Review


Chronologically, this book is the third volume in the New Edinburgh History of Scotland series. This series is designed to supersede the two previously published series, The Edinburgh History of Scotland and The New History of Scotland. Like the other volumes of the new series currently in print, this book is available in hard and soft cover, and the paperback edition has been kept within a student-accessible price range.

This volume (as with the series) is designed as an undergraduate-level core or reference text. Like current teaching texts, pockets of specific or more detailed information on particular topics, such as “St. Margaret’s Gospel-Book” or “Alexander I and Scone Priory,” are woven throughout the more narrative structures of the individual chapters. The period under question is the ‘long twelfth century,’ a period of transition and uncertain development within the makeup of the kingdom of *Scotia*. While this period has been treated before, even by the Edinburgh History series, the author has sought to avoid the traditional and established reliance on structures of feudalization and the magnified focus on the Anglo-Norman influence and its effect on the development of the Scottish Kingdom. This volume, and series, builds on the chronological and thematic histories crafted by scholars a generation earlier, and supplements the dated narratives with modern elements in vogue, like
structures of power, cultural diversity, marginality, and settlement and migration.

Oram tackles the established historiographical tradition, adding more than just a successful nuance to the core history of the period. His volume is divided into two sections: “Narratives” and “Processes.” While the more directed former pays due homage to the traditional historiography of Scottish development, the latter is used to reinterpret the dated structures of nation and state through a variety of innovative approaches. Within the first half, the author relates a structured history of the years 1070-1230, punctuated by the reigns of particular kings and climactic events. Oram clearly builds on his previous works on David I and Alexander II to craft this longer narrative of Scottish regnal development, but he makes a point to stress the oft-glossed multicultural vitality (Gaelic and Scandinavian) within Scotland’s story.

It is within the second half of the text, however, that Oram is able to rectify the underdeveloped importance of various processes that led to the social and cultural revolutions that took place after Malcolm III. Oram covers a large spread of social and cultural processes, ranging from the growth and shifts in power structures (both secular and ecclesiastical), to urban (social, cultural, political) development, to migration and settlement patterns. Most importantly for this reviewer, Oram spends worthwhile time on the environment, since shifts in climate and weather, as well as the human impact on the environment all play an equally important role (as actor and stage) in the narrative of Scottish development. He builds again on an impressive body of scholarship, to touch on population growth and pressures, resource management and exploitation, landscape change, energy production, and the development and impact of agricultural and pastoral regimes, all within a too short chapter. While entire books can and have been written on the
development of the Scottish environment, it is heartening to see it entering into core, and therefore more widely distributed and read, texts.

As a new volume on the well-treated period of twelfth-century Scottish development, *Domination and Lordship* is a very successful update on the traditional narrative, with the current and necessary additions of cultural diversity, settlement and migration, and the environment. This volume deserves to be a recommended text.

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