

HEROES, MYTHS AND ANNIVERSARIES IN MODERN SCOTLAND

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One of the major problems with historiography - the study of what historians have written - is that it is concerned primarily with the work of professional historians. While historians may reflect the dominant ideological mores of the day, and the careful deconstruction of their works can offer useful insights into the political agenda which framed their manufacture, we can not take it for granted that their assumptions and values were exactly the same as those popularly held in society. Historians tend to work in a rarefied atmosphere for a rarefied audience. An example from our own times should illustrate the point. Although there has been a prodigious out-pouring from Scottish academics in the field of Scottish history, the truth of the matter is that most Scots will have had their historical consciousness shaped more by writers such as John Prebble and Nigel Tranter, by television plays and by the film 'Braveheart' than by the work of professional historians.

One way to gauge popular historical consciousness is to examine the way in which Scots have celebrated historical anniversaries, in particular those associated with heroic figures. Anniversaries tend to be more populist in tone and are not confined to historians. Also, by comparing the celebrations of anniversaries in the past, we can gauge significant shifts in Scottish historical consciousness as different events are celebrated with different degrees of intensity. For example, the Union of 1707 was hardly mentioned, let alone celebrated, in 1807. In 1907 it was accorded a series of articles in the press, and by 2007 we will probably hear of nothing else but the Union, assuming it survives that long. Similarly, the whole of Scotland was awash with celebrations to mark the 250th anniversary of the National Covenant in 1888.

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Covenant celebrations were still strong in 1938. However, by 1988 it was fairly low key, reflecting, arguably, the decline in the perception of Scotland as an exclusively Presbyterian nation. What both examples illustrate is how contemporary political and ideological concerns impose themselves on historical anniversaries.

The purpose of this short essay, however, is not to assess the swings in popularity of historical events, but rather to examine how political and ideological values have changed over the last hundred years or so in Scottish society, and how they have manifested themselves in the celebration of leading figures and key events in Scottish history. In short, it will show how popular perceptions of Scottish history have reflected dominant ideologies, and how Scottish heroes and myths have been able to accommodate ideological and political change. As **Chamber's Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Scotsmen** put it in 1869: 'Among the biographies will be found a large number of an exceedingly instructive character, calculated to form incentive examples to young and ardent minds' (p.3). In other words, Scottish hero worship was designed to inform and instruct. In particular, the essay will focus on the cults of Burns, Wallace and the Jacobites, given that there is widespread current interest in these subjects, and also because their historical popularity has remained undiminished over the last hundred years.

TO SEE OTHERS AS OURSELVES

In order to understand the popularity of hero worship from the early nineteenth century onwards, it is first of all necessary to place the phenomenon in its appropriate historical context. The early nineteenth century was one of profound change and dislocation in Scottish society because of the impact of rapid industrialisation and urbanisation. For many contemporaries it appeared as if the traditions and national characteristics of Scotland were disappearing. The three Scottish institutions which had survived the Treaty of Union in 1707, and in which much of Scottish national identity was vested, were conspicuously failing to cope with the new demands of an increasingly industrial society. Whig lawyers such as Cockburn and Jeffrey looked to England for guidance in the development of law. The parochial school system of education had broken down in urban society, leading George Lewes to complain in 1834 that Scotland was a 'half educated nation'. A Royal Commission of 1826 had exposed deficiencies in the Scottish Universities which were failing miserably to live up to the reputation that had been established in the halcyon days of the Scottish

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Enlightenment. Perhaps most seriously of all, the Scottish Kirk was bitterly divided. In 1843 the unifying force of Presbyterianism was shattered in the Disruption whose scars would remain highly visible in Scottish society for the remainder of the century.

Given such traumatic changes, it hardly comes as a surprise to find that many commentators were deeply pessimistic as to the future prospects for a distinctive Scottish national identity. Walter Scott moaned that 'what makes Scotland Scotland is fast disappearing'. Such pessimism was shared by Henry Cockburn who claimed that the growing communications between Scotland and England was making the Scottish language extinct. The Rev James Begg's prognosis was equally gloomy and he talked of the Scottish nation 'sinking under a combination of increasing evils' (Scott 1988; Finlay 1997). Arguably, such fears and cultural pessimism culminated in 1853 with the formation of the National Association for the Vindication of Scottish Rights which sought to halt the perceived decline of Scottish national identity (Hanham 1967). The Association was similar to other anti-modernist and anti-industrialist groups which sprang up throughout Europe (Smith 1986; Mitchison 1980; Breuilly 1982). Its outlook was essentially romantic and backward-looking, and it is worth pointing out that the manifestation of this phenomenon in Scotland had no associations with pre-industrial conceptions of Britain, which should warn us against accepting any conclusions that British identity was forged by 1837 (Colley 1992). Britain, it would appear, was associated with modernism and industrialisation and not tradition and identity.

