developed a luxuriant mythology, designed to counteract the account and claims of its Anglo-Welsh competitor, and which asserted the realm's legal and dynastic autonomy. If England had inherited the Trojan Brutus, Scotland had discovered its founder

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[38] George Buchanan, *History of Scotland*, trans. J. Aikman, 4 vols. (Edinburgh, 1827), I, pp. 202, 212, 217, 230, 231, 246-8, 253, 284-6, 288, 292, 294, 318-20. The only exception is a British Constantine, mentioned in passing, who at one point (with the Scots) defeats the Saxons and Picts: *ibid.*, p. 253.

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 461.

[40] This is discussed at greater length in Williamson, *Scottish National Consciousness in the Age of James VI*, pp. 107-16; see also Williamson, "Patriot Nobility?"

in Gathelus of Athens — presumably a descendant of the victors at Ilium. But the classical connection now necessarily involved much more than stories which made statements about continuities of blood and law. They now assumed much more highly wrought political and ultimately cultural meanings.

Moreover, not only was the past endowed with wider significance and called upon to bear a more complex agenda, its underlying mythologies met with ever-deepening scepticism during the course of the sixteenth century. The old stories would long continue as a compelling element within popular culture, but within learned society Brutus and Gathelus became more and more embarrassing. Buchanan responded to these circumstances with a level of erudition that must strike one as impressive even today. Rejecting the basic origin myths, he instead undertook an analysis of the Celtic languages and their historical development which appears to anticipate modern linguistic principles, and is at least broadly accurate in its conclusions. Thus the Scottish past became located within a framework of truly formidable learning. If Buchanan continued to insist on the Scots' vast antiquity — still holding to the fabulous stories of Fergus I (330 B.C.) and the subsequent early kings — they provided both the crucial link to the earlier, classical world and powerful exemplars of that world's republican political dynamic. His achievement remained enormous nevertheless.[41]

The most telling feature of Buchanan's political vision is not its limited historical base (similar problems exist within most of his contemporary Welsh and English critics, none of whom appear to have shared his insight), nor the precocious ways in which his work anticipates eighteenth-century Celtic studies. Rather, the question must be why Buchanan's work, hugely popular as it was, did not lead *contemporaneously* to such lines of enquiry. Just this environment at just this time created Anglo-Saxon studies in England, but the only Scottish work to take up this aspect of Buchanan's *Historia* — Hume of Godscroft's response to William Camden, "Cambdenae" — was altogether defensive and derivative, and remained unpublished. Some years ago Stuart Piggott

[41] For a fuller discussion of Buchanan's analyses and their broader significance, see T. G. E. Powell, *The Celts* (London, 1958), pp. 17-19, Stuart Piggott, *Celts, Saxons and the Early Antiquaries* (Edinburgh, 1967), p. 10; Williamson, *Scottish National Consciousness in the Age of James VI*, ch. 6, "George Buchanan's Scottish Context", pp. 117-39; cf. Malcolm Chapman, *The Celts: The Construction of a Myth* (New York, 1992), p. 205

observed that during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the study of Celtic languages enjoyed none of the advantages of Old English. Not only were the texts exceedingly difficult to translate (and to obtain), they served no obvious ideological purpose for a reformed vision of the English past. But even with such linguistic ability and even with broadly secular commitments, there seem to have existed sharp limits to what this sort of study could achieve in the Scottish context as well.[42]

A central piece of the puzzle surely lies in Buchanan's own attitude towards the study of non-classical materials. In rejecting so many of the foundation-myths, Buchanan also felt constrained to reject altogether the bardic sources from which they derived. These originally oral traditions, the songs of praise and genealogy, were (he insisted) the product of primitive and ignorant people, who practised pastoral agriculture and lived in unstable conditions. Their outlandish stories and egregious assertions offered neither wisdom nor insight. Like nearly all his contemporaries, Buchanan lacked the anthropological tools by which the flat, atemporal landscapes of bardic myth might be translated into historical cognition, and in his view the use made of them by his Welsh critic, Humphrey Lhuyd, only served to confirm their emptiness. More sophisticated language, seen by Buchanan as the product of growth and refinement through time, would offer more sophisticated insight; and, for Buchanan, classical Latin was pre-eminently the language of rational discourse. Only classical sources, with their reasoned and accessible intelligence, could therefore establish the British experience in ways fully cogent and persuasive.[43] In the shadow of these perceptions, doubtless, also lay classical antiquity's prejudice against any vernacular, whether of the Angles or of the *Keltoi*. In the end much of Buchanan's undertaking seems to have become self-subverted, and strikingly so with his well-known comment:

