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**The Role of Religion in the Formation of  
National Identity**

**Case Study: Scotland (5<sup>th</sup>- 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries)**

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Literature and Civilisation**

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## **Dedication**

*I dedicate this work to my precious mother.*

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## **Abstract**

National identity is the feeling of belonging to a particular nation. It is more than being legally integrated within a country; it is rather a psychological integration. National identity gives a sensation of being at home, a home united by a common history, language, customs and traditions. As a nation, the Scottish people are very proud. They are well-known for their strong sense of nationhood, which recently became an interesting topic for many researchers. Nonetheless, these researchers have closed on how this national identity came to existence and what are the main elements that led to its formation. The present dissertation investigates the Scottish national identity and the role of religion in the process of its formation. Different chronicles and historical books were analysed to collect data about the origins and cultural aspects of the Scottish people. After studying their case history, the peoples of Scotland were groups of apposing clans of different origins, lifestyles and who spoke different languages. Their traditional religion was the only common element between them. Later, with the advance of Christianity, the Scottish people put aside their differences and former identities to embrace a new collective identity revolving around Celtic Christianity. The latter made Scotland a consolidated unit and a nation well-prepared for future political unions. National identity is usually a result of common origins, language or culture; however, with the Scottish people it is completely a different situation. Scotland is a nation conjoined only and alone by its religion.

### **Key Words:**

-National identity      -Scotland      -Culture      -Religion  
-Scottish people      -Nationhood      -Christianity      -Celtic Christianity

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## **List of Abbreviations and Acronyms**

**-UK:** United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

**-APA:** American Psychological Association

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## General Introduction

The United Kingdom (UK) includes England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. The last composes one third of the land and includes Britain's highest mountains and longest lakes. Scotland is divided into two unique parts. To the north, there are the Highlands, the land of the kilt, clans and lonely castles; an area so vast but sparsely populated, giving the classical image of Scotland. In Medieval times, the Highlands were inhabited by a collection of proud tribes or clans living in the harsh mountains, each with its own chief and unique traditions. To the south, there are the Lowlands which usually include all the lands that are not in the Highlands. This part of the country contains the great lakes and the rich fertile soil. This makes the Lowland region perfect for farming and other industries. Scotland has prevailed through a calamitous, yet, a successful history. The country is a land that was once occupied by the Roman Empire. It is with these Romans that the first annals, chronicles and records of the Scottish history were to be recorded. However, the Romans used to portray the inhabitants of the area that would later be called 'Scotland' as red-haired barbarian people who believed in magic and superstition. In fact, only thirty per cent of the population in Scotland has red hair. Later, the area witnessed several invasions from the Angles, Saxons, Jutes and the famous Norsemen. These invaders could not tame this land or truly subjugate the spirit of the Scottish people, starting from the ancient Picts and their mysterious culture to the inhabitants of the kingdom of Alba which later became nowadays' Scotland.

Scotland is a nation of proud people with unique traditions and culture passed down through generations. This makes the country stand out among the nations of the world. The Scottish people are well-known for their pride. Such sense of nationalism is reflected in their long struggle for freedom and independence. A nation, though united with England, has always refused to be called 'English'. National identity has become a rich topic for recent researchers, however, adding the word 'Scottish' to the mixture makes it even more interesting. To the present day, there are many Scots- in and outside Scotland-who still relate to their ancient clan-history. This can be seen in the way they wear their traditional kilts or tartans and how they play on their traditional bagpipes in Scottish national days. Though the number of writers on national identity is huge, there is little work that studied the Scottish national identity. And even those who shed some light on the Scottish nationhood, they did not study how it was developed or formulated. Thus, the focus of this research is the

formation of Scottish national identity. For that, the following research questions are put forward:

- 1- What elements are necessary in national identity formation? In case such elements do exist, do they all share equal importance in forming a nation's national identity?
- 2- Does religion have its place among such elements? In case it does, then what role does it play?

As possible answers, the following hypotheses are suggested:

- 1- Based on how nations reaffirm their identity with regard to their origins, history, territory and culture, then, maybe there are certain elements that contribute in a nation's national identity formation. These elements might be of equal importance or one might overshadow the other.
- 2- Based on how many nations identify themselves through their religion as in the case of the Muslim and Christian worlds, then, maybe religion does have an important role in nation's national identity formation.

This dissertation is divided into three chapters. The first one titled Identity vs. National Identity casts light on understanding identity and national identity as a concept. This chapter also aims at studying the account of Ethno-symbolism as one of the many theories on national identity which gives much importance to common origins, history, territory, language and religion as key elements in national identity formation. Finally, this chapter provides some of the dimensions of national identity. The Second chapter tackles Scotland as a case study to examine the five elements of national identity and how much contribution they had in building the Scots as a nation and Scotland as a state. Finally, the third chapter is devoted to the analysis of the role of religion in forming the Scottish national identity and how such element was an important key cog ushering various decisive events that took place between Scotland and England along the centuries.

# Chapter One

## Identity vs. National Identity

The term 'identity' answers the questions of 'who one is?' What comes to mind when one thinks of oneself; it forms one's self-concept. Identity is a person's natural state that is constantly growing and eventually becomes something bigger than oneself. It is dynamic and continuously being moulded based on life experiences, mistakes and successes that one has achieved in his life. There are different levels of identity. On the one hand, there is the personal identity that usually involves personal name, experiences, dreams, goals, desires and values and the amalgamation of these elements creates the self-image or personality. On the other hand, there are the more collective identities like dynastic, regional, ethnic or more broadly national identities. The latter is recently gaining interest from the side of many historians and scholars. That being said, the present chapter is an attempt to first understand identity and national identity as a concept. Then, it takes a step further to study and analyse the account of ethno-symbolism, one of the groundbreaking theories in nation and nationalism studies. Finally, this chapter will shed light on the psychological, cultural, historical, territorial and political dimensions of national identity.

### 1. Understanding Identity and National Identity

Identity is who one is, or rather the different characteristics that make one distinct from others. Actually, identity is much more than that. The term 'identity' is very difficult to define and illustrate. Its meaning is too illusive to be covered in one definition. The concept of identity is multi-dimensional in the sense that its meaning changes and depends heavily on the field or discipline that the term is used in. Generally, identity is defined in dictionaries as "the qualities, beliefs, etc., that make a particular person or group different from others" and "the relation established by psychological identification" (Merriam-Webster). It is quite clear that the dictionary definitions have failed to cover the whole meaning of the term; rather, it just gave a general view of it. However, the Serbian philosopher and anthropologist Zagorka

Golubovic claimed in her article “An Anthropological Conceptualisation of Identity” that “the basic meaning of identity refers to where one (a person or a group) belongs, and what is expressed as “self-image” or/and “common-image”, what integrates them inside self or group existence and what differentiates them *visa-a-vis* “others”” (25). In addition to that, she said “I am presenting the anthropological approach to this topic by considering identity as a socio-culturally conditioned phenomenon. Whatever forms it takes in different historical conditions in a long run of historical process. That refers both to collective identification and self-definition of individuals” (28). These quotations bring about the idea that identity is a set of characteristics and parameters that allow a person or a group to identify with a certain category and to be distinct from others. Identity is a matter of self-definition, of how individuals or groups choose to define themselves in a particular context. In other words, identity is how persons or groups view themselves and are viewed by others. Golubovic mentioned an interesting point. She highlighted that identity is not primordial or biological, but a socially and culturally constructed phenomenon. Identities are shaped by the society and culture, or more generally the context in which a person or a group lives.

In his book “War of Visions”, the politician Francis M. Deng defined identity as:

The way individuals and groups define themselves and are defined by others on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, language, and culture ... clan, lineage, and family are often vital elements of identity. Territory or region as an element of identification overlaps with one or more of the factors and is therefore of a complementary or an affirmative consideration. Whatever the determining factors, identity is a concept that gives a deeply rooted psychological and social meaning to the individual in the context of group dynamics. (1)

Deng adds that the formation of identity is governed by certain factors like religion, language, ethnicity and territory. The same characteristics serve as vital elements of a more specific form of identity known as ‘national identity’. Moreover, according to the American Psychological Association (APA) dictionary, identity is defined as “an individual’s sense of self defined by (a) a set of physical, psychological, and interpersonal characteristics that is not wholly shared with any other person and (b) a range of affiliations (e.g., ethnicity) and social roles ... Such a sense is derived from one’s body sensations; one’s body image; and the feeling that one’s memories, goals, values, expectations, and beliefs belong to the self”. This

quotation delivers a psychological conceptualisation of identity. It adds to the other definition that, besides the physical, social and cultural elements, identity is highly influenced by psychological factors, like the person's memories, goals and expectations in life. Social roles are crucial to the formation of self-image. For instance, being socially perceived as a parent, a teacher or a student influences how one views or defines himself or herself. A glance at the previous definitions hence gives the conclusion that there are two aspects of identity: subjective and objective. The subjective identity is simply how one conceives himself or herself to be. However, the objective identity is how they are viewed independently from how they see themselves. It is rather who they are in light of certain biological or social facts about them. The use of the term 'objective', here, is mainly to stress the idea that individuals cannot control the objective aspect of their identities, and are often constrained by it. For example, one cannot choose or change the colour of his skin or the background that he or she came from. On the personal, individual level, identity can be defined as the understanding of oneself in relation to others. On the national, corporate level, identities are formed in relation to other nations and states. This research focuses much attention on the national level of identity.

