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PROJECTING DYNASTIC MAJESTY: STATE CEREMONY IN THE REIGN OF ROBERT THE BRUCE

Lucinda H. S. Dean*

Introduction

Robert the Bruce’s inauguration ceremony took place at Scone in late March 1306,¹ in the midst of the crisis incited by the murder of his rival John Comyn by his own hand on 10 February at Greyfriars in Dumfries.² Isabella, countess of Buchan, enthroned and possibly crowned him as the adult representative of the earldom of Fife,³ and the collected “baronage” gave their oath of fealty to the new king. Much about this ceremony is speculative, as is often the case with the early reign of Robert Bruce. However, subsequent retrospective legitimization of the Bruce claims to the royal succession, highlighted by Michael Penman, suggest that all possible means by which Robert’s inauguration could emulate those of his illustrious Canmore predecessors would have been emphasized, particularly

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where they served the common purpose of legitimizing Robert’s highly questioned hold on power. This ceremony may also have witnessed the introduction of ceremonial elements that had previously been missing from earlier Scottish inaugurations, the inclusion of which would have been specifically aimed at emphasizing his right to rule on a level with his contemporaries. His contemporary monarchs included Philip IV, who ruled at the “zenith of Capetian power” in France, and Edward I of England who, following the conquest of Wales, granted his teenage son and heir the new title of the Prince of Wales. These men ruled from positions of dynastic longevity and relative security; a position quite the opposite of Bruce in 1306. While the former cultivated magnificent courts built upon magnanimous patronage, Bruce fought for the very right they deemed naturally their own – the right to rule unchallenged.

The history of fourteenth-century Scotland is inextricably entwined with the Wars of Independence, civil strife and an accelerated struggle for autonomous rule. The historiography of this period is unsurprisingly heavily dominated by themes including famous victories, such as Bannockburn in June 1314, and the conspiracies against Bruce, such as the Soules Conspiracy (1318-1320). Nevertheless, the scope is ever widening, with works exploring subjects such as the tomb of Bruce and the piety of the Bruce dynasty. Furthermore, there has also been a growing focus upon the use of propaganda and visual expressions of royal authority in medieval Scotland, particularly an increasing focus on the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries as a period of crucial development. However, the ceremonial history of this era still requires focused and detailed attention. Robert I may have started his reign in a less than auspicious manner, but he was very much aware of the royal court culture of his main adversary Edward I, having spent time as a bachelor in the English court in the early 1290s. The contentious beginnings of his reign can be argued to have fuelled his subsequent efforts to raise Scottish kingship from its troubled recent past through an engagement with courtly ceremonial practices flourishing elsewhere across Europe. This essay will address three key ceremonies through which a king would, traditionally, make powerful statements of royal authority:
the controversial inauguration or coronation of Bruce, the marriage of his infant son to the English princess Joan of the Tower in 1328, and his extravagant funeral ceremony in 1329. By focusing thus, this essay will act to further illuminate that glory and dynastic majesty were as central to the Scottish monarchy in the early fourteenth century as war and political turbulence.

To Crown the King: Scone, 1306
The removal of the Scottish regalia and the inaugural stone by Edward I in 1296, following the forced abdication of John Balliol from the Scottish throne, clearly left a gaping hole in the ceremonial rite for the king who would next take the throne. Although it has been convincingly argued that the inaugural stone has perhaps achieved an inflated importance through its removal, the circumstances surrounding the accession of Robert I ten years later undoubtedly hindered the provision of high quality replacement regalia. Nonetheless, there were some prominent items presented to Bruce by Robert Wishart, bishop of Glasgow, including a royal mantle. The royal mantle was an item of the Scottish regalia marked out in the famous accounts of the inaugural ceremony of Alexander III in 1249 and can be seen grasped by subsequent generations of Scottish monarchs in the images upon their seals. The provision of this mantle to “enrobe or dress” the new monarch, along with a banner displaying the arms of the king of Scots, is recorded in a document written to the pope by the English expounding the rebellious actions of Bishop Wishart, particularly the hand he played in Robert’s inauguration. Wishart’s involvement, and that of William Lamberton, bishop of St Andrews, who had trained in part under Wishart at Glasgow in his early ecclesiastical career, should be drawn into the foreground briefly. Both bishops later denied their presence at Robert’s inauguration ceremony to Edward I, but this was likely to have been for their own protection in the face of accusation. The papal bull that granted Scottish kings the right to full coronation with unction was not granted until twenty-three years later in 1329, but it specified these two prominent churchmen as those who “traditionally” invested the monarch. It is possible, therefore, that this bull was retrospective permission for an act already
undertaken. Scottish monarchs had long sought this ultimate recognition of their equal royal status, with both Alexander II and the minority government of Alexander III most recently seeking the right of unction. The crisis of power in 1306 was certainly one of great enough magnitude to have precipitated drastic measures to prove Robert’s legitimacy.