> I would rather choose to remain ignorant of the barbarous dialect of the ancient Britons, than unlearn that knowledge of the Latin tongue which I acquired, when a boy, with such great labour. I can perceive without regret, the gradual extinction of the ancient Scottish language, and cheerfully allow its harsh sounds to die away, and give place to the softer and

[42] David Hume of Godscroft, "Cambdenae; id est examen nonullorum a Gul. Cambdeno in Britannia sua positorum", Edinburgh Univ. Lib., MS. Dc.5/50/1. See Stuart Piggott's brief but extremely cogent comments on the opacity of Celtic sources to the mentality and purposes of the Renaissance: Piggott, *Celts, Saxons and the Early Antiquaries*, p. 14.

[43] Buchanan, *History of Scotland*, trans. Aikman, i, pp. 3, 4, 5, 8-9, 11, 65-79, 96-8.

more harmonious tones of Latin. For if, in the transmigration into another language, it is necessary that we yield up one thing or another, let us pass from rusticity and barbarism (*a rusticitate et barbaria*), to culture and civilization (*cultum et humanitatem*), let our choice and judgement repair the infelicity of our birth.[44]

From the late twentieth-century perspective, it may seem refreshing that Buchanan is no modern romantic in quest of nation, ethnicity, or "soul" — and that he insists on imagining the creation of political culture as a process of hybridization. That he stopped short at the threshold of the Gaelic world nevertheless offers insight into the scope and assumptions of his project, as well as into its problems and ambiguities. Yet Buchanan's decision inherently involved a trade-off: one species of knowledge — universal processes, the recognizable beginnings of social science — would emerge at the expense of more particularist cultural insight. This would prove a persistent pattern in Scottish intellectual history. Both its power and its limitations derive from the underlying preoccupation with being civilized, and from the deep-seated concern to locate Scotland within the categories of civilization.

Buchanan celebrated the abstemious political virtue of the ancient Scots: their central involvement in political decision-taking, their independence, their defence of the realm and its liberties, their resistance to luxury, corruption, standing armies and all the other causes and characteristics of tyranny. Despite this, he professed no singular admiration for the Highlanders and the peoples of the Isles, of whom he could speak very harshly.[45]

[44] *Ibid.*, p. 9. The original reads: "Quod ad me attinet malim ignorare veterem illam, et anilem priscorum Britannorum balbutiem, quam dediscere quodcumque hoc est sermonis latini, quod magno cum labore puer didici. Neque aliud est cur minus moleste feram priscam Scotorum linguam paulatim intermori, quam quod libenter sentiam barbaros illos sonos paulatim euanescere, et in illorum locum Latinarum vocum amoenitatem succedere Quod si in hac transmigratione in alienam linguam necesse est alteros alteris concedere, nos a rusticitate et barbaria ad cultum et humanitatem transeamus: et quod nascendi infelicitate nobis euenit, voluntate, et iudicio exuamus": George Buchanan, *Rerum scoticarum historia* (Edinburgh, 1582, S.T.C 3991), fo. 2ᵇ, ll. 80-8. This passage is discussed in Williamson, *Scottish National Consciousness in the Age of James VI*, p. 124. On the attitudes of classical antiquity, see Chapman's enormously refreshing *Celts*

[45] Buchanan adopted strikingly traditional language when he commented on Highland disorder during David II's reign. "The clans of the ancient Scots too, a race impatient of repose, added to the general disorder by their feuds . . When the country was everywhere else at peace, the Highlanders still continued in arms, and not only raged with cruel and savage barbarity among themselves, but likewise wasted the adjacent counties. The king having in vain tried every other method to produce concord among them, at last sent emissaries to increase their dissentions, till the most ferocious being destroyed by mutual slaughter, the rest might be rendered more mild and more tractable": Buchanan, *History of Scotland*, trans. Aikman, i, pp. 494, 499.