National identity is a sense of identification and belonging to a particular nation regardless of one's nationality or citizenship, a common culture, language, historical myths, ideology, national symbols, colours, blood ties, customs, and traditions, a community with common legal rights and duties, common economy and social mobilization, individuals living in a well bounded territory; a homeland unique for its history and geographical landscape. In their book "Understanding National Identity", the Emeritus Professor of Sociology and the Co-founder of the University of Edinburgh's Institute of Governance, McCrone and the Emeritus Professor of Social Research in the University of Edinburgh, Bechhofer described national identity as: "the means whereby people solve the need to belong, without which they suffer alienation and atomisation...National identity sutures people into the national community and gives them meaning and purpose beyond what they themselves can generate" (10). National identity portrays a national pride and emotional attachment to one's nation. This feeling brings about a tendency to defend that nation even when the members are sometimes personally unknown. For instance, if an Algerian person is proud of his identity and feels a strong connection with all fellow Algerians, this does not necessarily mean that he or she knows every Algerian on earth. In order not to be confused with

patriotism<sup>1</sup>, national identity is a healthy pride of one's country or nation that generates feelings of loyalty, love and support towards all the ones who identify with the same community. National identity usually creates a desire to help fellow members and to fight for the nation's independence and sovereignty. Studying the account of ethno-symbolism would be the easiest way to fully comprehend what national identity is.

## 2. Ethno-Symbolism and Nation Formation

The concept of 'national identity' has been approached from different perspectives. For some it has a 'primordial' quality. It is a natural and inevitable mode of being. It has historical roots that go back centuries, strictly taken to the beginning of human civilization. In the book "Nationalism and Political Identity", the Weinstein Chair of International Studies and Professor of Political Science, Sandra Joireman highlighted that primordialism is "the images of ancient beginnings, evolution and a natural state of being. These are the images that most closely represent the primordialist view of ethnic identities" (19). Others see national identity as 'situational'. In the book of "National Identity", Verdugo and Milne mentioned that "In the instrumentalist view, national identity is variable: it depends on circumstances since changes effect the intensity of identifications ... The situational approach to social circumstances effect the development, strength, and form of national identity" (195). Therefore, as the individual's situation changes, so will the group identification. The different attitudes, perceptions and sentiments will vary in relation to that individual in successive periods and different situations. Which means that national identity can be used 'instrumental' by elites who need to mobilise large groupings to support their interests and justify power invested in their institutions.

Apart from these two extremes, there is an approach that stresses the historical and symbolic-cultural attributes of national identity. This is the perspective adopted in this research. For ethno-symbolists, national identity is a type of cultural collectivity, characterised by myths of descent and historical memories, and differentiated by cultural elements like religion, customs, language, or institutions. In order to fully comprehend this perspective, one needs to distinguish between ethnic *categories* and ethnic *communities*. Ethno-symbolists emphasise that ethnic categories are human populations viewed as separate

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<sup>1</sup> Extreme nationalism that often results in conflicts, exclusions, as well as xenophobia \_the fear or hatred of strangers or foreigners

cultural and historical groupings. However, the population itself is often unconscious that it forms a separate collectivity. Like African-Americans or Asian-Americans living in the United States who fully identify as American citizens.

An ethnic community (French *ethnie*), on the other hand, can be distinguished by six main attributes as introduced by the doyen of ethno-symbolism, Dr. Anthony D. Smith in his book “The Ethnic Origins of Nations”:

- 1- A collective name.
- 2- A common myth of descent.
- 3- A shared history.
- 4- A distinctive shared culture.
- 5- An association with a specific territory.
- 6- A sense of solidarity. (22-29)

An ethnic community of a nation can therefore be seen as a named human population sharing a myth of common origins, historical memories, common culture, and an association with a specific territory or ‘homeland’. Hence, its population is united by a sense of solidarity and a sense of common identity. Dr. Smith said that: “an *ethnie* in my terminology is not just a category of population with a common name, descent myths, history, culture and territory association. It is also a community with a definite sense of identity and solidarity” (29)

A crucial point to be stressed here, an ethnic community is different from a *race* which usually refers to a social group that is differentiated by unique hereditary biological traits, like the natural colouring of people. Ethnic communities often get confused with races, however, this confusion is mainly a result of the widespread influence of racist ideologies and discourses. “The concept of the nation must be differentiated from other concepts of collective identity like class, region, gender, race, and religious community” (Hutchinson and Smith 4).

At this point it is necessary to shed light on some of the elements mentioned above. In regard to the attribute of the myth of common ancestry, Ethno-symbolists stressed on the idea that what really matters for the group identification is not the fact of ancestry; it is rather a fictive and a putative ancestry. Members generally believe that they compose a union of

interrelated families, forming one huge ‘family’. Nonetheless, facts of common origins are usually difficult to ascertain but this does not omit its account for the group identification. “Max Weber examines the nation as a ‘prestige community’, endowed with a sense of cultural mission. Nations, he claims, are too various to be defined in terms of any criterion, but he affiliates nation to ethnic communities as populations unified by a myth of common descent” (Hutchinson and Smith 15).

The same thing goes with what ethno-symbolists have termed ‘shared historical memories’. There is a thin line between myth and history. Sometimes individuals believe in and associate themselves with historical events that are founded on myths and legends about their ancestors, for instance the founding of Rome. According to the legend, ancient Rome was founded by the two brothers and demigods, Romulus and Remus. The legend claims that in an argument over who would rule the city (or, in another version, where the city would be located) Romulus killed Remus and named the city after himself. This has entered the historical consciousness of every Italian. Ethnic communities are doubly ‘historical’ in the sense that not only are historical memories essential to their continuance, but each of those communities is the product of specific historical forces and is therefore subject to historical change and dissolution.

For the association with a specific territory, it is the attachments and associations, rather than residence in or possession of the land with which members identify themselves.

Ethnie always possess ties to a particular locus or territory, which they call their ‘own’. They may well reside in that territory; or the association with it may be just a potent memory. An ethnie need not be in physical possession of ‘its’ territory; what matters is that it has a symbolic geographical centre, a sacred habitat, a ‘homeland’, to which it may symbolically return, even when its members are scattered across the globe and have lost their homeland centuries ago. (Smith 28)

It is where they believe they belong, not just a stretch of land; it is rather a ‘homeland’, a land of their kings, heroes, poets, priests and the like. Besides, it is this sacred land that brings the members of the nation together even if they are long divorced from it. Like

the Jews and the Armenians. Nothing would boost the feeling of nationhood more than an intense nostalgia or a spiritual attachment to a specific 'homeland'.

When it comes to the varying elements of a common culture, one is likely to deal with more objective attributes of national identity. For ethno-symbolists, elements like language, religion, customs, and pigmentation, are described as objective 'cultural markers' that function autonomously from the will of the individual, unlike all the subjective elements mentioned above. An individual can somehow control or choose the territory with which he or she wants to identify. These cultural attributes serve as differentiae that separate one population from another. Hence, it is the significance and the symbolism of these markers that actually matter for the process of identification.

The leaders of this approach, Anthony David Smith and John Hutchinson, postulate that national identity is anything but primordial, regardless of what other extremes may claim. The significance of these attributes coincides with the consciousness and unity of the community's membership as a whole. In other words, as all of these elements come together and become stronger, so does the sense of community. Conversely, as the significance of each of these attributes diminishes, so does the overall sense of nationhood. However, this statement remains to be tested.

Now the question is: how does a nation form? Ethno-symbolism offers two main kinds of nation formation: coalescence and division. The first arises from the combination of different units. A "nation comes into existence only when several elements come together" (Hutchinson and Smith 15). This can be achieved through the process of amalgamation of separate units, or through the absorption of one unit by another. The best example that could be provided here is the assimilation of regions or tribes. The second is the subdivision of a union into separate parts, when a part of a nation leaves the union to form a new group, as in the case of the Berbers or 'Amazighs' in Algeria. At first, the Berbers used to form a cohesive ethnic community or a nation. They shared the same traditions, customs, religion, and language. They used to speak Tamazight (Berber). Then, they subdivided into different ethnic groups. Like the Kabylis who speak the Kabyle Berber language, the Chaouis people or 'Chawia' who speak the Chaouia language, the Mozabite people who inhabit the M'zab region in the northern Sahara. They speak Mozabite language or (Tumzabt), and other ethnic groups.