It was during this period of rapid industrialisation and urbanisation that the Scots started to reinvent themselves. It was the era of Highlandism and tartanry, the romanticisation of the Scottish past, the sentimentalisation of rural life, and the contribution of imperial Scotland to the British Empire. Also, the period witnessed an ideological revolution in which the values of laissez faire liberalism came to dominate Scottish political culture. Core values such as self-help, thrift, hard work, independence and respectability became ingrained as part of Scottish identity and character, and this cultural hegemony was reflected in the political dominance of the Liberal Party in Scotland for most of the period from 1832 to 1914.

Much of this reinvention was manufactured by the new commercial middle classes who had been excluded from the traditional Scottish institutions through the power of aristocratic patronage. The cult of Robert Burns was used to propagate anti-aristocratic sentiment. After all, he was a commoner

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who had been let down by the aristocracy, and he showed that genius and talent were not the sole prerogatives of the aristocracy. Just as Highlandism was promoted because it was believed to be a purer and more traditional form of Scottishness, Burns was emblematic of an older, purer and uncorrupted Scotland which had, as yet, been untouched by industrialism and mammon. Burns and his world, as Andrew Noble has shown with his work on Christopher North, was corrupted to satisfy the sentimental and nostalgic needs of an industrialising nation (Noble 1988). For many in the nineteenth century, Burns' greatest achievement was to capture and preserve a dying language and way of life. Lord Rosebery speaking in Dumfries at the centenary of his death stated:

For Burns exalted our race: he hallowed Scotland and the Scottish tongue. ... The Scottish dialect, as he put it, was in danger of perishing. Burns seemed at this juncture to start to his feet and reassert Scotland's claim to national existence; his Scottish notes rang through the world, and he thus preserved the Scottish language forever - for mankind will never allow to die that idiom in which his songs and poems are enshrined.

To understand the veneration of Burns in the nineteenth century, it is necessary to take account of the ways in which he was moulded to accommodate the predominant laissez faire ideology of the day. Freedom and liberty was more to do with middle class individualism and anti-aristocratic sentiment than jacobinism. Along with Wallace and others such as David Livingstone, Burns was canonised into the broader lad o pairts mythology: Scottish society was inherently democratic and meritocratic (McCrone 1992). They were among the 'numerous instances of men who have risen from humble circumstances and attained to high positions and ... have succeeded in the pursuit of knowledge in spite of the greatest hardship and difficulties' (Chambers 1869, p.3). For Hector MacPherson and others, Burns owed his radicalism and democratic outlook to a Scottish tradition of Presbyterian democracy (MacPherson 1911). Although the middle class had attained the vote in 1832, Scottish society was still dominated, to a large extent, by the aristocracy (Hutchison 1986). Anti-aristocratic sentiment formed one of the most potent political forces in nineteenth century Scotland, and Burns's radical sentiments were used to reinforce this. According to Charles Thomson, Burns's message was:

founded on the thoroughly Scottish sentiment, fostered by Scottish history from the days of Wallace to our own times, of the value of man as

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man, of the dignity of labour, whether physical or mental, as compared with the tinsel shows of privilege indolence. The scorn for the empty 'birkie ca'd a lord' and for the king made dignities unbacked by merit, have persistently remained as Scottish qualities all down the ages, and they are becoming the qualities of men wherever thought has filtered down the humbler classes (n.d. 1908?, p. 433).