On Buchanan's telling, the great Lord of Argyll Somerled emerges as a trouble-maker, not as Highland hero. Buchanan applauded the Lord of the Isles's council at Islay as a political archetype; nevertheless he denounced Lord Donald the Islander's "accustomed barbarity", and strongly endorsed the Stewart campaign in the fifteenth century to curb the lordship and eventually destroy that Gaelic principality altogether.[46] Certainly Buchanan could also denounce powerful and self-serving Lowland dynasties (like those contemporaries of the Lords of the Isles, the house of Douglas) in language every bit as full-blooded. The Scottish past indicated long-term continuities of enormous significance, but it also suggested a potential for further changes which went beyond mere restoration. Like his predecessor Boece and his successor Hume of Godscroft, and like so many other European humanists, Buchanan would repeatedly stress the need for an *educated* élite. Learning did not detract from military and political virtue, but completed it; and he would angrily denounce "the false idea that literature rendered men idle, slothful and averse to active employment".[47]

To be sure, Buchanan was clear that neither the need for learning, nor the resistance to it, was in any way peculiar to the Scottish aristocracy. And the inverse was equally true: it was essential to his purposes that the Scottish political experience articulated principles directly connected to contemporary Europe, no less than to its antique past. Scotland was not unique in its politics, but only in their survival: the "traces" or "footprints" found among the ancient Scots pointed to earlier and more widespread practices. His *De jure regni apud Scotos: dialogus* spoke to a European audience and was clearly intended to have a European application. Although Buchanan never presented a general analysis of the decline of European liberty, he clearly perceived the surge of late medieval monarchy as manifesting "the degeneracy of the times". James III followed the pattern of Charles of Burgundy, Louis XI of France, John II of Portugal, Edward IV of England and, worst of all, Edward's successor, the infamous Richard III — and the young Scottish king had probably been influenced by their example.[48]

Buchanan did not claim (and could not claim) any thorough-

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[46] *Ibid.*, ii, pp. 27-31, 123-4. [47] *Ibid.*, p. 34.
[48] *Ibid.*, p. 221. Aikman mistranslates "Ioannes" as "James" (cf. Buchanan, *Rerum scoticarum historia*, fo 143*, l. 9). Buchanan of course had in mind João II (1455-95).

going Scottish uniqueness. A severe Scottish exceptionalism would not only qualify his universalist commitments, but, not less important, would inherently condemn the realm to barbarism. Scotland had to be imagined as participating within European civilization, and herein lay the heart of the problem. Gaelic sources might provide a Scottish past. They might provide evidence of military and even of civic virtue. But, in doing so, did they also provide evidence of civilization and culture? Could the Scots, therefore, however virtuous, escape the taint of savagery with which the German Counter-Reformers later caricatured them so viciously?

Hector Boece had addressed this issue by reading cultural meanings into the Scottish origin myths. Gathelus's war-band sojourned a number of years in ancient Egypt (where Gathelus — the founder Gael — married the Pharaoh's equally eponymous daughter Scota) before beginning their long voyage to the west, and Boece attempted to identify Egyptian as well as classical elements in the culture of the Scottish Gaels.[49] These efforts had been well received at the court of James V in the 1530s, and would long appeal to many Scots, but they had ceased to represent a serious option by the later sixteenth century. It seems clear that Buchanan felt considerable ambivalence about the relation between the virtuous Scottish past and humane learning, an ambivalence which informs his attitude towards Celtic sources. His rhetorical question about the Celtic tongues might almost be given larger scope: "Are we then to be allowed to change nothing of our ancient ruggedness?"[50] The *Historia* would occasionally notice learned Scottish kings like Eugenius (d. A.D. 452). It would claim John Scotus Erigena and Duns Scotus. It would speak at greater length of the *cultores Dei* or Culdees, early medieval Irish monks recognized as bringing learning to many parts of Britain and the Continent. It also spoke about St Columba.[51]

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[49] See Arthur H. Williamson, "Number and National Consciousness: The Edinburgh Mathematicians and Scottish Political Culture at the Union of Crowns", in R. A. Mason (ed.), *Scots and Britons: Scottish Political Thought and the Union of 1603* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 187-212.

[50] Buchanan, *History of Scotland*, trans. Aikman, i, p. 10.

