In recent years, scholarship about medieval Scottish literature has intensified, increasing our understanding of how Scottish writers engaged with contemporary literary currents and topics. The publication of *The Scots and the Arthurian Legend* (2005), edited by Rhiannon Purdie and Nicola Royan, became the first major study of the relevance of Scotland to the Arthurian Legend and its influence on Scottish romance in general. Emily Wingfield’s *The Trojan Legend in Medieval Scottish Literature* is a much-welcomed addition to this corpus, and it compliments Purdie and Royan’s volume tremendously. The book traces Scottish responses to the Trojan legend, since it was precisely in the Greek hero Gaythelos and the Egyptian princess Scota that Scots placed their national origins. Wingfield’s triumph is to understand that “there is no single legend of Troy” (p.1), recognizing the complexity and ambiguity of the Scottish Trojan legend narratives, at times pervaded by Anglo-Scottish political animosity, but also deeply entrenched in contemporary literary genres and traditions. The book aims to find whether there was a particularly Scottish response to the legend, one that differed from English texts. The book itself is comprised of five chapters with an introduction, a conclusion and an appendix of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Trojan legend manuscripts in Scotland. Additionally, the book includes an extensive bibliography. The author excels at answering the questions posed; her research also poses additional questions about the nature of medieval Scottish literature for others to follow.

The introduction establishes the historical and literary context of the Trojan legend in both Europe and Britain. Scottish writers based their versions of the Trojan legend on Guido de la Colonne’s *Historia destructionis Troiae*, composed in 1287. However, it is Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Historia Regum Britanniae*, written in the twelfth century, that provided Anglo-
Norman rulers with political legitimacy and cemented the English kings’ claims to overlord Scotland. Edward I used Monmouth’s description of Brutus and his settlement of Britain to prove his claim to the Scottish throne during the Wars of Independence. However, Wingfield’s analysis of the legend is not limited to the impact of politics on the Trojan legend. Writers such as John of Fordun, Walter Bower and Andrew of Wyntoun are the most nationalistic in their narratives, but they also raise questions about the nature of historical truth and fact. This constitutes one of Wingfield’s most compelling arguments: that late medieval Scottish literature differed from its English counterparts by a constant preoccupation with how authors construct historical fact through their narratives.

The first chapter examines Scottish responses to Monmouth’s Historia, where John of Fordun, Walter Bower and Andrew of Wyntoun re-appropriated the Trojan legend as a way of asserting Scottish sovereignty. The second chapter is concerned with how the Trojan legend influenced Older Scots narratives. The works examined are John Barbour’s Brus, the Octosyllabic Alexander, Sir Gilbert Hay’s Buik of King Alexander the Conquerour, Golagros and Gawane, Blind Hary’s The Wallace, and Clariodus. The texts are not directly concerned with Troy, but the legend left an indelible mark in their composition and interpretation. Combining propagandistic and advisory purposes, Older Scots romances were also concerned with the nature of historical truth.

The third chapter analyzes the Scottish Troy Book (STB), the only close translation of Guido’s Historia into Older Scots. Major topics in the STB include the representation of kingship and the portrayal of female characters. The poem, written between 1412 and 1420, is contemporary with resumed Anglo-Scottish hostilities between Robert III and Henry IV of England. Yet the poem’s main purpose is not propagandistic. Instead, Wingfield concludes that the STB has an ambivalent attitude towards both the Greeks and the Trojans and this reflected general malcontent with the instability of the political situation in Scotland. Wingfield also argues that the poem takes a “proto-feminist stance” (p.112) because of its favourable representation of Hecuba, Medea and Polyxena, a stance
also noticeable in Henryson’s *Eneados*. Wingfield describes the *STB* as a transitional text between nationalistic literature and the advice-to-princes genre.

The fourth chapter analyzes and compares responses to Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde* in Scotland, particularly Robert Henryson’s *Testament of Cressid*. This is one of the most literary chapters of the book; for Wingfield, Henryson’s *Cressid* is characteristic of Scottish poets’ attention to literary tradition and poetic truth (p.149). Scottish poets had an “interrogatory approach” (p.149) to the act of writing and reading that differs from English poetry of the late medieval period. Wingfield dedicates her last chapter to Gavin Douglas’ *Eneados*, the first translation of the Aeneid into an Anglic language. Douglas’ translation scrutinized the nature of literary authority and its relation to the politics of the time. He also reflected on the difficulty of writing in Scots while adhering to classical literary tradition. Wingfield successfully demonstrates how the divergent versions of the Trojan legend throughout the late medieval period evidence the Scots’ capability to re-appropriate a text that was continually deployed against them.

Religion is barely featured in Wingfield’s analysis of the text, even when the authors were clerics. While in the first chapter Wingfield hints at the connections between the early Stewart kings and the cult of Santiago de Compostela in the first chapter, the reader might question whether there were also more religious motifs in the Scottish chronicles studied. However, this is not a failing of the book; on the contrary, other scholars would benefit from expanding Wingfield’s interpretations to cover religious implications of medieval Scottish texts. The author is to be lauded for an excellent monograph that successfully contextualizes the Trojan legend in Scottish literature.

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