The important point to emphasise here is that while Burns can be interpreted from a socialist perspective in the twentieth century, for most of the nineteenth century his work was used to give credence to laissez faire liberalism. Although there may appear to be a contradiction in promoting Burns as a symbol of a purer and pre-industrial Scotland while at the same time using him to advocate modern laissez-faire principles, the fact is that by showing that meritocracy had always been an inherent feature of Scottish society and had a long historical pedigree, liberal ideology was legitimised by presenting it as a continuing and developing part of Scottish tradition. The dignity of hard work, the perseverance of toil and calm stoicism were values that the rest of Scottish society should emulate precisely because they were perceived as traditional Scottish values.

Burns was praised for inculcating family values. According to Rosebery, Burns 'dwells repeatedly on the primary sacredness of the home and the family, the responsibility of fatherhood and marriage' (1896 Glasgow). He was likewise praised for making respectable the old Scottish songs which contained language which was crude and vulgar and unfit for genteel company. He transformed the baseness of Scottish society into something sublime. Even the temperance league found that Burns could be used to endorse their message, and compiled extracts from the prose writing of Burns to show that the Bard warned against the evils of Strong Drink: 'The Hounds of Hell that beset a poor wretch who has been guilty of the sin of drunkenness'.

Burns was used by Churchmen of varying persuasions to extol the religious life. Evangelicals used the story of his life to illustrate the frailty of the human condition. His natural poetic simplicity was contrasted with the contortion of the too clever moderates. Burns and his ability to portray the perfection of creation, his humanity and charitable spirit were all highlighted by evangelicals (Seton 1908). Burns was made a pious and religious man. Even the anti-vivisection and animal rights group of the nineteenth century used him as a champion of their cause (Hardie n.d.).

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In the nineteenth century Burns was recast to mirror the predominant political values of the day. Strident Jacobonism was emasculated:

'A man's a man for a' that' is not politics - it is the assertion of the rights of humanity in a sense far wider than politics. It erects all mankind; it is the charter of self-respect ... it cannot be narrowed into politics. Burns's politics are indeed nothing but the occasional overflow of his human sympathy into past history and current events.
(Rosebery 1896 Glasgow)

Likewise, Burns's Scottish nationalism was cancelled out by repeated reference to his British patriotism, such as the jingoistic 'Does Haughty Gaul Invasion Threat' in which Burns urged readers: 'Be Britain still to Britain true, Amang oursels united' and 'Who will not sing God Save the King, shall hang as high's the steeple'. The same political and ideological conditioning which made the 'Kailyard' so popular also explains the popularity of Burns. That is not to say that Burns was Kailyard; rather it is how he was represented in the nineteenth century.

As the dominant individualist Liberalism of the nineteenth century gave way to the politics of class and collectivist socialism in the twentieth century, Burns was remoulded to suit those ends. Keir Hardie, Ramsay MacDonald, Tom Johnston and James Barr all used Burns and had their socialism influenced by him. According to Johnston:

Our great democratic singer had no illusions about landlordism. He and his 'toiled with the ceaseless toil of galley slaves' and lived amid 'nakedness and hunger and poverty and want' that parasitical lairds should not only be well fed and well clad, but should have a plenitude of counters for their midnight gambings with 'the Devil's pictured beuks' (n.d., p. 61).

Burns and his poetry were featured in advertisements for the Co-operative movement after the First World War to show a Scottish tradition of anti-capitalism. Burns was also used by the nationalists, especially his anti-Union sentiments which were used to reinvent him as a Scottish patriot. Scottish nationalist propaganda frequently featured Burns' Scottish patriotism:

Alas! have I often said to myself, what are all the boasted advantages which my country reaps from the Union, that can counterblast the annihilation of her independence, and even her very name! Nothing can

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reconcile me the common terms 'English ambassador', English Court, 'English Commons'.
(**Scots Independent**, January 1931, p. 40)

The most commonly used Burns by nationalists was the bitter 'Parcel of Rogues in a Nation' in which the Scots aristocrats responsible for the Union were described as 'a coward few' who had offered their services to the English 'for hireling traitors' wages'.