John Hutchinson is one of the doyens of nation and nationalism studies. He belongs to the ethno-symbolists who insist on the pre-modern, ethnic basis of many nationalisms and nations. As well as on the fact that in some European and Eastern nations the ethnic community was well developed long before the advent of the modern era and could therefore form the basis of the modern nations. “There are ‘ethnic roots’ which determine, to a considerable degree, the nature and limits of modern nationalisms and nations”, and “The ‘modern nation’ in practice incorporates several features of pre-modern ethnics and owes much to the general model of ethnicity which has survived in areas until the dawn of the ‘modern era’” (Smith 18). The so-called ‘modern nations’ so often incorporate pre-modern features of name, memories, symbols, customs, language, territory, religion and the like, the kind of elements explored by the ethno-symbolists.

Hutchinson made a distinction between ‘modernists’ and ‘ethno-symbolists’. The former believe in the idea that the construction of national identity is the work of elite, instrumentally used and controlled, whilst the latter focus on national identity as historically constructed “embodied in myths, symbols and culture” (Hutchinson 76). He emphasised on the role of historians and artists in the process of nation formation. For him, the leaders of nationalist movements are typically “Historical scholars and artists” rather than “politicians or legislators” (110). He described nationalist leaders as ‘moral innovators’ who rely on national media to spread their messages, stressing primordial myths, histories, traditions and rituals to raise national sentiment and bring different parts of the nation together. At present, national identity is generally attributed to citizens of a nation-state<sup>2</sup>. However, distinct national identities may also be shared among individuals belonging to nations without states, such as Quebec, Catalonia, the Basque Country and Scotland. Collective memories of a time when the nation was independent, endured oppression, or attained international leadership tend to strengthen a sense of common identity among those who belong to the nation, even if it lacks a state of its own

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<sup>2</sup> When a group of people, who share the same history, traditions or language, lives in a particular area under one government or a sovereign state

### **3. Dimensions of National Identity**

National identity is constituted by a set of attributes shared by those who belong to a particular nation. The nature of these attributes stems from the specific way in which the nation is defined. Yet, in referring to the nation as a human group conscious of forming a community, sharing a common culture, and in some cases, attached to a clearly demarcated territory, having a common past and a common project for the future while claiming the right to self-determination, it is clear that national identity has five dimensions: psychological, cultural, territorial, historical and political.

#### **3.1 Psychological Dimension**

The psychological dimension of national identity arises from the consciousness of forming a group based on the 'felt' closeness uniting those who belong to the nation. Such closeness can remain latent for years then suddenly comes to the surface whenever the nation is confronted with an external or internal enemy - real, potential or imagined - threatening its prosperity, its traditions, culture, territory, and its sovereignty.

Some writers on nationalism<sup>3</sup>, including ethno-symbolists, insist on the subjective nature of national identity's components. However, the most relevant quality of those components is not whether they are subjective or objective, but rather whether they are felt as real by those sharing a common identity. Across the globe we find countless examples of people prepared to make sacrifices and ultimately die for their nations. This proves that, at least for them, national identity is real and worth fighting for. But why is this so? Sharing a national identity generates an emotional bond between members. This is fundamentally psychological and irrational because national identity is the only group that can demand a person's loyalty because of felt kinship ties. A nation is a group of people who feel that they are ancestrally related, forming a fully extended family. Since all nations originate from the mixing of people from various ethnic origins, what matters is not chronological or factual history but sentient or felt history. The attributes, real or invented, sustaining the belief in

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<sup>3</sup> An ideological movement that promotes the identification with a particular nation and the support of its interests, often with the belief that one's nation or country is better than the other's

common ancestry make up national identity and foster a sense of belonging which generally endows members with a sense of loyalty and social cohesion.

### **3.2 Cultural Dimension**

Values, beliefs, customs, conventions, habits, languages and practices are transmitted to the new members who receive the culture of a particular nation. As mentioned above, the process of identification with the elements of a specific culture implies strong emotional investments. “It is this sense of history and the perception of cultural uniqueness and individuality which differentiates populations from each other and which endows a given population with a definite identity” (Smith 22). Two major inferences, derived from this, possess a particular significance when considering national identity. First, a shared culture favours the creation of solidarity among the members of a given community by allowing them to recognise each other as fellow members and to imagine their community as separate and distinct from others. Second, individuals socialised within a distinct culture tend to internalise its symbols, values, beliefs and customs as forming a part of themselves.

Many writers on nationalism define the nation as a cultural entity and refer to the processes of communication as fundamental in creating coherent societies and cultures. Communication requires the use of a specific language known by the members of the nation. Vernacular language<sup>4</sup> has a power that springs from its ability to create unified fields of exchange and communication, which contributes to the strengthening of national identity. Two people who do not understand each other cannot be said to share a national identity.

### **3.3 Historical Dimension**

Members of a nation tend to feel proud of their ancient roots and generally interpret them as a sign of resilience, strength and even superiority when compared to other nations unable to display a rich past during which the nation became prominent. Greeks are proud of their classic legacy encompassing art and philosophy, the introduction of democracy and the Olympic Games, regardless of their current status as a nation. Belonging to Castile, the

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<sup>4</sup> A language or dialect native to a region or country rather than a literary, cultured, or foreign language

dominant nation within Spain still commemorates the date Columbus first landed on the American soil, and Italians, at least many of them, celebrate the Roman Empire.

Nations remember admirable and spectacular experiences, but they also evoke dreadful moments of national humiliation and suffering. This selective use of history provides members of a nation with a collective memory filled with transcendental moments in the life of the community, events and experiences that allow people to increase their self-esteem by feeling as members of a community which has proved capable of great things. Therefore national identity can be seen as “solidarity sustained by a distinctive historical consciousness” (Hutchinson and Smith 15). All nations evoke some features that make them special and, in a certain way, ‘superior’ to the rest. They all excel in something, no matter what, that makes them and their members unique. History contributes to the construction of a certain image of the nation and represents the place where nations are made.

History makes ones closer to their ancestors, and strengthens the subjective belief of being part of an extended family. It is through identification with one’s history that they rejoice their ancestor’s victories and feel their sufferings and humiliations throughout history. People feel aroused when reading about their common past. The feeling of continuity with the past and projection into the future unites the members of the nation and gives them the urge to explore their roots and the collective dimension of their lives.

### **3.4 Territorial Dimension**

For centuries, the life of individuals evolved around a small territory where family, work, and religious and administrative structures were concentrated. In turn, individual’s identity was defined by the roles they played within that limited territory. Many sociologists and scholars of nationalism have wondered if the sense of national territorial boundedness vary depending on whether an individual forms part of the elite or is a member of the masses. It is suggested that elites acquired a much more accurate sense of the territorial boundaries of the nation as soon as they had access to education. Masses required a great shift to conceive the nation as their home, since large sections of the population had never travelled around their own nation’s territory and could not imagine it as clearly bounded and distinct. “Territory is relevant to ethnicity, therefore, not because it is actually possessed, nor even for

its ‘objective’ characteristics...but because of an alleged and felt symbiosis between a certain piece of earth and its community” (Smith 28). It is the psychological association with the territory that mattered for the process of national identification.

### **3.5 Political Dimension**

The political aspect of national identity when applied to the nation-state focuses upon those actions of the state destined to construct a cohesive society through a set of strategies designed to generate a culturally and linguistically homogeneous citizenry. As mentioned by Hutchinson and Smith: “what distinguishes the nation is a commitment to a political project” (15), by creating a national education system and national media, and by promoting a specific ‘national’ culture and an ‘official’ language, the nation-state contributes to the dissemination of a national identity among its citizens. Some of them, however, may already have a different national identity, or originate from beyond the nation-state’s boundaries. Others may legally be citizens of a particular state but place their loyalty elsewhere. The nation-state is the highest and most desirable form of political organization. Here, nationalism is strongly related to political ideologies and has a cultural cohesion and a political unity that comes naturally to this entity. National identity becomes the front and centre of political organizations in the sense that they forge social bonds, collective spirit and a sense of destiny for their community. Scholars speak of two types of nationalism: ethnic and civic. Ethnic nationalism is based on ethnicity, religion or race where blood determines the membership. Civic nationalism is based on the belief that loyalty and adherence to a common set of political principles or ideals is what defines membership in a nation. It promotes the idea of a homogeneous national identity which generally ignores intra-state diversity.

### **Conclusion**

National identity is a collective sentiment based upon the belief of belonging to the same nation, and of sharing most of the attributes that make it distinct from other nations. Belief in a common culture, history, kinship, language, religion, territory, founding moment and destiny have been invoked, with varying intensity, by individuals claiming to share a particular national identity. The approach of ethno-symbolism has insisted on the pre-modern, ethnic basis of national identity. Particular concern has been given to the extent to which the

significance of each of the cultural attributes, like traditions, customs, language, religion, and common origins, influences the overall sense of nationhood. Such elements shall be dealt with in the following chapter as they represent the argument to rely on in order to examine the validity of the previous theory by taking Scotland as a case study.