Various accounts refer to the crowning of the king, including the English chronicler Walter of Guisborough and the fifteenth-century Book of Pluscarden, as well as a further English document which records that Englishman Geoffrey de Coigners had concealed “a certain coronet of gold with which Robert de Brus lately caused himself to be crowned in.” A curious and less than patriotic fourteenth-century parody, found embedded in a contemporary Scottish chronicle manuscript, further emphasizes the bishop’s involvement with the following indictment:

And [before] the Abbat of Scone,  
John Earl of Atho, Simon Frase, and  
his brothers [...] and many [more] was  
he crowned first by the abominable  
Bishops of Glasgow and St Andrews [...]  

If both bishops were in attendance, as the parody suggests and Barrow has long since posited, they may have gone even further than crowning Robert Bruce on the Feast of the Annunciation of the Virgin (25 March) in 1306. The king had just committed a heinous crime and he had turned to Wishart for absolution. Wishart may ultimately have pushed for anointing for his own piece of mind, to absolve Robert and cleanse (or re-baptize) him in readiness for receiving the crown, as much as for the aggrandizement of Bruce. This action would have gone against papal restrictions on Scottish royal (and ecclesiastical) power, but papal relations were unlikely to have featured heavily in the mind of a king who had just murdered a man in a church. Penman has recently argued that this baptism and renewal was in fact continued and further emphasised in the subsequent Palm Sunday Mass, which the Bishop of St Andrews admitted to undertaking. Such a ceremony, reflecting Christ’s entry into Jerusalem, would have
been heavily laden with rich symbolism that would have been appreciated by all in attendance.\textsuperscript{24}

John Watt has proposed, when discussing Philip IV of France, that where authority was openly threatened or a king felt “wounded” in this era it often created some of the most absolute statements of royal prerogative.\textsuperscript{25} What clearer statement could have been made at this juncture? Moreover, Edward I’s reaction to the ceremony was extreme, and all involved felt his wrath with vicious attacks on Bruce’s family and adherents. Scone Abbey was under continued scrutiny until at least 1307, with searches carried out for relics and other valuable items; Henry Mann, abbot of Scone, along with Bishop Lamberton, Bishop Wishart, and Isabella, countess of Buchan, were all imprisoned, the latter infamously placed in a wooden cage at Berwick.\textsuperscript{26} Sonja Cameron and Alasdair Ross emphasize the fact that, while Lamberton was released relatively quickly, Wishart’s punishment and exile was far more extreme than that of his ecclesiastical colleague and continued well into the reign of his son, Edward II.\textsuperscript{27} Interestingly, the length of incarceration and severity of punishment was equally harsh for Isabella, countess of Buchan, implying that it was by these two that the English monarchy felt most betrayed. This certainly suggests that they had gone beyond merely assisting Bruce in raising himself to the throne in the manner of his predecessors, rather creating a ceremonial occasion designed to make the Scottish king an equal to his English rival and remove any undertones of subservience that lingered.

**Ambition and Display in the Marriage of David Bruce and Joan of the Tower**

Robert Bruce’s own marriages had occurred long before his succession and there had been few opportunities beyond the battlefield for the Scottish king to demonstrate his royal majesty to a captive audience including foreign guests.\textsuperscript{28} His second wife, Elizabeth de Burgh, was accorded the title of queen in chronicle accounts, but none of the records of Robert I’s accession in 1306 suggest that his wife was present during the ritual, and she was captured shortly after in the repercussions that befell Bruce’s family and adherents.\textsuperscript{29} Even following victories against the
English, particularly Bannockburn and the subsequent release of Elizabeth, there are no records that indicate that her return was utilized for ceremonial display or a consort crowning. However, the marriage of Prince David, the infant heir of Robert I, to Joan of the Tower, daughter of the deposed Edward II and sister of Edward III, in 1328 provided a prominent opportunity for Bruce and must be considered primarily as a representation of the royal authority of the father rather than the son.

Heralded by the Treaty of Edinburgh–Northampton agreed in the spring of 1328 with Queen Isabella and Mortimer on behalf of Edward III, this marriage was intended to be the triumphant conclusion to the long drawn-out war between England and Scotland. Crucially for Scotland and Bruce, the treaty led to the English monarchy finally being forced to accept the sovereignty and independence of Robert I as King of Scotland, along with the return of the Black Rood relic. However, the young Edward III was by no means as anxious for peace as his mother and the agreement was a fragile one. Opinions recorded in some of the English chronicles at the time of the match also reveal open hostility, including one which states that the union was an “abaschemente oft alle Raille Blode of Englande.” Such opinions were undoubtedly aggravated by the demonstrations of Scottish confidence that accompanied the marriage and the shift in the balance of power that it represented. The very choice of Berwick as a site for the wedding was provocative: the town had been central to Bruce’s attempts to reclaim Scotland’s former boundaries, it was the last town retaken from the English, and the site from which he had “dictated” his terms in 1327. Even the ability to choose the venue made a distinct departure from the previous Anglo-Scottish marital unions of his Canmore predecessors, for this time the control was placed firmly in the hands of the Scots. The choice of Berwick overtly emphasized the victories Robert had achieved for his dynasty, and this prosperous border burgh – one of the largest in the realm – was able to support ceremonies designed to reflect an image of plenitude and opulence that would rival those of his contemporaries in scale and design.