Yet, given the variety of views expressed by Burns on a whole range of issue, competing political and ideological factions have always been able to find something which suited their own ends. Burns's nationalist pronouncements could be offset by his Unionist ones. In 1930 John Buchan praised Burns for his stalwart support of the British imperial mission (Buchan 1930). Likewise, socialist interpretations of Burns's anti-aristocratic and democratic sentiment could still be recast as laissez faire individualism. With the collapse of the nineteenth century political consensus and the absence of a clear ideological imperative in the works of Burns, the cult has remained staunchly apolitical. In the opinion of George Malcolm Thomson's fictional Mr Gillespie Maclean:

Mr Maclean does not neglect literature. It is an exploded delusion that the man of affairs, the stern practical man on whose work the prosperity of the country is built, has no interest in the higher activities of the mind. Every year on the twenty fifth of January, he attends the dinner of the Burns Club of which he is a notable ornament. A busy man all his life, he has had little opportunity to study the works of the national poet. ... As for those envious and presumptuous scribblers who dare to write poetry in the language which Burns made for ever his own Mr Maclean has nothing but contempt ... the idea that a man can, as it were, set up as a poet without the approval of a world-wide network of clubs and societies strikes him as dangerous and anarchical to a degree.
(Thomson 1928, p. 27)

The Burns cult has permitted a safe celebration of Scottish identity which raises no awkward political or cultural questions. The recent controversy about the 'discovery' of lost Burns poems which purport to show him as a radical and a nationalist has ignited a furious backlash. In part, this is because the argument is not simply about historical and literary scholarship, very little of the evidence having been subject to scrutiny in any case, but because it

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will give one ideological camp more rights of possession to a fundamental part of Scottish myth and tradition than the others.

THE GREAT LIBERATOR OR THE GREAT LIBERAL?

The cult of William Wallace has a long pedigree in Scotland stretching back into the middle ages. The fifteenth century epic, 'The Wallace', written by the minstrel, Blind Harry, was a piece of anti-English propaganda which was used to mobilise Scottish resistance to English encroachments. Indeed, if we follow the publication rates of 'The Wallace' in the period before the Union of 1707, we find that it is a fairly accurate barometer of worsening Anglo-Scottish relations (Ross and Scobie 1974). 'The Wallace' remained a popular piece of literature in Scotland after the Union, although such a virulent piece of anti-English sentiment ran against the prevailing ideological notions of the time (Brims 1987, p. 254). Along with the bible, it remained a staple of household reading in nineteenth century Scotland, and the repeated references to it in autobiographies is an ample testament to its popularity (Smout 1987, p. 237). The cult of Wallace, as was the case with Burns, was adapted to fit the new circumstances of an urban, industrial and commercial society.

The appeal of Wallace in the mid-nineteenth century lay in the individualist and meritocratic notions of the commercial middle class. The Great Reform Act had given these people the vote, but Scottish society was still dominated by the aristocracy, and an especially sore grievance was the issue of patronage in the Church (MacLaren 1974). Wallace was held up as an emblem because he governed and protected Scotland, not because of birth-right but because of ability and talent. Such sentiments had an obvious appeal to the middle class which felt that they were being denied social and political prominence. Also, because much of Scottish politics in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was fuelled by anti-aristocratic sentiment, the Wallace story could be used to illustrate the duplicity and self-interested treachery of this class. Thomas Carlyle summed up the feelings of many a middle class Scot when he wrote:

It is noteworthy that the nobles of the country have maintained a quite despicable behaviour since the days of Wallace downwards - a selfish, ferocious, famashing, unprincipled set of hyenas, from whom at no time, and in no way has the country derived any benefit whatsoever.
(Johnston no date, p.32)

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The prosperity and future of the nation could not be trusted to the aristocracy. As was the case with Burns, who was also badly let down by the aristocracy to die in poverty, Wallace was used to justify notions regarding the inherently meritocratic characteristics of the Scottish people. The values of responsible civic virtue, liberty from oppression and the concept of freedom had little to do with anti-Unionism or anti-English sentiment as such, but everything to do with mid-Victorian *laissez faire*. While it was possible for the cult of Wallace to be used for nationalist endeavours, the weakness of the National Association for the vindication of Scottish Rights in the mid-nineteenth century, and the marginal influence of nationalism on Scottish politics at this time, tend to suggest that conventional mid-Victorian ideology rather than Scottish nationalism was the instrumental driving force behind the public veneration of Wallace.