# Chapter Two

## Scottish National Identity

National identity is a collective feeling of belonging and identifying with a particular nation. It is paralleled with an acute sense of uniqueness and pride. Having examined the account of Ethno-symbolism, one of the theories of nation and nationalism studies, it is quite clear that national identity feeds on certain elements to nurture the sensation of boundedness among the members of the nation, history, origins, land, language, and religion, to name the most important elements of national identity. The foregoing chapter is thus dedicated to take Scotland as a case study by highlighting the etymology of the name of the country and how it ended up being used to refer to the area now occupied by the Scots or the Scottish people. Most importantly, this chapter uses the common elements of national identity to examine and analyse the formation of the Scottish nationhood.

### 1. Origin and Language

‘Scotland’ has been a meaningless concept for the people who have been living in the past of northern Britain now designated by the term. Only in the last thousand years, there has been no sense of ‘Scottishness’ above the more local, regional, and dynastic identities which shaped people’s daily lives. Prior to this, not only was there no ‘Scotland’, but there was no ‘England’, no ‘Wales’, and no ‘Ireland’. Nor were there any boundary lines between these entities. Observing the geological aspect of Scotland would be the quickest way to comprehend the basic features that have dictated Scottish history. One will see how Scotland is divided into two parts, as “no king, government or foreign conqueror ever could. The Highlands and the Lowlands were regions created by geography and they have been kept separated by economy and politics, even by language and culture” (Peter and Fiona S. Fry 4). Therefore, it is quite necessary to study the origins of these peoples and how they have been kept separated by different cultural elements, especially language.

### **1.1. The Celts (800 BC-43 AD)**

In historical records, much emphasis was given to four people who occupied parts of the British Isles. The Romans who governed Britannia; an area comprised almost the whole of England, Wales and, for a short period, southern Scotland, from 43 to 410 AD. However in the ninth century, there were also British or Welsh tribes in the south of Scotland. In Lothian, Berwickshire, and Roxburghshire, there were Anglo-Saxons, probably mixed with the British too. The Norsemen from Norway were colonizing the islands and estuaries of the north and west, and threatening the political survival of the other people. Before the Romans, Anglo-Saxons, Danes and Normans, there were the Celtic people, to whom one can give names, living in the British Isles. They were known as the Picts, the Gaels and the Britons. Nonetheless, it is difficult to write about the Celtic history and origins with great certainty because of the lack of detailed historical records, especially the records concerning the early historical times of Scotland. The only major sources, used by historians, were written by a sixth century monk called Gildas, an eighth century Northumbrian monk called Bede and the Anglo-Saxon chronicles.

Most historians view the Celts as other Germanic tribes that migrated west from Central Europe. However, in the Declaration of Arbroath “the Scottish Claim of Independence” written in 1320 and submitted to Pope John XXII, the Scottish barons and nobles described the sovereignty of the people and how they came to settle in the British Isles “from Greater Scythia by way of the Tyrrhenian Sea and the Pillars of Hercules, and dwelt for a long course of time in Spain. Whence it came, twelve hundred years after the people of Israel crossed the Red Sea, to its home in the West where it still lives today”. It is clear from the writing of these nobles that they have come from east to west. Moreover, a new scientific study found genealogical evidence to prove this statement. In 2010, Dr Mark Jobling, from the department of Genetics at the University of Leicester, published a journal on the white chromosomal lineages to the Celts. In the journal, the lineage of European male white chromosomes were tested and analysed with DNA evidence strongly supporting the theory that Celtic men spread from one source which is the Near East or the Middle East. The increasing trails of chromosomes shows the path of migration from the Middle East to the region where the Celtic people reside. However, historians still have different views concerning the origins the Celts.

The Celtic language was spoken along all the western isles, Scotland, Ireland, Cornwall, the Isle of Man and Brittany. The Celts “had a well-developed language. (They were still speaking P-Celtic and Q-Celtic. Possibly the P-Celtic tongue was the same as that spoken by the Celts in Wales)” (Peter and Fiona S. Fry 15). They were recognised by most historians and archaeologists as Indo-European tribes, living in the British Isles since pre-historic times, and who were identified by their use of the Celtic language and other cultural similarities. However even between the tribes themselves, there were some linguistic or vernacular variations which remains quite controversial. The Celts were known for their clan-based history that is filled with tribal conflicts. Woolf held that “Northern Britain was still fundamentally rural and occupied by kin-based societies” (312). Perhaps, they lived in an Iron Age society. Then, the tribes gradually became farmers, deforesting land for crops and keeping domestic animals.

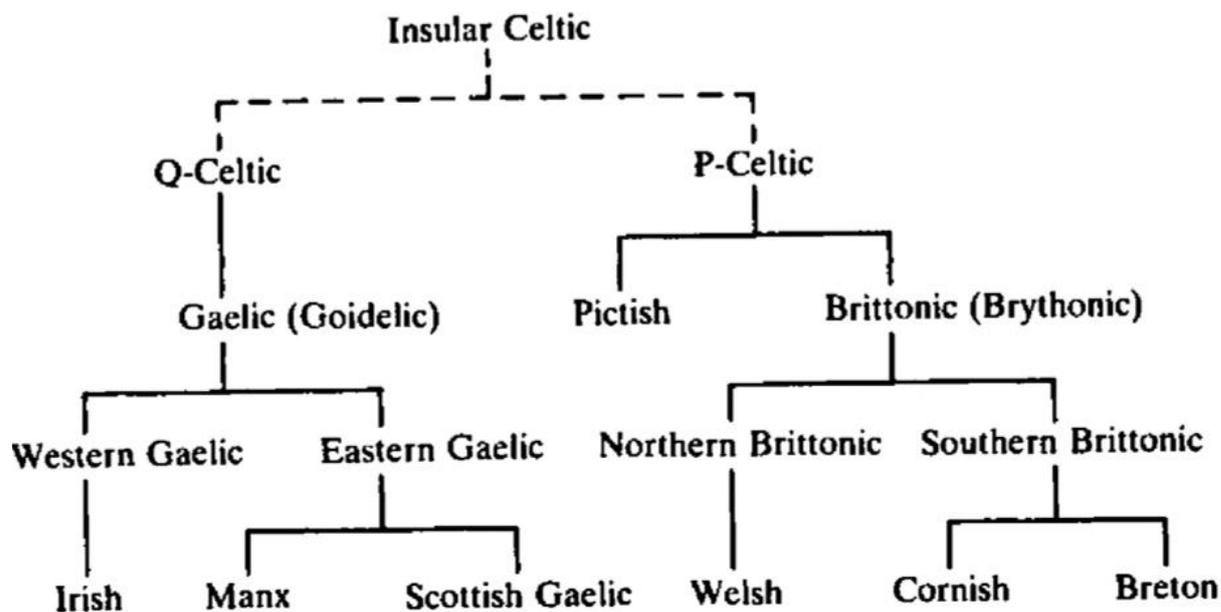
### **1.1.1. The Picts (3<sup>rd</sup> century)**

The term Pict is derived from ‘Picti’ meaning ‘painted people’; it was first used by Roman writers at the end of the third century and was picked up in succeeding centuries by Christian authors to refer in an entirely derogatory fashion to the warlike tribes of the distinct north. Fraser suggested that “The most common explanation is that Picti originated as Latin ‘painted’, a Roman nickname arising from an actual tendency among the northern peoples to apply pigment to their skin” (47). According to Roman historians, Picts tattooed their bodies and carved standing stones, some of which can still be seen today. To Tacitus, one of the greatest historians and the son-in-law of the Roman general Agricola, the people north of the Forth were ‘Caledonian Britons’, and it is clear that in the Roman period they were also considered Brittonic by their neighbours. The early medieval Irish and Welsh terms for the Picts, respectively Cruithne and Prydyn, both derived ultimately from the same word: Pretanni, the root of the present ‘Britain’. However by the eighth century at least, Britons and Picts were seen by those around them as distinctly separate people. “Picts and Britons had entirely different racial origins. It is, therefore, not surprising that their languages were regarded, if mainly for political reasons, as distinct” (52). The Romans called the tribes of the north ‘Caledoni’ and named their land ‘Caledonia’. “There were those whom the Romans called Caledonians, who occupied all northern Scotland. In later years these were called the Picts, because they tattooed their foreheads and other parts of the body” (Peter and Fiona S.

Fry 19). To be more accurate the term 'Caledoni' referred only to one of the Pictish tribes. There were other Pictish tribes occupying the southern part "later to be named by the Romans, like the Damnonii in Argyll, the Novantae in Galloway, the Votadini in the Lothians and the Selgovae in the Cheviots" (19). Pictland was the most controversial Celtic tribe because of its dazzling geography and complex clan history. One theory highlights that the Picts were the descendents of a Gollish tribe called Pictones, living in the modern Bordeaux region in France, but most historians believe that the Picts were simply the descendents of the Iron Age, pre-Celtic inhabitants of northern Scotland.