The details of the betrothal ceremony on 17 July 1328 itself are sparse in surviving descriptive accounts. Despite the latent
animosity which remained between the English and the Scots in 1328, the chroniclers of both realms concur that the marriage was accompanied by rich display, competitive shows of knightly valour and luxurious feasting lasting for several days. Financial records for medieval Scotland are patchy at best and absent at worst, but there are surviving Exchequer Rolls covering the final two years of Robert I’s reign that add valuable insight to the preparations. Even the smallest details can be used to build up a picture of the event, such as the payments made to repair a wall around the cemetery of Saint Trinity church in Berwick after the ceremony, implying that the crowds collected in great volume around the church to see the infant royals enter and exit the church. Moreover, the records suggest a far higher cost than the proposed £1,000 price tag put on the celebrations by Penman, with the three main totals recorded adding up to over £2,300 without the individual smaller entries and additional supplies in livestock and other goods. Supplies were brought in from far and wide. Basics such as grain, flour, malt, barley, oats, beef, mutton and fifty-six casks of wine were brought to Berwick from around the Scottish realm, and the more expensive and exotic purchases arrived from abroad. While such procurement of goods may seem normal, this royal wedding in 1328 marks the first occasion when the Scottish financial sources yield sufficient material to assess the scale of ceremony and feasting found at an extraordinary event.

Two named merchants – Peter the Machinist and Thomas de Carnato – made separate journeys of acquisition specifically to procure items required for the festivities, recording spending of £941, 6d. and £400 respectively. Thomas de Carnato was, unfortunately for historians, royally exempt from providing an itemized list of his purchases, although the limited evidence suggests that his cargo contained exotic silks and precious metals, which will be discussed shortly. No royal exemption existed for Peter the Machinist so a full itemized list remains recording that he purchased a range of items, particularly fine fabrics, food stuffs, and cooking and serving equipment. The food products purchased illustrate the myriad of flavours and exotic aromas found in the feasting that took place, including pepper, cinnamon, honey, nutmeg, olive oil, galangal, mustard, cumin, ginger, saffron and
sugar. All these products were bought in vast quantities; for example, one bale of ginger contained 1,060 pounds of the spice and over forty pounds of saffron were bought for use in this ceremony, which give a clear indication of the scale of the event.

The quantity of food, quality of meat, and variety of exotic flavours would naturally have been used as an indicator of wealth and status. However, there are some purchases made together that particularly stand out: 4,360 pounds of almonds, forty loaves of sugar (equating to around 378 pounds), 2,104 “confections” and eight pounds of “colours for food.” These quantities of sugar, confections, and almonds combined with food colourings suggest some form of decorative marzipan dessert, with the colours possibly used for designs such as coats of arms as were used in the fifteenth century. During the wedding feast of James II and Mary of Guelders in 1449 the two main decorative dishes are found described by a French observer: the first, a savoury dish with a painted stuffed boar’s head surrounded by banners displaying the arms of the king and his nobility; and the second, an exquisitely crafted ship with silver cords carried in by the Admiral of the Scottish fleet, William Sinclair [St Clair] earl of Orkney, and four knights. Considering this marriage treaty signed at Brussels in 1449 was one of mutual military support and trade alliances, the latter display would have made a pointed statement about the nature of the marital union. This event was some hundred years after David’s marriage, when such forms of display were rising in prominence and elaboration. Yet, the financial accounts of the fourteenth-century Scottish court hint at the kind of displays that were the foundations of such later developments and reveal a ready understanding of the opportunities that food offered as a medium for projecting magnificence.

Food was, of course, just one item in an arsenal of display that could be deployed at such an occasion. Coloured cloth costing around £265, with additional vast quantities of fur for lining and trimming, was purchased for the clothing of soldiers, attendants, and men-at-arms for the wedding. The colours of the cloth are not specified; however, the lion rampant had been introduced by William I and rapidly became a prominent royal symbol – featuring on Alexander III’s and Bruce’s seal and later on David’s coinage.
Moreover, Stevenson has emphasized that the use of this powerful symbol of royalty was enhanced by Robert I on his seal as part of his broader project of display and propaganda. This increases the probability of the symbol’s use on the clothing of these men, as a potent but also relatively cheap way of making a strong royal statement. The expense lavished on the soldiers and attendants suggest that these figures would have been highly visible in the ceremony. They probably formed part of a ceremonial procession leading the couple to and from the church, and played their part in the feasting display by carrying the courses of food, led by the master of the household or another key official, as in fifteenth-century Scottish and European ceremonies. There was also a significant payment of over £61 made to a group of minstrels for their performances at the wedding celebrations. This was more than double the amount paid for over £61 made to a group of minstrels for David and Joan at the time of their coronation in 1331, while a group of English minstrels at Dumbarton shortly after the wedding festivities received just £4. These comparative expenses indicate that there were great numbers of musicians employed for an extended period of time at the wedding, and further amplify historians’ understanding of the scale of the occasion.