Just as Burns was used to hark back to a Scotland untainted by the evils of urbanisation and industrialisation, so was the memory of Wallace used to remind Scots of their historic nationality. The building of the Wallace monument at Abbey Craig near Stirling was supported vociferously by members of the National Association for the Vindication of Scottish Rights who believed that the distinctive characteristics of Scottish society were being eroded by modernisation and infringements by the British state (Hanham 1967, p. 149). Wallace was an appeal to a different and distinctive history which would remind the Scots of who they were. Yet the vision of Scottish history which emerged was tainted by mid-Victorian ideology. Evidence that meritocratic, individualist and anti-aristocratic thinking dominated the Wallace cult can be found in the scarceness of references to Robert Bruce. Bruce, after all, had been victorious, and 1314 had marked a crucial turning point in the Scottish wars of independence. Yet it was the commoner Wallace, rather than the king Bruce, who received the veneration. For middle-class Scots, the qualities of self-sacrifice, civic duty, patriotism, individualism and the belief in meritocracy were more important than the victory of Scottish freedom on the field of Bannockburn. In any case, according to Lord Rosebery, who presided over the celebrations at the anniversary of the battle of Stirling Bridge in 1897, it was Wallace who had made the Bruce's victory possible. It was these qualities of individualism which, according to Andrew Carnegie, made Wallace a greater man than Bruce (Ash 1990). All over Victorian Scotland, local business and rotary clubs began to raise subscriptions for their own statues of Wallace. And while such statues were emblazoned with 'liberty and freedom' it should be remembered that these words had different connotations from those which we now associate with them. The statues of Wallace which adorn our city

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and town centres today are not so much a testament to the man who fought for Scottish independence against the English, but rather a celebration of the characteristics which Victorian middle-class Scots believed were inherent within Scottish society.

As with Burns, the story of Wallace was easily adapted for the propaganda of the socialist left as it rose in the twentieth century. The rhetoric of 'freedom and liberty' was now applied to economic slavery, and the two cults were effectively fused with the singing of 'Scots Wha Hae' at radical meetings (Smout 1987, p. 237). According to Tom Johnston, 'If at bottom Wallace's revolt was not a last effort to cast off feudalism from Scotland, why did the Scoto-Norman nobles hate him so?' (n.d., p. 23) Scottish Labour leaders recast Wallace as a freedom fighter who strove to free the common people from the yoke of the oppressive barons. Bruce, as was only to be expected of one of the aristocracy, was castigated for his duplicity and self-interest. James Barr, on entering the palace of Westminster, paid homage at the hall where Wallace was tried and claimed that his heroic deeds had united and welded together the Scottish nation (Barr 1949, p. 121). The communists also appropriated Wallace, and he appeared alongside Galgacus on the banners of marchers in the early twenties. While the endeavour to present Wallace as a socialist or communist required only a minor tinkering with the facts, the emergence of a nationalist movement in the nineteen twenties which electorally challenged Labour and focused on Wallace's fight for independence against the English state made his position in the canon of the left more ambiguous. As attitudes hardened in Labour and communist circles towards Scottish nationalism, attitudes towards Wallace became more ambivalent. Lewis Grasic Gibbon (James Leslie Mitchell) wrote about Wallace 'having led the common folk' but warned against nationalist who would use 'Blethers about Wallace' to 'do down the common folk' (Young 1983, p.146).

Scottish nationalists have laid the longest and most consistent claim to the Wallace legacy during the twentieth century. The uncompromising pursuit of Scottish independence and his martyrdom for the cause meant that there was no ambiguity as far as Scottish nationalist were concerned. Indeed, Lewis Spence, the first nationalist candidate at a by-election in Midlothian in 1928, had posters distributed for the campaign with a picture of Wallace demanding Scottish freedom. Nationalists continued the Elderslie parades which had been started in the late-nineteenth century (the memorial was erected in 1912) and by the 1930s dominated them (Pittock , 1991, p.188). Seldom would two months go by without the party's journal, **The Scots**

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Independent, featuring some major tract on the life and times of Sir William Wallace or on Wallace's legacy to the nationalist movement (Finlay 1994, pp.36-7). The first member of the SNP to enter Westminster as a member of Parliament, Dr Robert McIntyre, in April 1945 described it as the place 'where they judiciously murdered Willie Wallace'. Cultural nationalists, especially Sidney Goodsir Smith, contributed to the maintenance of a nationalist Wallace cult through poetry and drama. The presentation of Wallace's uncompromising nationalism was probably instrumental in rehabilitating the reputation of Robert Bruce, who from the eve of the First World war started to come back into favour. Although nationalists celebrate Bruce's achievement every year at Bannockburn, his ambiguous reputation, his position as King and the rather dubious claim that the Queen is his descendant, has made him more accessible for those wishing to express a more moderate form of nationalism.