In the late seventh and early eighth centuries, the Picts united their land and Pictland was born. It was located north of the river Forth and later east of the long mountain range that makes the 'spine' of Scotland. Pictish ceased to be spoken, and because it was not spoken the records (annals, laws, histories or genealogies) failed to be copied in later centuries and were totally lost. However, the Picts have left their animals, real or imaginary, and their symbols stoned all across north-east Scotland. Interesting facts about the Picts are confined to their royal inheritance, which came through the female line, and their language surviving in place names that belong to the P-Celtic division, as does British. The great body of Celtic speaking people had split many centuries before into two sections, P-Celtic and Q-Celtic. Of present and recent languages, Welsh, Breton, and Cornish belong to the former, Irish, Manx and Gaelic (the language spoken by the Scots) to the latter-(figure 01). Many of Scotland's towns still have Pictish names, Pittenweem and Pitlochry, to name few. The Pictish land was extremely spacious. They had sacred hills, Ben Ledi and Schiehallion, the Tay Valley, Fife, and Morayshire. They can be traced in 'Duns' or Forts, Dunnottar, Dunkeld and Dunnichen. In 741, the Pictish king Oengus had some sort of overlordship over the Scots, however, the Great Battle of 839 saw the slaughter of kings of both Picts and Scots by Norsemen. After the disastrous defeat at the hands of the Vikings, a Scot named Kenneth MacAlpin became the ruler of the Picts. (Woolf 93). Some historians believe it was a matter of a Scot inheriting the kingdom through a Pictish mother because of the Pictish rule of succession through the female line. Others believe that it was completely a take-over, and the Scots (Gael) had won the throne.

**Figure 01: Origin of Celtic Languages**



**Source:** MacAulay, Donald. *The Celtic Languages*. Cambridge University Press, 1992, p.6

### 1.1.2. The Gaels (5<sup>th</sup> century)

As far back as the third century AD, Irish settlers from the region of the later country Antrim had crossed the North Channel and settled in the west of Scotland. In their own language, they called themselves ‘Goidil’, modernised as ‘Gaels’, and gave this name to their new homeland, ‘the Gaelic Coast’ (Scots Gaelic ‘Earraghaidheal’, English Argyll). Latin sources of the Post-Roman period called the inhabitants of Ireland the ‘Scotti’ and the people of Argyll, ‘Scotti Britanniae’, ‘Scots of Britain’; people who lived in the past Britain north of the Cheviot Hills and river Tweed. The presence of Irish-speaking Scotti may reflect an actual folk movement of settlers from Ireland to Argyll. Alternatively, the people of the region may always have been more closely linked to the inhabitants of north-east Ireland with whom they were united by the sea, than to the occupants of the Brittonic lands on the far side of the harsh mountains of Druin Alban. This somehow explains the conflicts between these tribes. In the early eighth century, the Gaels were confronted with the rising power of the Picts. In 736 AD, Picts stormed Dunadd; a location where Gaelic kings were inaugurated in a ceremony that symbolically married them to the land.

The Scots historically are intruders. They were viewed by the Romans as the Gaelic-speaking ‘pirates’ who raided Britannia in the third and fourth centuries. They came from Ireland and built the kingdom of Dalriada on land which had once been Pictish, in the west of Scotland, in Argyll and the Isles. By the mid-sixth century, they held a sizeable kingdom lying north of the Britons of Strathclyde and stretching up beyond the Great Glen, and they named it after the district of Ulster from which they took their royal house. They gave names of individual princes to areas of occupation, for instance Comgal to Cowall. They had their strategic fortified centres like Dunadd.

In the mid-sixth century, they added to their territorial imperialism the great saint, Columba. With his powerful influence, Gaelic speech and culture were remarkably intrusive at the time. It spread all across Scotland. This was a massive change, even though for the most part it replaced another Celtic language. The gap between P-Celtic and Q-Celtic was already deep. Some historians highlighted that St. Columba used an interpreter when addressing the Pictish king, which implies that Pictish and Gaelic were hugely different. Gradually the name Scotia divorced from its old meaning of Ireland and came to mean all Scotland north of the Forth, which had hitherto been called Alba. This area became occupied with people speaking Gaelic and owning a Scottish king.

### **1.1.3. The Britons (4<sup>th</sup> century)**

One of the three Celtic tribes, the one that was doing worst in the ninth century was the Britons. Their kingdom was called the kingdom of Strathclyde, with its fortress at Dumbarton. They could be traced in Clydesdale<sup>1</sup> and the northern English countries on the west. Elsewhere, there were lesser princes ruling smaller areas. Historians know something of these Britons from the Welsh literature. The Welsh epic, *The Goddodin*, was written down in its final form in the twelfth century, but carrying stanzas three centuries older. It is about one of the Celtic tribes, Votadini who at one time had a town on Traprain Law. This poem and other Welsh poems do not tell the story of organized kingdoms but rather of princes who fought with one another for land and power. There are meagre historical records about the Britons; however, what is quite certain is that they spoke Breton which belonged to a Celtic language known as the common Brittonic (also called common Brythonic, Old Brythonic, or

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<sup>1</sup> Clydesdale or Lanarkshire is a region in the southwest of Scotland.

Old Brittonic). Most of the recent historical records view the Britons as Celtic-speaking tribes who originally came from Wales.

### Map 01: North Britain in the Middle Ages



**Source:** Taylor, Alice. *The Shape of the State in Medieval Scotland: 1124-1290*. Oxford University Press, 2016, p.xxiv

### 1.2. The Roman Occupation (55 BC-5<sup>th</sup> century)

Although the Roman presence in the northern parts of the British Isles was often blurred, the effect of the Roman conquest in the southern parts was highly considerable. The first incursion came in the summer of AD 79 when the Roman general Agricola led his army deep into Caledonia. Peter and Fiona S. Fry suggested that “Agricola was soon to become the first Roman general to advance into Scotland and to fight the Celts in a major battle” (20).

The invasion which followed was recorded by his son-in-law, the historian Tacitus, and resulted in Roman victory at the battle of Mons Graupus in AD 83. A frontier was established much further south with the building of Hadrian's Wall on the Tyne-Solway line in the 120s and 130s. In the middle of the second century, southern parts of the isles were brought within the Roman province of Britannia when a second wall 'Antonine Wall', of more modern construction, was built on the Forth-Clyde line in C. 143. "Both Hadrian and the Antonine wall were psychological as well as physical barriers. They marked boundaries, as it were. But neither side for a moment imagined them to be impregnable" (25). The Hadrian's Wall was built as a means of protecting the somewhat Romanised tribes and areas from the turbulent and warlike tribes of the north. The northern wall was abandoned a decade after, approximately in the mid-160s. Then, a putative campaign against the Caledonians was waged by the Roman Emperor Severus (Caracalla). Nonetheless, the concerted attacks of the 360s were particularly intense and involved not only Picti and Scotti but also Saxons from across the North Sea.

By the late second century and early third century, "Cumbria and south-west Scotland were attacked by parties of fierce warriors coming by sea from Northern Island. They were known to the Romans as the Scotti, a word meaning raiders" (Peter and Fiona S. Fry 26). By the late fourth century, the Roman power in the British Isles started to diminish, leading to its ultimate departure in AD 410 or there about. "Nearer to the middle of the fifth century the Romans abandoned Britain altogether, leaving the British to fend for themselves against growing danger from Saxon pirates from Europe, Scots from Ireland and, of course, Picts and other tribes from Scotland". When part of Scotland was under the Roman conquest, Latin became the principle language of the elites, especially in the more Romanised south and east of the island. The impact of Rome on native society perhaps was the physical remains of the Empire: the enormosity of Hadrian's Wall, the monumental carved distance slabs from the Antonine Wall, the remains of the huge fortress at Ardoch, Perthshire, and the dazzling parade armour found at Newsteads in the Tweed Valley. The first roads in Scotland or Britannia were established by the Romans who introduced, in the space of few years, a whole system in the south of the country, in addition to the language of course.

### 1.3. Germanic Invasion and Expansion (5<sup>th</sup> century)

After the decline of the Roman Empire around 410 AD, Angles and Saxons began moving from main land Europe and settling all across England and the lower parts of Scotland. To be more accurate, there were not only Angles and Saxons who had come to the Island, but according to Peter and Fiona Fry, the Jutes and Angles from Denmark and the Saxons from north-west Germany and Holland came to the lower parts of the British Isles too. This was claimed to be under the urgent demand of the weak Britons who were facing brutal confrontations with the Picts and the Scots. (27). They were promised lands by the Britons. Then, seduced by the fertility of the island, the newcomers decided to stay and settle on the east side between the Forth and the Tyne, emigrating from Humber and Yorkshire. In the course of the next hundred years or so, more and more of these Saxons, Angles, and Jutes arrived from the three most powerful nations of Germania (as Bede described them) to seek their fortunes in a new land. However, some historians claimed that the main cause was not the fertility of the land, but rather because the newcomers defeated the Picts and the Scots, and they were not paid for their efforts. Eventually, they rebelled and started invading the land. “The Saxons, however, rebelled, beginning to seize Romano-British territory for themselves, further afflicting their beleaguered hosts and administering the *coup de grace* to Roman civilization and culture in Britain” (qtd. In Fraser 44).