[51] *Ibid.*, pp. 203, 209-10, 213, 226, 250-6, 260, 263, 268, 294. The great virtues of the Culdees were their honourable poverty, sincere piety and pursuit of honest (if unspecified) learning, all of which contrasted with the corruption of the high Middle Ages (cf. *ibid*, p. 359). Nevertheless, Buchanan almost seems to restrict the role and significance of Christianity among the ancient Scots. The ninth king, Josina — who in the earlier accounts of Boece and Chambers receives the equivalent of the Mosaic

But the relation of these figures to the political culture with which Buchanan was so centrally concerned is far from clear. Their learning, apparently, did not so much inform that society as to lift it from barbarism. Time and again Buchanan intimates that the ancient Scots were a primitive people, as were all the peoples of the British Isles. The Scottish dynasty was founded as a response to tensions among peoples who were "fierce barbarians". He knew very well that the Scots and the Picts were regarded as barbarians by the Romans. The tale of the death of Kenneth III (c. A.D. 994) by means of a mechanical statue is dismissed as fabulous: it simply was not credible "that after the extinction of the elegant arts among other nations, a statue could be so ingeniously fabricated in the remotest corner of Britain".[52] While Buchanan did indicate that from time to time luxury and corruption were defended in the name of culture, a sense of tension between liberty and civilization persists nevertheless.

Buchanan had ended Mair's rigid bifurcation of Scottish politics. Scotland was no longer simply the location of the Anglo-Irish land frontier. Yet a restored Scotland, aristocratic and broadly republican, implied more than simple revival. It implied cultural revolution, the integration of multiple traditions and of a variety of worlds. Ironically, the curse of barbarism turned out to have creative consequences, not simply debilitating ones. The tensions and complexities which resulted from it would eventually play a central role in the creation of Scottish social science.

Of more immediate importance was the status of Buchanan's Scotland. As the *Historia* asserted emphatically, the realm was imperial in the sense of its unassailable sovereignty. Still, in at least two important senses, the realm was distinctly non-imperial. Whatever the historical involvement of Scotland in Ulster, Man, or the northern English counties, there existed no inferior or

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revelation from Spanish philosophers — is reduced in Buchanan's hand to a Gaelic medicine man. The first coming of Christianity to Scotland during the reign of Donald I (c. A.D 194) is noticed only in passing. Oddly enough, Buchanan seems to suggest that paganism fits well with the ancient virtue: the restoration of one appears to involve the restoration of the other (*ibid* , pp. 163, 183). Contrast with Boece, *Heir Beginnis the Hystory and Croniklis of Scotland,* trans. Bellenden, fos xviᵃ-xviiᵃ; David Chambers, *Histoire abbregée de tous les roys* (Paris, 1579), fo. 7; also with popular versions like John Monipennie, *Certayn Matters concerning the Realme of Scotland, Composed Together* (Edinburgh, 1594?), S.T.C. 18016; London, 1597, S.T.C. 18017; London, 1603, S.T.C. 18018); J Monipennie, *The Abridgement or Summarie of the Scots Chronicles* (London, 1612, S.T.C. 18014).

[52] Buchanan, *History of Scotland,* trans. Aikman, ı, pp. 159, 221, 231, 317.

dependent crowns. The Constantinian model had been resolutely rejected; Scotland in no way constituted a multiple state. Instead, the model derived from antique Sparta or modern Venice, which were traditionally visualized (whatever might have been the historical reality) as aristocratic, stable and enormously long-lived.[53] Again in defiance of reality, these polities were also understood as being non-expansive (in contrast to more democratic Rome), and thus Buchanan's Scotland was also non-imperial in the modern sense which emerged in the sixteenth century.

Accordingly, Buchanan's reaction to European imperialism in the New World was distinctively negative. Like Montaigne and a great many others in France at mid-century, Buchanan became increasingly aware of the indigenous inhabitants of the Americas. Judging from his subsequent writings, Buchanan evidently reflected on the Portuguese encounter with the Indians of Brazil while he served as a member of the faculty of arts at the University of Coimbra. It seems likely that he later did so in France, too, where this event much exercised the public imagination. As early as 1550, for example, an elaborate Brazilian tableau was staged at Rouen, which portrayed that land as a luxurious Garden of Eden. From within the idyllic picture emerged both real and dummy Indians, presented as leading a primitive and happy natural life.[54] Nicolas de Villegaignon's voyage to Brazil in 1557 was well known, and Montaigne apparently conversed with a Brazilian at Rouen in 1562. Anticipating Montaigne — whose famous essay on the Brazilian cannibals (c.1578-80) sought to show the severe limits of rational cognition rather than to idealize Indian society — Buchanan too found no model in the New World. Again like Montaigne, Buchanan decried Portuguese viciousness and corruption — which he found even worse than any Indian barbarity.[55] The title of his *In colonias brasilienses, vel*

[53] See J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton, 1975); Buchanan, *De iure regni apud Scotos.*

[54] Kendrick, *British Antiquity*, p. 121; cf. *Une fête brésilienne célébrée à Rouen en 1550*, ed. Ferdinand Denis (Paris, 1850), which reprints the description that appeared in 1551.