The appearance of the film 'Braveheart' has done much to reactivate the cult of Wallace in Scotland. Predictably, given the current political climate, it is not surprising that many Scottish audiences should pick out the theme of Scottish independence and in so doing reflect into the cult their own contemporary political aspirations. This contrasts with the audience in America which picked out the freedom of the individual and anti-statism as its central message. Although many historians have berated the film for its historical inaccuracy, it is obvious that the Wallace myth has lost none of its potency. Indeed, by nit-picking, historians have failed to grasp that the continuing historical significance of Wallace lies not so much in the man but in the myth, and that throughout Scottish history from the time of Wallace's execution, it has been the myth rather than the facts which has inspired. Also, the enduring power of historical myth lies in its ability to adapt and reflect the changing aspirations of society.

THOSE WHO DIED FOR SCOTLAND?

The Jacobite myth has had a central role in the development of modern Scottish historical consciousness. Culloden has been represented as the final battle between Scotland and England in which the Highland Clans valiantly fought to preserve the Catholic, old Celtic social system and the rights of the true monarch against Protestant, Anglo-Saxon modernism..

Eighteenth century opinions of the Highlander were neither flattering nor generous (Clyde 1995). The Highlands were depicted as backward and

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barbarian and the region was regarded as a brake on progress and modernity. By the mid-nineteenth century, however, the symbols of the Highlands had become an emblem for Scotland as a whole and the cult of Highlandism propagated values and representations of the Highlands and Highland society which were noble and virtuous. The development of the cult of Highlandism has been well documented and repetition of it here would be unnecessary. Suffice it to say that it was largely a sentimental response to the problems of industrialisation and urbanisation (Clyde 1995; Devine 1994; Leneman 1988). Probably the most significant element in the spread of Highlandism was militarism (Clyde 1995). In the nineteenth century certain values associated with Highland military prowess were identified and propounded in this myth.

Depictions of the Highlands as backward, warlike and inhospitable remained current through the nineteenth century. However, these values were interpreted in a positive rather than negative light. Whereas they were viewed as a barrier to progress in the eighteenth century, in the nineteenth they were believed to be fundamental in conditioning the martial and spiritual qualities which were so admired by a Victorian society that was becoming increasingly concerned at the spread of materialism (Argyll 1887, p.482). The centuries of perpetual Clan warfare had instigated innate martial values, the rugged terrain had fashioned a hardy and resourceful people, and the Clan social system had inculcated unthinking loyalty and trustworthiness. The work of Sir Walter Scott did much to redeem the Highland character, and the Jacobites were increasingly portrayed as valiant, though misguided, warriors who were untainted by the corruption of modern society and whose loyalty was such that against impossible odds they held fast to their beliefs.

Such qualities were seen not only as admirable, but also as useful to British military endeavour. The same qualities which were projected back into the Jacobite movement were the same as the current expectations of the Highland Regiments. The sentimental cult of Jacobitism was so successful that it could claim Queen Victoria as an adherent. Stories of Scottish military prowess in pursuit of imperial expansion and defence were woven into an unbroken tapestry of Highland militarism.

The typical representation of Highland qualities was projected in historical accounts which showed that, without the Union and the imperial mission, such talents were wasted on warfare among the clans. The values of Highland society were only to be realised in the period after the Union. Pageants and expressions of loyalty were a showcase of Highland militarism. The lesson to

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be learned from Culloden was that it was valiant, brave and worthy, but ultimately futile. According to Sir Henry Craik 'The Jacobite Rebellion, in spite of all its heroism, was doubtless a mistake, upon which the pedagogues of history may be justified in emptying all the phials of their denunciation, but from it Scotland emerged a new nation' (1901, p. 347). Yet, every cloud has a silver lining, and the innate Highland qualities of martial valour were saved from going to waste in imperial service. In the nineteenth century there was little dwelling on the destruction of Highland traditional society which followed in its wake. It was glossed over in favour of the glamour and heroism. Another example of the perpetual lines of tragedy with furnished Scotland with its pre-Union history.