By that time, the Island was divided into four kingdoms, Pictland, Dalriada, Alt Clut<sup>2</sup> (Strathclyde) and the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of Bernicia and Deira that eventually became the kingdom of Northumbria. The Angles, Saxons and Jutes were referred to as the Anglo-Saxons who spoke the language that we know today as Old English. To the south of Scotia lay the Anglican kingdoms of Northumbria, populated by Angles from across the North Sea, with a fair-sized British element, too. What destroyed these Anglican kingdoms and their civilization was the force that shaped Scotland in the ninth and tenth centuries, the invading Norsemen.

### 1.4. Viking Interlude and Legacy (8<sup>th</sup> century)

Around the ninth century, the Danes started building settlements around the British Isles and in early eleventh century, Norsemen invaded. In 793, Normans sacked Lindisfare.

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<sup>2</sup> One of the early medieval kingdoms of the Britons in what the Welsh call Hen Ogledd and whose capital town was Dumbarton.

The ‘Black Gentiles’ as the Irish called them, sailed down the west coast of Scotland, and in 794 Skye and Iona and all the islands were pillage by this valiant, wrathful, sea-raiders. Woolf believed that “The Viking Age, and specifically the settlement of large parts of northern Scotland by Scandinavians in the course of it, marks a major turning point in the country’s history” (275). The Viking long-boat seventy feet long, strongly built and beautifully curved could and did fight naval battles. At first, they came as pagan looters and destroyers of other civilizations, a generation later; the emphasis was more on conquest and settlement. Many of them came to the island because they were drained by the restrictions of their king, Harald Fairhair of Norway. For instance, Ketil Flatnose stopped paying tax to his king and went to the island. He conquered the Hebrides, and ruled it.

By that period, it was these settling ‘Norsemen’ from Norway, bringing their families, and their laws, looking for good trading bases, and building private empires that destroyed the central northern English kingdoms. “Healfdene went with part of the army into Northumbria and set up winter quarters by the River Tyne, and the army conquered the land and they often ravaged among the Picts and the Strathclyde Britons” (qtd. In Woolf 111). They occupied most of the islands of Scotland and most of the coasts of Britain and Ireland. The Vikings settled particularly in the north-east coast of England, in Northumbria. They also conquered parts of the North like the Hebrides, the Orkneys and the Shetlands. It was their pressure on the Scots and Picts that produced the smashing military defeat of these two together in 839, leading to their union in 843 and the creation of the kingdom of Alba, what was later to be known as Scotland; “the kingdom of Alba, a polity that is clearly the direct ancestor of modern Scotland. Indeed, the Anglo-Saxons were already calling it Scotland” (Fraser 349).

After establishing the Danish kingdom of York, the Vikings started to assimilate with the Picts and the Scots through intermarriages, especially between royal families as with the Viking princess Ingibjorg who married the Scottish king Malcom III. In addition, their presence brought a new strong blood to the peoples living in Scotland (Peter and Fiona S. Fry 45). The Vikings added a new language to the Scottish linguistic account. ‘Old Norse’ was a North Germanic language once spoken in Scandinavia, the Faroe Islands, Iceland, and Greenland, parts of Russia, France, British Isles and Ireland. Fraser postulated that:

what we can say with some certainty is that by about 1200 most of Scotland north of the Dornoch Firth seems to have been entirely Norse-speaking and that Norse place-names had replaced those which had been

in existence before the arrival of the Scandinavians ... it seems likely that throughout the western Isles Norse language and toponymy had replaced the Pictish and Gaelic. (276)

As stated by Woolf, the Viking heritage played a major part in forming modern identities (276), especially the Scottish one. The danger of the Norsemen was one of the reasons that brought closeness among the peoples of Scotland and ultimately leading to the creation of the Kingdom of Alba, which eventually became modern Scotland. Studying the history, origins and language of the people who inhabited the British Isles from pre-historic times reaching the eleventh and twelfth centuries brings about the idea that Scotland was, in fact, a matrix of people of different origins. Each held an association with a specific history, a history of invasions and tribal conflicts. Moreover, the area known today as 'Scotland' witnessed and experienced a variety of languages, be it Celtic, Germanic, English, or French.

## **2. The Making of the State (9<sup>th</sup> century)**

In the first millennium AD, the predecessors of the kingdom of Scotland, both Gaelic kingdom of Dalriada and the kingdom of Pictland, with themselves formed a part of a greater Celtic culture that can be traced back many thousands of years. Before the Roman invasion, the north part of the island was inhabited by people who spoke P-Celtic, whereas, the tribes in Ireland spoke Q-Celtic. The Romans first sent "an embassy to the kings of the Scots and Picts, exhorting them to submit to the Romans" (Skene 43). According to the chronicle, the warlike tribes of the north refused to submit, and the Romans arrived in Britain. With the course of three hundred years, the Romans violently subjugated most of the Brythonic tribes, and the lands they colonized are known today as England and Wales. They forcibly assimilated the population, giving the ruling class little choice but to adopt the Roman way of life. Separating the northern tribes from the southern Britons by building the two walls, the Romans appeared to have caused a split in the Brythonic cultures of Britain. By the fall of the Roman Empire, Brittonic evolved into early Welsh, and the native ruling class by that time deeply entwined with the Roman administration had for the most part adopted the trappings of the Roman culture. Britons, by that time, were very weak and this made them an attractive option for the Germanic tribes from mainland Europe who for various reasons saw the opportunity to establish a new land for themselves. The period was marked by large numbers of Angles, Saxons and Jutes arriving to the British Isles and controlling southern and eastern parts of Britain. It was also by that time that Irish kingdoms appeared in western Britain. "The Scots,

says Bede, migrating from Ireland under their leader Reuterha, appropriated, either by fair means, or by force of arms, those settlements among the Picts, which they still possess” (Skene 43). The Gaelic kingdoms, or Tuatha in Irish, were loose coalitions of various clans, which were themselves loose coalitions of various families of Gaelic speakers. After the Roman departure, one particular kingdom had flourished which is Dalriada; a new territory founded by Fergus the Great in the late fifth century, invading lands originally populated by Brythonic tribes. The kingdom soon became a significant power that maintained strong ties with Ireland and its aristocratic culture and in particular the Irish traditions.

As the kingdom grew, it had several conflicts with the early Welsh kingdoms south of the Forth of Clyde and the newly arrived Saxons of Bernicia and of course the Picts. Finally, the creation of the kingdom of Alba, the predecessor of the kingdom of Scotland, combined two Celtic cultures together, the Pictish and the Gaelic cultures. The two had an interesting clan system which was applied to everyday life. It was “a series of social grades from the chief down to the bondsmen” (Adam 95). In other words, the social grades moved from the Higher King down to the slaves who would be foreigners captured on raids. Observing the history of Scotland, one can clearly notice that throughout the centuries the Scottish people, as they are called today, never had an association with the same territory. Nor was there an association with the same culture and the sense of boundedness, as it is the case today, was in any way inevitable! The Scottish people were historically portrayed as several kingdoms of different origins continuously fighting each other to gain power and more lands. Paganism<sup>3</sup> was the only shared element amongst them. Furthermore, it was extremely difficult to track their history and to know about their detailed everyday life. Archaeology was the only source used by historians to put together the pieces of the early Scottish history.

### **3. Establishing a New Administration (12<sup>th</sup> century)**

By the twelfth century, burghs<sup>4</sup> started to appear in the Lowlands of Scotland. The idea of the burghs was introduced first by the English men who used it as a protection against the raids of the Vikings. The first royal burghs, in medieval Scotland, were created by King David I<sup>5</sup>. The notion of these burghs played a crucial part in Scotland’s history. A burgh could

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<sup>3</sup> Paganism is a religion that has many gods or goddesses, considers the nature holy, and does not have a central authority.

<sup>4</sup> It is a city or a town or town in Scots surrounded by a tall, thick stone or dirt wall and a wooden fence. It is modernised as borough.

<sup>5</sup> He also brought the feudal system from England because he grew up there in front of his sister Margret who was married to King Henry I of England.

protect itself by walls, gates and armies. It could elect officials to make local laws in its minor parliaments. During that period, foreigners were given lands by monarchs to move and settle in the Lowlands. Many of these burghs were inhabited by Englishmen, Danes and Flemings. The “influx of Flemish and other foreign settlers, especially after the expulsion of the Flemings from England in 1155, was beneficial to burghal development north of the border” (Houston 1). Most importantly, burghs were able to produce goods and trade them with other burghs, or outside Scotland with England and Europe. They were not required to pay taxes by the royal house; therefore, they were able to make their own wealth using their markets. The economic system in the Lowlands became a commercial one and inevitably leading to a change in the country’s law to adopt with the new conditions.