Regrettably, despite the relative wealth of material for David II’s marriage ceremony provided in the accounts, they do not allow many conclusions to be drawn with regards to the attire of the royal couple themselves. As previously noted, the merchant Thomas de Carnato appears to have been well-trusted by the crown, and the records that do exist of his purchases demonstrate that he was definitely purchasing precious metals:

\[\ldots\] Et pro vno sigillo aureo ad opus regis, cum cathena argentea deaurata, et vno sigillo argenteo, cum cathena argentea, pro domino rege nunc regnante, cvij s. \[\ldots\]

\[\ldots\] And for one gold seal for the work of the king, with a silver gilt chain and one silver seal, with a silver chain, for the lord king currently ruling, 108s.
The existence of a specific and full set of royal regalia in Scotland at the start of Robert’s reign was certainly unlikely. However, Robert I’s manner of projecting Scottish magnificence and royal authority through this wedding seemed to spare no expense in creating the kind of image that would promote Scotland’s capacity to compete on the European stage, particularly with England. It is, therefore, highly probable that items of regalia (possibly child-sized) were made or purchased for the young prince for his wedding to Joan, and that Carnato may have been entrusted to acquire items such as a crown. Moreover, it is equally plausible that Robert sought to embellish or acquire new regalia of his own in preparation for the ceremony at Berwick. Alexander Brook has suggested that the cut of the diamonds found in the Scottish crown that remains extant today are of Indian origin, the style of which can be most comfortably dated back to the fourteenth century. Robert would not have been in the position to purchase diamonds and fit them to his crown for his own inaugural ceremony in 1306, but he could have done so at a later date.

Despite all the pleasure and luxuries provided at Berwick, the absence of Robert I himself must have been marked. The king did not accompany his son to Berwick; instead, Thomas Randolph, earl of Moray, and Sir James Douglas headed the party. Penman has proposed that Bruce’s decision was a conscious reaction to Edward III’s refusal to attend. However, it seems odd that Robert would snub his own son in this manner, particularly when he had laid out such great expense, due to the behaviour of teenaged Edward III who, unlike Robert, had little reason to rejoice in such a union. A more likely reason for his absence can be found in the chronicles and financial accounts of the latter years of Robert’s life, which all emphasise the issues regarding his increasingly ill health. The costs for the wedding are tellingly intermingled with the payments of physicians, for his tomb being fashioned in Paris, and even the preparations for his funeral. Furthermore, Barbour’s account describes a crowning ceremony for David and Joan following their return to Edinburgh in 1328:

He [Robert] has gert set a parliament
And thidder with mony men is went,
For he thoct he wald in his lyff
Croun his young son and his wyff
And at that parliament sua he did.⁵⁸

Barbour suggests that this parliament also contained an act of succession that officially placed the Steward (Robert Stewart, later Robert II) in line for the throne should the young prince die. This, along with the guardianship of Thomas Randolph and Sir James Douglas, was confirmed through oaths of fealty from the gathered estates. While this reveals Robert I’s confidence to crown the young couple without papal sanction, it also draws the pleasures of the wedding ceremony, and potential stability that the union should have brought, into a sharp contrast with the fear of dynastic insecurity that this infant couple’s accession would bring should Robert die during their infancy. Hindsight should not colour our view here, and it is true that many kings have been found preparing their tombs long before death. However, Robert’s preparations for death and the payments for physicians, found amidst those for the wedding, suggest that the king and those close to him were well aware of the speed with which this bond of peace could be shattered.

The Final Journey: Bruce’s Funeral, 1329
When it comes to scale of opulence and extravagance, it is perhaps the closing ceremony of Robert’s life that truly emphasizes his mastery of ceremonial display. The choice of Dunfermline as his place of rest was recorded in a letter to William, bishop of St Andrews, dated 1314, stating that he wished to be buried with honour near the tombs of his kingly predecessors.⁵⁹ Both Boardman and Penman agree that the king’s choice was strongly linked to his attempts to bolster his own fledgling dynasty and firmly unite it with that of the former Canmore kings and St. Margaret.⁶⁰ The provision of an effigy, or remodelling of an existing tomb, for William I at Arbroath and the setting up of perpetual illuminations there further reveal the use of memorial by Robert I, and emphasize his awareness of the potential political power in such representational actions.⁶¹ The separate burial of Robert’s entrails at
Cardross and his heart at Melrose can be clearly linked to the developments across Europe regarding separate burials of nobility, royalty and prelates.\textsuperscript{62} The removal of the heart and separate burial had been popular in England and France from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and there is strong evidence to suggest that such a practice had been in use for both Alexander II and Alexander III in thirteenth-century Scotland, if it had not been introduced earlier.\textsuperscript{63} Separate heart burial has been commonly linked to a desire to increase intercessory prayers for the dead but, as Danielle Westerhoff has argued in regards to English nobility, it was also tied to demonstrations of social status and noble display as embalming was an expensive practice.\textsuperscript{64}