However, it should be stressed that Jacobitism was not the same as Highlandism, and although the Jacobites were the subject of much sentimentalisation, they did not sit easily in the myth-canon of nineteenth century Scotland. While the Highlanders were rehabilitated, the same can not be said for the Jacobites. The qualities which Victorian Scottish society admired in the mythical Highlander were not a consequence of, nor dependent on, Jacobitism. Indeed, Highland support for Jacobitism was presented as the unfortunate result of over-bearing loyalty which had been created in the Clan system over many centuries; Jacobitism was superfluous to the production of Highland valour. Rather, the Jacobites had cynically exploited the innocent Clan system. The Highlands were seen by many Scots as an untainted and purer form of Scotland as it must have existed in the past, and were idealised as being the environment which produced the raw material of the Scottish character and identity. The rapid spread of evangelical Presbyterianism in the western Highlands and the Highlander's avid commitment to the Free Church of Scotland were further important factors in confirming lowland middle-class perceptions of the quintessential Scottish characteristics of the Highlander. Also, the Presbyterianisation of the Highlands, it could be argued, was an important factor in breaking down the psychological barrier of the Highland/Lowland divide.

Evidence that the Jacobites did not occupy a central place in Scottish popular historical consciousness can be found in their absence from many obvious historical sources. For example, **Chambers Dictionary of Eminent Scotsmen**, originally published in the 1830s and updated and reprinted in 1869, contained over 700 biographies of Scottish historical figures, but few Jacobites. Even the accomplished Jacobite general Lord George Murray, let alone Bonnie Prince Charlie, did not warrant a mention. Popular historical biographies such as the **Famous Scots Series**, started at the end of the

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nineteenth century, admitted no Jacobites. Short surveys of Scottish history delivered by politicians praising Scottish character often failed to mention the Jacobites, and perhaps the greatest populariser of Scottish history in the nineteenth century, Lord Rosebery, as president of the Scottish Historical Society, called for more research into that 'unhappy race, the Stuarts, who seem to have vanished from our historical record'. Charles Thomson accused present day Jacobites of:

disloyalty to the United Kingdom and all that is best in it, the freedom of the subject and the supremacy of the people's parliament, or disloyalty to the great past and present of Scotland [which is] folly and treason of the most contemptible type. What would the success of Jacobitism have meant to Britain? Simply a recrudescence of divine right personified in a monarchy restored by arms and maintained by force, while for Scotland it would have involved in addition another determined struggle against Roman Catholicism or Episcopacy. Even the distinction so often drawn by present day Jacobites between *de jure* and *de facto* monarchy strikes at the very root of democracy and parliamentary control, attaching as it does, more importance to 'Royal Blood' than a nation's will or intelligence ... [it is the opposite] to the reawakened feeling of Scottish democracy.

(Thomson n.d., p. 348)

Finally, as Colin McArthur has recently shown, the commemoration of the anniversary of Culloden itself was fraught with ambiguity and tensions throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (McArthur 1994).

A threefold explanation can be advanced to account for the uneasy relationship of Jacobitism to Scottish historical consciousness. Firstly, the Jacobites could not be moulded into a vision of the Presbyterian democratic tradition which had so effectively procured Burns and Wallace. In spite of the fact that the Jacobites were predominantly drawn from the Episcopalian North East, the popular perception in Scotland was that the Jacobites were a Catholic force (MacPherson 1905, p.167). Given that most popular notions of Scottish character portrayed Presbyterianism as its bedrock, it would be unthinkable to accommodate a movement which was dedicated to the restoration of a catholic monarchy whose family had been active in the persecution of Covenanters in the seventeenth century.

Secondly, and again the contrast with Wallace and Burns is useful, the Jacobites could not be worked into the meritocratic and *laissez-faire*

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ideology. The Jacobites were aristocrats fighting for the divine right of Kings. This had little appeal in nineteenth century Scotland where anti-aristocratic sentiment was a dominant political force. Unlike Wallace and Burns whose talents were God given and whose abilities dictated their affection among the Scottish people, the Jacobites relied on out-dated notions of privilege. In short, there was nothing in the story of the Jacobites that middle class Scotland could seek to emulate. Indeed, the furore over the refusal of Highland landlords to permit the building of Free churches on their land exacerbated anti-aristocratic sentiment, and the images of Highlanders worshipping in fields in all weather conditions brought them firmly within the Covenanting tradition while their landowners could be identified as persecuting Jacobite tyrants (Macinnes 1990, p. 56). Also, it is worth pointing out that much of the sentimentalisation of the Jacobite cause came from aristocratic quarters in the north east (Donaldson 1988, p. 93).