[55] Thus Montaigne contrasts the relatively humane execution of prisoners among the Brazilians with the appalling tortures of late introduced by the Portuguese — and these latter were gradually replacing native practices. "They [the Brazilians] thought these people from the other world [i.e., the Portuguese], being men who had sown the knowledge of many vices among their neighbors and were much greater masters than themselves in every sort of wickedness, did not adopt this sort of vengeance without some reason, and that it must be more painful than their own, so they began to give up their old method and to follow this one": *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*, trans. Donald Frame (Stanford, 1957), p. 155.

sodomitas, a Lusitanis missos in Brasiliam (1568) is fitting: the horror of cannibalism itself paled before the perversity of the degenerate settlers, whose "accursed filthiness" (*execranda spurcitia*) disgraced Christian Europe. In Horatian alcaic strophes, Buchanan poured out an extraordinary wrath:

> Descende coele turbine flammeo
> Armatus iras, Angele, vindices,
> Libidinum jam notus ultor
> Exitio Sodomae impudicae.

> En rursus armis quod pereat tuis
> Lustrum Gomorrhae suscitat aemulum
> Syrum propago, et exsecrandae
> Spurcitiae renovat palaestram.

(Come down from the sky in flaming whirlwind, armed, angel, with avenging anger, long since known as the scourge of lust in the destruction of Sodom the wicked city. May it perish once more at thy hands! The progeny of the Syrians calls up a sacrificial offering to rival Gomorrah, and it renews an arena for accursed and unspeakable filthiness.)

<p style="text-align:center">★ ★ ★</p>

> O Christiani infamia nominis!
> O foeda labes et nota temporum!
> O turpium turpisque causa, et
> Exitus, et pretium laborum!

(O shame of the Christian name! O shameful decline and sign of the times! O vile cause of villainous men, both the outcome and the prize of their labours.)

The consequences of the appalling colonists for the people of Brazil were all too evident:

> Pars ista mundi, quam sibi propriam
> Sedem dicavit mollis amoenitas
> Luxusque, sub foedis colonis
> Servitium tolerat pudendum.

(That part of the world which a gentle and temperate exuberance has consecrated as its own seat and proper place suffers a shameful servitude under the rule of these disgusting settlers.)

<p style="text-align:center">★ ★ ★</p>

> Quem, rere, ponet nequitiae modum
> Frenis libido libera? et insolens
> Humanioris ferre victus
> Illecebras meliore coelo?

(What limit to wickedness, say you, does unbridled lust set for itself, unused to the enticements of a more humane way of living under a better sky?)

<div align="center">★   ★   ★</div>

Ignota rostris verrimus aequora,
Gentis quietas sollicitavimus
Terrore belli, orbisque pacem
Miscuimus misero tumultu . . .

Gens illa nullos mitis in hospites,
Et ora victu assueta nefario,
Portenta conspexit Cyclopum
Sanguinea dape foediora.

(We swept unknown waters with our prows; we went after peaceful peoples with the terror of war, and we stirred misery and tumult into the peace of the world . . . Those people [i.e., the Brazilians], hospitable to no guests, and shores[56] accustomed to an unspeakable diet [i.e., human flesh], have looked upon sights more disgraceful than the bloody feasts of the Cyclops.)[57]

There could be little doubt who was worse or where corruption really lay, and Buchanan ended his poem by calling on both the bowels of the earth and the heavens to issue forth fire upon the pestilent Portuguese colonists and destroy them.[58]

Montaigne would make a more highly articulated but broadly similar argument, even though his central concern was to contrast Brazilian practices with French behaviour during the religious wars.[59] Despite drawing diametrically opposed political conclusions — Buchanan's Calvinist revolutionary activism contrasts utterly with Montaigne's Catholic conservative quietism — they had participated in a common intellectual environment during the 1540s, and their approach to the New World breathes a common spirit. Perhaps even more emphatically than Montaigne, Buchanan aimed at degenerate Europe, rather than at any New World virtue.

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[56] *Ora*: a pun on the more usual meaning, "mouths"?