It was not until 1331 that retrospective absolution for those who carried Bruce’s heart was granted.\textsuperscript{65} Therefore, the division of Robert’s body for burial was, in true Bruce style, openly flaunting disobedience to papal attempts to curb this practice with the bull \textit{Desterande Feritatis} in 1299. There were many who flouted such rules, but the journey of Robert’s heart on crusade to Jerusalem – around the neck of Sir James Douglas in “a case of fine silver” – was in fact incredibly unusual, as Grant Simpson has discussed.\textsuperscript{66} While the pilgrimage of Robert’s heart was unusual, it must be considered alongside contemporary thinking regarding the heart as the “most worthy” organ that carried the “most noble” elements of an individual with it.\textsuperscript{67} Thus by ordering that his heart should make this final pilgrimage, Robert made a public statement that would have resonated with those who heard of it. The king’s heart did not reach its desired destination, due to the death of Douglas. However, on their arrival in the Low Countries, Douglas and his entourage of knights provided rich entertainment for guests on his ship making the journey itself a comprehensive propaganda exercise with Douglas acting as the flagship of Scottish representations of majesty abroad.\textsuperscript{68}

Robert died at his manor of Cardross near Dumbarton on 7 June 1329 and payments to the Rector of Cardross indicate that the oblations took place at Cardross, where a separate entrails burial took place as the king’s embalmed body lay in state prior to his journey to Dunfermline.\textsuperscript{69} The journey from Cardross to Dunfermline was between sixty and seventy miles, with at least two
stopping points of the funeral procession indicated by expenses accrued at Donipace and Cambuskeneth to carry out vigils each time Robert rested on his final journey. The exact route that Robert’s procession took cannot be confirmed, but other stopping points can be proposed extrapolating from what is certain. For example, the distance from Cambuskenneth to Dunfermline is around twenty miles and was perhaps broken by a further stop at Culross, which was central to the cult of St. Serf, mirroring the dedication of Cardross where the procession had begun.

Robert’s final journey through the realm gave increased time for vigils and was an elaborate manner of publicly announcing the death of the king. In this way it reflected a pattern found in earlier Scottish funerals, which would be continued until the final burial of a Scottish monarch in Scotland in 1543. It can be argued that Robert’s final journey saw the itinerant nature of the Scottish monarchy shaping the manner in which state ceremonial developed, as much as it affected the management of the realm at a more practical level, as it passed through his familial heartlands and across the central belt of power in the realm. This was a recognizable trait in subsequent early Stewart funerals, such as that of Robert II (d. 1390), which significantly also occurred where there were complexities and uncertainties regarding the succession.

The date of the actual burial at Dunfermline is unclear. It is possible that Robert, with the full awareness of his approaching death, or Thomas Randolph, earl of Moray and guardian, may have orchestrated a specific date for burial to tie it to a significant ceremony or event. It is posited by Ralph Griffiths that the use of regalia in English royal funerals was designed to emulate the pinnacle of the king’s majesty: the unction and coronation. Perhaps the most significant date for Bruce, rather than his controversial inauguration ceremony, would have been his victory at the battle of Bannockburn on 24 June 1314. Practically, even if this date had not been chosen specifically, his death on 7 June allowed for over two weeks for preparations and the journey from Cardross to Dunfermline if the ceremony had taken place on the memorial day of Bannockburn. Moreover, the route of Robert’s final journey meant that the full procession passed the very site itself. By combining the funeral ceremonial with this victory in
reclaiming Scottish independence, the king’s most glorious moment would be drawn into sharp focus in the memories of those who buried him.

At Dunfermline a painted wooden chapel – a “herse” or “chapelle ardent” – decorated with black material, candles and 2 pounds of gold leaf was erected over the king’s body. This is the first known reference to this kind of structure in a Scottish ceremony. Later structures of this type were central in royal funerals, such as those of James V and his wife Madeleine in the sixteenth century. These two structures in Holyrood Abbey over two centuries later were each aglow with candlelight and richly decorated with hundreds of heraldic escutcheons, and in James’s case additional decoration included clubs, swords, and other paraphernalia of war. Direct evidence of escutcheons or coats of arms on Robert’s “herse” cannot be found; however, the fact it was painted could imply some kind of heraldic or dynastic decoration, particularly when considering the wider European context. Peter Coss has emphasized how the Edwardian era of war across Europe saw a proliferation of heraldic symbolism and chivalric culture, and while the heraldic nature of Robert I’s hearse cannot be confirmed, the presence of knights certainly can.