By the thirteenth century, society was no longer clan-based “Over the twelfth century, kings did not rule solely through patronage<sup>6</sup>; their power was not exercised through lordship alone. A unit of local governance and administration (the sheriffdom) was first introduced south of the Forth but, under Mael Coluim and William, developed north of it” (Taylor 439). Law was made by the king as well as the country’s advisors. King David I introduced jurisdictions, sheriffdoms and a complete legal system. The sheriffs were performing several roles like collecting taxes and rents, and hearing court cases. For instance, “the unique burgh court roll of 1317, as well as extracts from the register of 1398-1407 (making the start of the almost continuous series of court and council records)” (Pryde 47). This was considered a major turning point in the history of Scotland. However, these changes were not noticeable in the Highlands. “King of Scots do not seem to have ruled Alba (meaning north of the Forth) through administrative institutions either during or prior to David’s reign” (Taylor 439). In fact, “The law of the Highlands was the law of the clan chiefs. To a great extent it remained so up to the seventeenth century” (Peter and Fiona S. Fry 65). The people in the Highlands refused to adopt the new changes and preferred to maintain their ways of life, for example the Gallgaels in Galloway.

#### **4. Highlanders vs. Lowlanders**

The huge cultural gap in Scotland was between the Highlands and the Lowlands. The territory of Scotland was divided into two roughly equal halves by the so-called Highland Line. The area to the north of this line is mountainous, and it is called the Highlands. The area to the south is known as the Lowlands. Geography was not the only factor that separated these

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<sup>6</sup> It is the power to give jobs and positions, or to provide other help to people as a reward for their support.

two parts. They were also divorced by many languages, many dialects, and countless local patriotisms and prejudices. Unlike the Celtic people of the Highlands, the Lowlanders were not of Celtic origin, but of Saxon origin. However, the Lowlands are the cradle of the Scottish nation. It was the people of the Lowlands, with their great warriors and leaders such as William Wallace and Robert de Bruce, who in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries fought and won the struggle for Scotland's independence against the attempts of England's feudal kings Edward I and II to make Scotland a province of England. The Highlanders had great pride and considered themselves superior to the Lowlanders because most of them were descendants of Danish and Anglo-Saxon settlers and were, therefore, not true Scots. The two parts of Scotland differed not only in language and customs but also in their history. Throughout centuries, the southern parts of Scotland were conquered by Romans, Anglo-Saxons and English, and the northern parts witnessed the Viking power that was finally broken at the battle of Largs in 1263. By that time, Norse, Pictish and Gaelic had substantially merged into the one heroic tribal culture which was to survive in the Highlands of Scotland.

Highlanders were extremely proud of their culture and maintained all their cultural aspects. The wearing of tartans or coloured checks was common in the Highlands until approximately the middle of the eighteenth century. Originally, the tartan was worn as a single piece of cloth. The Kilt did not become popular until the beginning of the eighteenth century. Each clan has its own tartan. Today, the Kilts are worn in special occasions or ceremonies, and sometimes even without a special reason. The Great Highland bagpipe was first attested in Scotland around 1400AD, having previously appeared in European artwork in Spain in the thirteenth century. In 1746 at Culloden, the English troops massacred all the clans, destroyed the Scottish clan system, and banned the tartans, the bagpipe and their language. The Scottish traditions were banned but never forgotten. They were brought secretly and very proudly up to the present day. The Scots were highly superstitious. At the present moment, the Scottish people still believe in their myths and legends like the myth of the Loch Ness Monster<sup>7</sup>. "The manners and customs of the Scots vary with the diversity of their speech. For two languages are spoken amongst them, the Scottish and the Teutonic; the latter of which is the language of those who occupy the sea board and plains, while the race of Scottish speech inhabits the highlands and outlying islands" (Skene 38). Gaelic was the language of the Highlands and Islands, and the Scots was the language of the Lowlands. The

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<sup>7</sup> The Loch Ness Monster or Nessie is a mythical creature that is said to inhabit the lake of Loch Ness in the Scottish Highlands. It is usually described as a huge dinosaur living in the waters.

Scots had many similarities to English; however, it also draws from Gaelic and the dialect of the Vikings (Old Norse). “Scots is a sister-language to English, to employ the Neo-grammarians family-tree metaphor. Both languages stem from Germanic dialects which arrived on the British Isles in the fifth century, and reached as far as north of the river Tweed, into the Scottish Lowlands” (Kopaczyk 5). After the Norman Conquest of England in 1066, “large numbers of Anglo-Saxon speakers fled to Scotland, including the English royal family” (6), especially to the Lowlands. For this reason the Highlanders considered themselves the true Scots. The Lowlanders were highly influenced by the English culture, leading to their assimilation with the English language and way of dressing. The Lowlands had no clans that had their own tartans. It was rather a Highland custom. Strangely enough, some theories suggested that Kilts actually originated from Ireland. At least, it is certain that the Scottish and Irish cultures were to a certain extent alike. “The Scottish nation ... resembles the Irish in all things- in language, manners, and character” (Skene 38). Tartans have been found in Bronze Age Central Europe and the bagpipe is thought to have come from ancient Central Asia. Therefore, even the culture that the Highlanders were clinging to was itself a combination of different cultures. A question ought to be asked here: what is the actual factor that united the Scots and generated this great sense of ‘Scottishness’?

### **Conclusion**

This part of the dissertation has studied some of the common elements of national identity using the Scottish case history. Being previously mentioned, a nation that possesses a sense of nationhood usually shares the same customs, traditions, language or more generally a common culture. The members of the nation, in most cases, share an association with a particular territory; a homeland that is strongly related to their believed myths and legends. The history that has shaped their identities is buried in the mind of each and every member of the nation. Furthermore, coming from the same origin adds to their sense of nationhood and connects all the members together as one ‘super family’. Conversely, the Scottish case has failed all the expectations. The peoples, in the area that was going to be known as ‘Scotland’, spoke a variety of languages and had different customs and traditions. However, the Scots did not seem to have faced much trouble concerning their religion. Therefore, the last chapter is devoted to study, analyse, and illustrate the role of religion in forming the Scottish national identity

# Chapter Three

## Religion and Scottish National Identity

Although the percentage of the population in Scotland whose origins, language or culture can be traced back to the same roots is relatively small, the Scottish people are still considered strong nationalists and proud Scotsmen. Since pre-historic times, the peoples of Scotland did not seem to be separated by their religion. They were collectively proud pagans until the introduction of Christianity. Religion is highly important for the formation of national identity. In some cases, religion is the identity itself. For instance, the Arab Muslims usually consider Islam as their identity. Many would say “I am an Arab, so I am a Muslim” or vice versa. It is true that there are some nationalists who care for the nation’s interests, but do not share the religion of the majority, for example, the Christians in Palestine who are as nationalists as the other Muslims. Religion becomes the spectacle in the formation of national identity when the person identifies with a nation united by its religion; a nation with different cultures and languages, but conjoined by a common religion. While the Christian Faith has played a major part in the history of Scotland, there has been little previous works looking at the importance of religion in the formation of the Scottish identity. It is this issue that the present chapter would explore and cast light on how crucial religion was in uniting the peoples of ancient Scotland.

### **1. Introduction of Christianity (55BC-5<sup>th</sup> century)**

Since the early fourth century, Christianity has been the prevailing religion of the Roman Empire. However, one is solely ignorant of the means by which it reached northern Britain. There are no contemporary accounts, and historians are forced to rely almost exclusively on archaeology. The only documents available are written centuries later. Mounting archaeological evidence reveals the spread of the new religion from Christian communities in the Roman frontier zone focused on the bishopric at York, via Carlisle, to Galloway and the river Valleys of Liddesdale and the Tweed Basin to Lothian, basically in all

areas reached by the Roman Empire. This first phase of Scottish Christianity can be traced in the long-cist cemeteries as far as Angus. There were ordinary Christian cemeteries of slab-lined graves oriented east-west. The burials of the privileged few might also be marked by a cross-slab or inscribed stone, for instance, the kirkmadrine Early Christian Stones and the burial grounds and cemeteries in Wigtownshire. Some stones in Wigtownshire also bore the Chi-rho monogram which was used by early Christians (see appendix 01). These cemeteries date back to the end of the fourth century to the middle of the sixth century. This brings about the idea that, perhaps during that period, some Christian priests were preaching their faith in Galloway.