[57] George Buchanan, *In colonias brasilienses, vel sodomitas, a Lusitanis missos in Brasiliam*, in his *Opera omnia*, ed. Thomas Ruddiman, 2 vols. (Leiden, 1725), ii, pp. 293-4.

[58] *Ibid.*, p. 294

[59] Was it more barbarous to roast a man when dead (as the Brazilians did) or when alive (as the French did in the case of heretics)? Montaigne made it clear, however, that the Brazilians provided no model. "I am not sorry that we notice the barbarous horror of such acts [as cannibalism], but I am heartily sorry that, judging their faults rightly, we should be so blind to our own": *Complete Essays of Montaigne*, trans. Frame, p. 155

It is not altogether clear from Buchanan's verses what struck him as so profoundly wrong about the *turpes colonos* of Portuguese Brazil. Yet from his continual references to Sodom and Gomorrah, sexual pollution, "accursed and unspeakable filthiness", defilement, unbridled lust, "filthy perverts" (*impuris cinaedis*), clerical homosexuality — and a potential pun on the word *labes* (falling off) and *tabes* (plague, pestilence) in the line "O foeda labes et nota temporum!" ("O shameful decline [plague?] and sign of the times!") — one might almost think that European decadence had manifested itself in the syphilis pandemic.[60] Where James VI denounced degenerate, tobacco-smoking, syphilitic ("pockie") Indians, Buchanan appears to have decried degenerate, syphilitic colonists. Certainly his hostility ran deep and, for Buchanan, the consequences were necessarily deeply anti-imperial.

Thus in his poem, *In Polyonymum* ("To Polyonymus"), Buchanan mocked and castigated the multi-named monster that was Portuguese imperialism:

> Lusitanicus unus es mare ultra et
> Citra Algarbicus Indicusque Arabsque,
> Persicus Guineusque et Africanus
> Congusque et Manicongus et Zalophus;
> Nec tuis titulis abest superbis
> Aethiops nimio perustus aestu,
> Nec circum triplicem refusus orbem
> Cunctarum Oceanus parens aquarum;
> Nec portus neque merx neque insula ulla est,
> Lucelli unde levis refulget aura,
> Quae *te non titulo* augeat. Tot ergo
> Cui sunt nomina, nonne iure Regem
> Multis nominibus vocabo magnum?
> Sed Rex nominibus tot ille magnus,
> Si belli furor aut mare aestuosum
> Occludat piperariam tabernam,
> [Famam fenore pransitabit emptam]
> Versuram faciet vel esuribit.

(Being a single Portuguese, you are known on either side of the sea as ruler of the Algarve, of India, Arabia, Persia, Portuguese Guinea, Africa, the Congo, the Kongo Kingdom, and Sofala, and your proud titles include that of the ruler of Ethiopia parched with excessive heat, and of Ocean

[60] Homosexuality was one the charges eventually laid by the Lisbon Inquisition against the faculty members of the University of Coimbra's ill-fated Colégio das Artes — though apparently not against Buchanan personally. Buchanan must have felt enormous anger at what he regarded as the guilty accusing the innocent of their own crimes See A. H. de Oliveira Marques, *History of Portugal*, 2 vols. (New York, 1972), i, p. 299.

father of all waters, flowing round the threefold globe; and there is no port, trade, or island from which a slight gleam of profit shines which does not enhance you with a title. Since you have so many names, shall I not be right in calling you the Great King of Many Names? But if the fury of war or the raging sea shuts down the pepper stall, that great King of so many names will [lunch on the reputation purchased with borrowed money; he will] borrow money, or go hungry.)[61]

The empire was an inherently unstable and vulnerable commercial world that provided no stage upon which virtue might be enacted. Buchanan would hardly have shared James VI's enthusiasm for the commercial development of the Isles and its promise of civilizing effects. But he would surely have appreciated Garrett Mattingly's comment that by 1560 the Portuguese monarchy had in effect become the proprietor of "a bankrupt wholesale grocery business". He not only had little interest in Scottish overseas trade; at moments he showed a simply extraordinary willingness to accept its complete constriction.[62]