Three surcoats and two hooded cloaks of black high grade lambskin were purchased for the dule wear (or mourning garments) for three knights, along with black cloth to cover the horse-drawn litter carrying the king. There are also entries relating to pieces of crepe or silk and a further 2,600 leaves of gold – 600 of which appear to have been backed with papyrus paper – the purpose of which is not specified. The Steward is singled out in the accounts as being provided with a piece of cloth, but not one specifically deemed for clothing. These pieces of cloth and gold leaf on papyrus paper may have been given as offerings by the nobility with the Steward leading the way. As David II was just five years old when his father died the Steward, Robert I’s teenage nephew and next in line for the throne, was likely chief mourner by default. Such offerings can be found described in both the English fifteenth-century Liber Regie Capelle, and in the sixteenth-century Scottish heraldic manuscript from John Scrymgeour’s collection, in which the cloth offered is described respectively as gold and black. The
Scottish royal funerals of preceding centuries increasingly incorporated heraldic features, including offerings of knightly accoutrements, and the remaining evidence certainly suggests that the roots of these traits were firmly taking hold in the early fourteenth century.

The illuminations at the ceremony must have been staggering: 8,992 pounds of wax were released to John of Linlithgow for use throughout all the liturgy of the funeral and for torches to accompany the procession. The quantity of wax used was not quite as extravagant as that ordered for the funeral of Philip V in 1322 (13,000 pounds), but it was over 1,000 pounds more than that used at the funeral of Louis X in 1316 and more than double the 3,606 pounds used at Henry VII’s funeral in 1509. The volume of the illuminations suggests an elaboration of this ceremonial element to emphasize Robert’s status, but there were also layers of religious meaning – particularly for torches carried in the procession – including the apotropaic powers of the candles and connection to the light of Christ. Such a display would therefore have fit in with Bruce’s other activities to very publicly atone for the sins he had accumulated during his reign. This ceremonial feature was also one that remained prominent in Scottish funerals throughout subsequent centuries indicating the longevity of traditions that permeated the ceremonies of death.

**Conclusion**

These illuminations provide a fitting place to conclude this analysis of how state ceremonies in the reign of Robert Bruce can be used to cast further light over what were once described as the “dark and drublie days” of fourteenth-century Scotland. In both March 1306 and June 1329 the fragility of the Bruce dynasty was certainly a cause of underlying tensions and the political situations could barely be described as secure. Yet, in both cases ceremonial display was utilized to bolster the image of royal authority. The more that the events of 1306 are reassessed, as Barrow has suggested, the more the layers of stage management by the monarch and prominent men of the realm become visible. Conjecture must be called upon in the analysis of this event due to the nature of the extant source material. However, what is certain, considering the
significant players involved and the risks taken in supporting Bruce in 1306, is the unlikelihood of anything being left to chance. This pivotal moment required a significant statement about Bruce’s right to rule, which the crowning and anointing of the king herein proposed, amidst traditional elements drawn from the inaugurations of his predecessors, would certainly have made.

It is important to remember that Edward I was both an adversary and a model for Bruce, and that Robert was intent upon making a level playing field upon which to compete with his English counterpart. In the closing years of his reign, when the balance of power with England had shifted towards the Scots, the displays of the Bruce dynasty show conscious attempts to engage in the game of medieval one-upmanship with European contemporaries. The opportunity actively to display the power and majesty of the dynasty in direct competition with England came in 1328. The marriage of David and Joan was the first marriage between these two realms undertaken on Scottish soil and on Scotland’s terms. Every sensory display was harnessed and manipulated to illustrate the victory of the Bruce dynasty, however fragile it was in reality. The same dedication to mastering projections of royal authority was equally present in the final ceremony of Robert’s life as he made his way to his elaborate Parisian tomb in Dunfermline Abbey, a monument which was surely designed to mark a clear contrast to the simple tomb of his former rival. Edward I may have been long dead by 1328-9, but Robert’s desire to compete was very much alive.

These are also the first Scottish royal ceremonies for which comprehensive financial sources survive and allow increased insights into the roots of subsequent ceremonies which are unattainable for earlier weddings and funerals. As such these ceremonies are as much a benchmark for the study of royal ceremony as they are for the achievements of Robert Bruce. Simpson has stated that: “to be accepted as a king, one had to behave like a king,” and the ceremonies here discussed demonstrate that Robert I and the Bruce propaganda machine excelled at presenting an image of royal majesty on par with European contemporaries. War and strife were certainly prominent in fourteenth-century Scotland, but they should not be allowed to
disguise the very real abilities of Robert the Bruce in the forging and projecting a refined image of kingship and authority.