Finally, the Jacobites contradicted the notion of the 'bloodless' Union between Scotland and England in 1707. One of the most cherished articles of Scottish historical faith in the nineteenth century was that the Union brought to an end Anglo-Scottish enmity peacefully. With their determination to end the Union, the Jacobites were an awkward reminder that the Union was not universally accepted in Scotland and that its security was attained through bloodshed.

Murray Pittock has examined the development of Jacobitism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and shown how it adapted and transformed itself into a radical and nationalist ideology (1991). While the movement was on the fringes of Scottish political life, it was important in the development of a Celtic nationalist identity. For nationalists such as Rhuraidh Erskine of Mar, Culloden was a battle between the Celtic and Saxon races, and the Hanoverian victory marked the cultural suppression of Gaeldom. Indeed, such racial notions were extended to account for the Irish War of Independence. Celtic nationalism played an important part in the formation of the National Party of Scotland in 1928, and Celtic nationalists were more radical in their socio-economic policies and their demands for complete separation from England than the mainstream movement. Indeed, such was their radicalism that they were expelled in the early thirties. Celtic nationalists played an important role in positing an alternative vision of Scotland's past. This was one in which the Gael, and by implication the rest of Scotland, which they believed to be fundamentally Celtic, was a victim of Saxon repression. Scotland had been de-Celticised (Finlay 1994, pp.29-71). The Celtic nationalist view of Scottish history was that Culloden marked the

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beginning of the colonisation of the nation's culture and heritage, a view which was echoed in the 1960s by the American sociologist Michael Hechter (1975).

Indeed, it is remarkable how much of Scottish popular historical consciousness has moved towards the Celtic nationalist interpretation of the Jacobites. Much of this is due, no doubt, to the writings of John Prebble who brought home to the public the enormity of the suffering endured by the Highland population. But, also, a significant element has to be the rise of Scottish nationalism in the last thirty years. The Jacobites are ideal candidates for a nationalist historical myth. They opposed the Union, had they been successful there would be a different Scotland, and, perhaps most crucially, their endeavours for independence (as some would argue) were rewarded with the full repressive weight of the British state. The Jacobites, it can and no doubt will be argued, saved Scottish national honour on the battlefield of Culloden because Scottish independence was not bartered or bribed away in 1707, but crushed by military force in 1746. If this seems a trite fanciful, then it should be borne in mind the recent work of two distinguished Jacobite scholars. Murray Pittock (1995) has recently interpreted the Jacobite movement as a predominantly lowland nationalist movement while Allan MacInnes (1995) has likened the onslaught against Highland society after 1746 to ethnic cleansing.

CONCLUSION

This essay has been an examination of historical perception rather than of reality. Historians in Scotland, often obsessed by a desire to find the 'truth', have paid little attention to the power of popular historical consciousness as a political and cultural force. Furthermore, as recent work by James McMillan on the role of Jean d'Arc in twentieth century France has shown, the capture of popular historical icons is a major factor in the political process (1993). Work by English historians such as Patrick Joyce (1982) and Michael Savage (1987) and, in Scotland, Catriona MacDonald (1996) have shown that political change is fuelled to a large extent by popular perceptions of tradition and history. Scotland has many historical myths and they have played a significant role in the political, social and cultural development of the nation, either as vehicles of change or to express dominant political ideology. One of the failings of the Scottish historical profession has been the failure to engage with historical myths, other than to rubbish them. As David McCrone has pointed out, we need to recognise that there are different types of histories

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(1992). The factual invalidation of myths in weighty academic tomes does not and never has invalidated them as complex icons of cultural, social and political belief. After all, the only consistency that the Scots have displayed in the last two centuries in their assessments of Burns, Wallace and the Jacobites is a dogged determination to believe what they want to believe. And in such a scenario what is more important - destroying the myth or understanding it?

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