[61] George Buchanan, *In Polyonymum*, ed. and trans. Philip J. Ford and W. S. Watt, in Ford, *George Buchanan*, pp. 144-5. The bracketed line is thought to be a variant which became conflated: *ibid.*, p. 187. See also I D. Mcfarlane, *Buchanan* (London, 1981), p. 156. Together, as well as independently, these lines offer powerful insight into Buchanan's attitudes. Mary Elizabeth Perry has argued persuasively that in Spain the much-prosecuted "nefarious sin" of buggery constituted the anti-natural counterpart to the anti-theological sin of heresy. At the same time she claims that the Inquisition records "reflect a desire to protect the reputation of the Church" and that "accounts of improper behavior in the confessional refer only obliquely to homosexual activity". M. E. Perry, "The 'Nefarious Sin' in Early Modern Seville", in Kent Gerard and Gert Hekma (eds.), *The Pursuit of Sodomy: Male Homosexuality in Renaissance and Enlightenment Europe* (Binghamton, 1989), pp 67-89. Winfried Schleiner makes the arresting point that English writers in the late sixteenth century identified "commerce" as gold, wealth and trade with "commerce" as sexual intercourse and poisoning: W. Schleiner, "Moral Attitudes toward Syphilis and its Prevention in the Renaissance", *Bull. Hist. Medicine*, lxviii (1994), pp 391-2. I am indebted to Raymond Waddington for drawing my attention to these two articles Counter-Reformation literature generally had accused both Luther and Calvin of being sodomites, while the Inquisition reserved the ultimate penalty — being burned alive — for heretics and for those convicted of the "nefarious sin"· Nicholas P. Canny, "The Formation of the Irish Mind: Religion, Politics and Gaelic Irish Literature, 1580-1750", *Past and Present*, no. 95 (May 1982), pp. 91-116.

[62] Mattingly is cited (without further reference) by Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Spain and Portugal* (Madison, 1973), p 239 Amazingly, Buchanan seems to endorse warmly Alexander III's policies which restricted Scottish merchants to the internal retail trade. "As either through ignorance of navigation, or by being tempted through avarice to venture too rashly to sea, many shipwrecks had occurred; and as by frequent piracies the company of merchants were almost entirely ruined, [Alexander] ordered that they should no more carry on trade by sea. The regulation, after it had continued for a year, and was even complained of by some as a public grievance, yet, at length, occasioned so great a quantity of foreign merchandise to be brought to the country, that such articles were never so abundant nor so cheap in Scotland; but that, in this case too, he might consult the interest of the regular traders, he forbade that any

Buchanan's poem *Brasilia* (contemporary with his *In colonias Brasilienses*) lamented João III's policy of abandoning Moroccan territories for the unjust conquest of the New World:

> Africa deseritur, miles mendicat egenus,
> Vi sine tuta fugax oppida Maurus habet.
> Accipit obscoenos Brasilia fusca colonos,
> Quique prius pueros foderat, arva fodit,
> Qui sua militibus tollit, dat rura cinaedis,
> Jure sub adverso nil bene Marte gerit.

(Africa is deserted, the needy soldier begs; without a struggle the Moor, prone to flight, holds safe the towns. Dark Brazil takes on the obscene settlers. And he [i.e., the clergy] who formerly defiled the boys, defiles the fields, and he [i.e., João] who takes away land [in Morocco] from his own soldiers, gives it [in Brazil] to the perverts. Nothing goes well in war when right is on the other side.)[63]

This intensely anti-clerical poem condemns the entire imperial enterprise in the New World. In some ways suggestive of Montaigne's later essay "Of Coaches" (1585-8),[64] its tone, if anything, is even more unremittingly critical.

Morocco, however, appears to have held an altogether different place within Buchanan's perceptions (and perhaps within the Portuguese imagination as well). More or less contiguous to the realm and with significant possessions there dating back well over a century, the region seems to have comprised a sort of indigenous frontier. The Moroccan "towns" Buchanan surely has in mind are most notably the fortresses of Alcácer and Arzila, abandoned by the Portuguese in 1549 and 1550 in favour of the consolidation of Brazil.[65] Buchanan's concern for the soldiers and the lands the king surrendered in Morocco, as he launched the clergy into

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person should buy from foreigners, except the merchants, all others being ordered to purchase what they wanted in retail from them"· Buchanan, *History of Scotland*, trans. Aikman, i, pp 391-2.

[63] George Buchanan, *Brasilia*, in his *Opera omnia*, ed. Ruddiman, ii, p. 293.

[64] *Complete Essays of Montaigne*, trans. Frame, pp. 685-99.