NOTES


3 Isobel Comyn, Countess of Buchan, nee MacDuff of Fife: referred to as filia/daughter of the earl of Fife in Guisborough (*The Chronicle of Walter of Guisborough*, 367) and recorded as sister of the under-aged 8th earl and daughter of the deceased 7th earl in *The Complete Peerage of England*. 
Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom, Extant, Extinct or Dormant, ed. G.E. Cokayne et al. (rep. in 6 volumes, Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 2000), 2:375. However, Barrow states that this is a mistake and she was in fact sister of 7th earl and aunt of the 8th earl (Barrow, Robert Bruce, 151, fn. 28). The role of the secular earls in the making of Scottish kings had a long and important heritage. The inauguration of Alexander II, for example, in 1214 saw nobles including the earl of Fife plus just one bishop attend the inauguration, while the majority of ecclesiastics stayed with the deceased William I to prepare him for burial. The role of the earl of Fife more specifically was to enthrone the king upon the inaugural stone, an action he is seen undertaking in the extant images of Alexander III’s inauguration in 1249 (in the Scone Seal, c. before 1280, and in an image from Bower’s Scotichronicon, c. 1440). For further on the role of the earls, specifically the role of the earl of Fife see: Archibald A.M. Duncan, “Making a King at Scone in the Thirteenth Century,” in The Stone of Destiny: artefact and icon, ed. Richard Welander, David J. Breeze, and Thomas O. Clancy (Edinburgh: Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 2003), 139-67; Dean, “Crowns, Wedding Rings and Processions,” ch. 2.


This process has begun in the author’s thesis: Dean, “Crowns, Wedding Rings and Processions.”


Bower, *Scotichronicon*, 5: 295; Walter de Gray Birch, *History of Scottish Seals from the eleventh to the seventeenth century, with upward of
two hundred illustrations derived from the finest and most interesting examples extant (Stirling: Æneas Mackay, 1905), 1: passim.


16 Thanks to Dr. Alasdair Ross and Dr. Sonja Cameron for letting the author read their forthcoming article on Bishop Robert Wishart: “The Bad Bishop: Robert Wishart and the Scottish Wars of Independence” (forthcoming).

17 “Bull of John XXII Concerning the Coronation of the Kings of Scotland” in Facsimile of the National Manuscripts of Scotland, selected under the direction of the Right Hon. Sir William Gibson-Craig, Bart. Lord Clerk Register of Scotland and photzincographed by command of her Majesty Queen Victoria by Sir Henry James (Edinburgh: HM Register House, 1867-72), 2: 24-5.


19 CDS, 2, no. 1914.


22 Thanks to Dr. Michael Penman for much discussion on this topic, see also comments published during the revision of this article: Penman, *Robert the Bruce*, 96-7. For more on the “cleansing functions” of religious ritual see: T.A. Boogaart II, “Our Saviour’s Blood: Procession and Community in Late Medieval Bruges,” in *Moving Subjects: Processional Performance in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, eds. Kathleen Ashley and Wim Hüsken (Amsterdam: Rudopi, 2001), 69-116, esp. 70-72.


26 Barbour, *Bruce*, 88-9; *CDS*, 2, nos. 1812-6, 1818, 1824-5, 1827-8, 1903, 1906; *CDS*, 3, no. 24. Entry 1903 refers to a letter of February 1307 from Clement V to Edward I regarding the “translation” of important documents – including charters dating back to David I – from Scone to the abbey at Reading.

27 Cameron and Ross, “The Bad Bishop: Robert Wishart.” It is also pertinent to note that Wishart was incarcerated for longer than Bruce’s wife and daughters.

28 The only other occasion that has been proposed to have possibly included foreign guests (if not, it was attended by vast numbers of Scottish magnates and prelates) was the consecration of St. Andrews in 1318: Penman, “Who is this King of Glory?” Also briefly mentioned in Barrow, *Robert Bruce*, 265-6.
The parody poem recording Bruce’s accession hints at Elizabeth’s absence, as it refers to Elizabeth’s comments to Bruce “when he was come home” from his inauguration with no mention that she accompanied him: *Passio Scotorum Perjutatorum*, 172. On her imprisonment: Nicholson, *Later Middle Ages*, 75; Barrow, *Robert Bruce*, 293; Brown, *Wars of Scotland*, 201-202.

Rare surviving financial material rather than contemporary descriptive accounts allow understanding of David II’s wedding; therefore, it would be wrong to suppose that because there is no extant evidence for a significant ceremony upon the return of Queen Elizabeth to Scotland that no ceremony took place.

The Holy Rood of St. Margaret relic is recorded being returned in a couple of the English chronicles at this time (possibly a point at which other regalia was returned or promised along with the Stone of Destiny): *Old Chronicle or Kalendar or Chronicle of Brute, to the sixth year of Henry V*, Harley MS 4690, fols. 74v-75r, BL; *A Chronicle of London from 1089 to 1483; written in the fifteenth-century and for the first time printed from MSS. in the British Museum, to which are added numerous contemporary Illustrations, consisting of Royal Letters, Poems, and other articles descriptive of public events, or of the manners and customs of the metropolis*, ed. E. Tyrrel and Sir N. H. Nicholls (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green, 1827), 52-3.


In particular see: *Old Chronicle*, BL Harley MS 4690, fols. 74v-75r, BL.

For more on the ceremonial of these thirteenth-century unions see Dean, “Crowns, Wedding Rings and Processions,” 216-36.


17 July (or Sunday prior to St. Mary Magdalene feast day, 22 July) is recorded in: Fordun, *Chronicle*, 345; Bower, *Scotichronicon*, 7:43;
*Chronicle of Lanercost*, 260-61. However, some English chronicles state it was on the feast day of St. Mary Magdalene itself including: *Old Chronicle*, BL Harley MS 4690, f. 75r, BL. Penman states 12 July: *David II*, 18.

37 Bower, *Scotichronicon*, 7:43; Barbour, *Bruce*, 746-9; Monachus de Bridlington, BL Harley MS 688, fols. 316v-317r, BL; Mary Anne Everett Green, *Lives of the Princesses of England from the Norman Conquest* (London: Henry Colburn, 1849), 3:105. Everett Green refers to over three hundred and sixty lances or spears provided by Isabella for a mock spear fight and references Wardrobe Fragment, 2 Edward III, Queen’s Remembrancer; however, this has not been located in English royal financial material at National Archives (Kew) despite searching all expense rolls and fragments from 1327 to 1330.


39 There are a number of smaller individual entries and incoming livestock and goods recorded for the wedding, but the three “bulk” costs from the accounts total: £230 8, 11 s., 4 d. *ER*, 1:118-19, 149, 185; Penman, *David II*, 18-19.

40 *ER*, 1:cxvi-cxvii, 185-92.


42 Exchequer Records: Exchequer Rolls, E38/7, National Records of Scotland (NRS); *ER*, 1:cxii-cxv, 118-19. Spot check undertaken to assess accuracy of edited volume transcription and revealed only very minor discrepancies.

43 *Ibid.* The almonds and loaves of sugar alone were £53, 18 s. (over a ninth of the cost of Peter’s acquisitions), and were in addition to seventy pounds of cheaper (presumably lower quality) sugar bought separately in a barrel for the kitchen/ provisions, which suggests that the loaves of sugar were for a specific purpose.

44 For example, see discussion of the iconography of “soltetes” – “three-dimensional tableaux that were sculpted from sugar paste and then painted” at the coronation banquet of Katherine de Valois, queen of Henry V, in February 1421: Joel F. Burden, “Rituals of Royalty: Prescription, Politics and Practice in English Coronation and Royal Funeral Rituals c. 1327 to c. 1485” (Unpublished Thesis, University of York, 1999), 197-220, quote 220.

46 This kind of display can be found epitomized in the Feast of the Pheasant organized at Lille by Duke Philip of Burgundy in 1454. Olivier de la Marche’s account of the event is translated and discussed in Andrew Brown and Graeme Small, *Court and Civic Society in the Burgundian Low Countries, c. 1420-1530* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 36-53.


49 For Scottish examples in regards to James II and James IV see: Dean, “Crowns, Wedding Rings and Processions,” 256-7, 273-4.

50 *ER*, 1:cvi-cvii, 210, 398.

51 See above note 42.

52 *ER*, 1:150.


56 It is suggested that on receiving the news of his sister’s marriage to David, Edward III burst into tears: Penman, *David II*, 18.


University Press, 1988), no. 44. Entry states that he wished to be buried: “propter honorem sepulture regum predecessorum nostrum.”

60 Boardman, “Dunfermline as a Royal Mausoleum,” 144-5; Michael Penman, “A Programme for Royal Tombs in Scotland?” 244-7. For further discussion on the king’s devotional practices see: Penman, “Sacred food for the soul,” 1035-62.


64 Westerhoff, Death and the Noble Body, 76-80.


66 Bower, Scotichronicon, 7:65; J. Froissart, Chronicles of England, France, Spain and the Adjoining Countries from the latter part of the

67 Westerhoff, Death and the Noble Body, esp. 51, 95.

68 Ibid., 180-82. Simpson uses the detailed contemporary account of Jean le Bel for this event.

69 Exchequer Records: Exchequer Rolls, E38/10, NRS; ER, 1:215.

70 Ibid., 297.


72 The procession was a central aspect of the Scottish funeral from the funeral of William I in 1214 until that of James V in 1542-3 (died December, buried January): Dean, “Crowns, Wedding Rings and Processions,” ch. 1.


74 Exchequer Records: Exchequer Rolls, E38/9, NRS; ER, 1:150, 197, 215. Both terms are used to describe the structure in the accounts.


77 E38/10, NRS; ER, 1:176, 213, 255-6.

78 Ibid, 221; E38/10, NRS.

79 Liber Regie Capelle was written by the Dean of the Chapel Royal, William Say, c. 1448; however, it is an extended version of “Rubrica de Regis Exequiis” from the Liber Regalis seu Ordo Consecrandi Regem

Liber Regie Capelle, 113; John Scrymgeour’s heraldic collection: “The maner hou herrauldis and purfervants fould know of oblesquis,” National Library of Scotland (NLS) MS. Adv. 31.5.2 fols. 15r-16v. For transcription of MS, see: Dean, “Crowns, Wedding Rings and Processions,” Appendix A.

E38/9-10, NRS; ER, 1:150-51, 193, 232. The funeral liturgy would have extended beyond the immediate ceremony and the wax would have been used across this elongated liturgical performance.


Barrow, Robert Bruce, 152.

Duffy, Royal Tombs, 96-9.