[65] João III abandoned several important Moroccan fortresses during Buchanan's residence in Portugal The most important were Alcácer (1549) and Arzila (1550). Also, in 1549 João appointed Tomé de Sousa governor of Brazil with the assignment of centralizing and co-ordinating its occupation — which included establishing a capital at Bahía de Todos os Santos. Although royal policies towards Morocco and Brazil long pre-dated these specific decisions, the decisions necessarily gave them public prominence. It is difficult to say what Buchanan would have made of King Sebastian's later ill-fated adventure in Morocco as "Christ's captain": see H. W. Livermore, *A New History of Portugal* (Cambridge, 1966), pp. 146, 149, 153; De Oliviera Marques, *History of Portugal*, i, pp 308, 311-12.

Brazil ("he who takes away land from his own soldiers, gives it to the perverts"), is highly suggestive. Has the planting of soldiers as citizen-farmers on the classical model been supplanted by a clerical world empire? Has military virtue been corrupted by growing clerical power? Certainly Buchanan had experienced at first hand the growing clericalism of João ("the Pious") and the freshly unleashed Lisbon Inquisition.[66]

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Whatever his attitude towards Morocco (and his political purposes in *Brasilia*), Buchanan's critique of Europe's adventure in the New World by no means precluded what might be called internal expansion or perhaps regional consolidation. Under the fifth earl of Argyll, Clan Campbell expanded at the expense of the partially indigenous MacDonalds (among others) in the name of a Gaelic Protestantism.[67] At least on the surface, the fusion of Gaeldom's ancient Scots with "disciplined" and book-oriented Protestantism may well have embodied the cultural interpenetration implied by Buchanan's work — and life. The Campbells may have adopted an archipelagic perspective and refined the notion of Britain. Yet in the intellectual world of George Buchanan and, possibly, in the political world of the Campbells, one could imagine an Achaean League or dynastic hegemony, even growth by agglomeration. But it would prove difficult indeed to imagine imperialism in the sense which became normative by the late sixteenth

[66] João became increasingly fearful of crypto-Judaism and subversion — and became a militant, intolerant promoter of the Counter-Reformation — during the latter part of his long reign: see De Oliviera Marques, *History of Portugal*, i, p 215; Payne, *History of Spain and Portugal*, p. 238; Alexandre Herculano, *A History of the Origin and Establishment of the Inquisition in Portugal*, ed. Y. H. Yerushalmi, trans John C Branner (New York, 1972).

[67] See Jane Dawson, "Two Kingdoms or Three? Ireland in Anglo-Scottish Relations in the Middle of the Sixteenth Century", in Mason (ed.), *Scotland and England, 1286-1815*, pp. 113-38, Alexander Grant, *Independence and Nationhood. Scotland, 1306-1469* (London, 1984), ch. 8, "Highlands and Lowlands", pp 200-20; A. Grant, "Scotland's 'Celtic Fringe' in the Late Middle Ages: The MacDonald Lords of the Isles and the Kingdom of Scotland", in R. R. Davis (ed.), *The British Isles, 1100-1500: Comparisons, Contrasts and Connections* (Edinburgh, 1988), pp. 118-41; Arthur H. Williamson, "Social Science and the Reconstruction of the Scottish Past", *Jl Brit. Studies*, xxvi (1987), pp. 354-60; Arthur H. Williamson, "From the Invention of Great Britain to the Creation of British History: A New Historiography", *ibid.*, xxix (1990), pp. 267-76.

century. Even so, it would inherently be well nigh impossible to imagine one thing: an "Indian".

Both Buchanan and his sometime professor Mair reflected on the sixteenth-century Iberian world, and their severely conflicting perceptions of it were integral to their radically different visions of Scotland. At the heart of the matter lay the meaning of civilization. Their successors — most notably Hume of Godscroft and James VI, respectively — would build on and rework their thinking. If Buchanan's critique of commerce (like his pupil's promotion of it) pointed to the future in ways that Mair's concerns did not, the confrontation of their thinking remains of prime importance. Together they had defined one of the central and enduring fissures within Scottish political culture.

Yet at only a slightly deeper level, both the imperialist and the anti-imperialist — both those who saw virtue as integral to the imperial entreprise and those who saw it as inimical to it — participated in a shared undertaking. Their common project was to imagine culture within a cold, northern and (putatively) altogether inhospitable land. As it did for their contemporary Hector Boece, this preoccupation enjoined a European horizon from which neither they nor virtually any of their successors could ever fully depart. It was a circumstance that pointed Scottish thought towards general principles rather than particularist identities, to social science rather than ethnic uniqueness, to humanity rather than nationality.

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