The Faith came to Britain with the Romans; however, their impact was not that powerful because they were not able to invade the whole area. They mainly influenced the Britons between the walls. “While the holy Eleutherus ruled the Roman Church, Lucius, a British king, sent him a letter, asking to be made a Christian by his direction. This pious request was quickly granted, and the Britons received the Faith” (Bede 45). There were Christian soldiers in units of the Roman Army. Merchants, administrators, colonists of all kinds, arrived and quickly established the Roman rule all over what we now know as England and, less securely, into parts of Wales and Southern Scotland. Every kind of Mediterranean religious cult would have come with them. The pagan gods were quickly to identify with the local Celtic pantheon. The Christian Faith may well have seemed to be yet another of the new Greek mystery religions. But unlike them, it spoke of mankind loved by everlasting love; love of God the creator. It spoke of forgiveness, integrity and eternal life. It swept up the best of paganism in an all-fulfilling embrace, and revealed creation as the transfigured image of God. However, the Christian Faith was not entirely respected and huge areas remained pagan, especially the northern parts. In the late eighth century, Britain began to be raided by Germanic pirates from the continent. By that time, the Roman army had been withdrawn altogether and Britain was left to fend for itself. The cities began to decay, the fabric of society began to fall apart, mercenaries were hired to protect the disorganised Britons from Germanic tribal invasions. It was a decision that led to a calamity. Angles, Saxons and Jutes poured into the country, many of their leaders taking over the old Roman estates, complete with Celtic tenants and bondsmen (slaves). The incomers were pagans, and large numbers of nominally Christian Celts reverted to paganism. The collapsing Romano-British, Celtic and by now largely Christian culture was pushed further and further west wards.

## 2. Saints of Scotland

Apart from the Romans, Christianity did not find its way to Scotland until groups of religious people undertook the task of converting the inhabitants of the area. These religious people included saints such as Ninian, Columba, the Anglo-Saxon queen named St. Margret and the like.

### 2.1. St Ninian (4<sup>th</sup> century)

Among the young ones who came to spread Christianity was St Ninian. The saint was widely known to have established a hugely popular Romano-British Christian community at Whithorn<sup>1</sup>, and recruited sons of leading families to monastic schools. This patterned a radical alternative to the superstitious way of their world. The religious centre became known as “Candida Casa” as termed by Bede. According to him, “The place belongs to the province of Bernicia and is commonly known as Candida Casa, the White House, because he built the church of stone, which was unusual among the Britons” (146). Excavations conducted at Whithorn in 1949 brought to light a small and very early primitive religious cell, a cell, perhaps, may have been the “Candida Casa”. Although his wave of God was soon replaced by a wave of godless invaders, Ninian’s work remained a beacon of hope for succeeding generations. In much of the Empire, the monasteries became more formal, but Ninian’s religious centre remained a model of fellowship for countless groupings of monks, nuns, and hermits throughout the Celtic lands. Ninian is believed to have converted the Southern Picts. For Bede, “The southern Picts, who live on this side of the mountains, are said to have abandoned the errors of idolatry long before this date and accepted the true faith through the preaching of Bishop Ninian, a most revered and holy man of British race, who had been regularly instructed in the mysteries of the Christian Faith in Rome” (146). The achievements of St Ninian were recorded by his biographer Ailred and the monk Bede, also an eighth-century poem on the Miracles of Ninian, written at Whithorn.

### 2.2. Other Saints (6<sup>th</sup> century)

After Ninian, there were traditions recorded by Bede of other early Christian missionaries like St Kentingern (St Mango) and St Serf of Culross. According to the chronicles, Kentingern was given the name “Munghu” or Mango when he was baptised by his

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<sup>1</sup> It is a royal burgh in the historical country of Wigtownshire in Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland.

friend St Serf. Like Ninian, the two are believed to be of the race of the Britons. St Mango was the founder of the church in Glasgow and a missionary in Cumbria. However, these missionaries remained shadowy figures. There are no historical records about their achievements, except their work places. The prominence of the cult of Ninian has obscured the effects of other early churchmen, for instance, the Briton Finnian, a major figure of the mid-sixth-century church who was known as an early teacher of the great Irish missionary St Columba.

### **2.3. St Columba (6<sup>th</sup> century)**

The ecclesiastical history of Dalriada is dominated by the figure of Columba (Colmcille) and by his monastery on the island of Iona. The holy man was born in Gartan, Ireland and died in Iona Scotland. Columba's social rank was on a par with that of the High King. In 560 AD, a bloody battle, with some three thousand dead, took place near one of Columba's monasteries in Drumcliffe North, Ireland. Columba's involvement in the politics that led to the battle is believed to be the reason for his exile- imposed or self-imposed – to Scotland, in order to save as many souls for Christ as fell in the battle. According to Bede, "Columba arrived in Britain in the ninth year of the reign of the powerful Pictish king, Bride son of Meilochon; he converted that people to the Faith of Christ by his preaching and example, and received from them the island of Iona on which to found a monastery" (146). He had persuaded the Pictish king to give him Iona for the founding of his monastery.

Columba arrived in Scotland to find a population enthralled to Pagan gods and living in terror from a monster in Lake Loch Ness. To enter the water was considered a certain death. According to the legend, St Columba ordered one of his companions to enter the water, and the Loch Ness Monster appeared. St Columba faced it by making the sign of the cross and commending the monster to go back to the deep water. Terrified by the sounds of the saint's voice, the monster went back to the deep water and never to return again. After this miracle, St Columba was considered a powerful preacher and started to be honoured and revered by kings and all-embracing by the peoples of the time. According to another legend, when St Columba came across Pagans worshiping poisoned water, instead of destroying it, he simply purified its waters and claimed it for his own faith; rather than destroying the old symbols of Paganism, Columba simply subsumed them. He miraculously purified their water and used it to symbolically purify the converts. It was one the rituals that are central to the Christian

traditions. Columba became the archetype for the wanderers for Christ; the Irish missionaries who were to bring the Gospel to parts of continental Europe over the next few centuries.

According to his biographer, Columba converted king Brude to the Faith, and in 574 consecrated (ordained) an Irish king, Aidan, to the throne of Dalriada. Columba and his followers, later, are believed to have converted vast areas single handed in Scotland and the areas surrounding it. Columba is believed to have converted the northern Picts. Bede postulated that in “the year of our Lord 565 ... a priest and abbot named Columba, distinguished by his monastic habit and life came from Ireland to Britain to preach the word of God in the provinces of the northern Picts, which are separated from those of the southern Picts by a range of steep and desolate mountains” (146). Columba’s mission also penetrated into Perthshire where a community was founded at Dull, and another at Dunkeld which is considered as the third religious center. The other two most holy places in the Celtic world are Iona and Lindisfarne. In Iona, the island Columba made into a beacon for Christ, the earliest Celtic cross was found. The oldest Irish illuminated manuscript ‘the Cathach’ is attributed to Columba and the most important manuscripts from Britain and Ireland all came from Columban monasteries. It was in Iona “that Columba died and was buried at the age of seventy-seven, some thirty-two years after he had come into Britain to preach” (Bede 146). It was also in Iona that the Scottish kings were buried in the hope of picking up benefits from the proximity of the great saint. Lindisfarne was the cradle of Christianity for much of England. It eventually became known as ‘Holy Island’; the home of Christ.

The sons of Ethelfirth, an earlier Northumbrian king displaced by King Edwin in 616, had fled to Scotland because of political problems. The Bernician princes had been converted to the Christian Faith by the Irish monks on Iona. “During the whole of Edwin’s reign the sons of Ethelfrid his predecessor together with many young nobles lived in exile among the Scots and Picts and [were] there instructed in the teachings of the Scottish church and received the grace of Baptism. But on the death of their enemy Edwin, they received permission to return to their own land” (Bede 141). When Edwin was killed, Oswald<sup>2</sup> returned to claim his kingdom. He defeated and killed Cadwallon<sup>3</sup> and sent to Iona for help to establish the Faith in Northumbria. The Iona community sent monk Aidan to Northumbria

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<sup>2</sup> He was the eldest son of Ethelfirth of Bernicia who came to rule after spending a period in Exile.

<sup>3</sup> Cadwallon, also spelled Caedwalla or Cadwalader, was a British king of Gwynedd (nowadays north Wales) who, with the Mercian king Panda, invaded Northumbria in 632 or 633 and killed the Northumbrian king Edwin in a battle in Hatfield Chase (south of York).

with some companions, and they were given the Isle of Lindisfarne as a base for their operations. The king himself was taking part in the work of spreading the faith. “While the bishop, who was no fluent in the English language, preached the Gospel, it was most delightful to see the king himself interpreting the word of God to his ealdorman and thanes; for he himself had obtained perfect command of the Scottish tongue during his long exile” (Bede 145). Seven years later, Oswald was defeated and killed near the Welsh border by Panda the Pagan king of Mercia. After the death of his brother, Oswui<sup>4</sup> continued the work of the church. Missionaries sent from Lindisfarne by Aidan and his successor Finan, who also came from Iona, spread the Faith through all the provinces of the Angles and from the river Thames to the river Forth, for the movement was both northwards and southwards. A double monastery, with separate communities of men and women, was founded at Coldingham about 640, and placed under the superintendence of king Oswald’s sister Ebba. Cuthbert from the monastery of Melrose went on missionary tours through the modern Lothians and the Border Country. By that time, Christianity was spreading fast all across the area and more people embraced the new faith.

#### **2.4. St Margaret (11<sup>th</sup> century)**

The peoples of Scotland gradually united when Malcom III Canmore married the Wessex princess Margaret in 1069. He took to himself not only a much-loved wife but also an acknowledged saint. Margaret’s family fled from William the Conqueror and a storm caused their ship to wreck in Scotland in 1068 on an area now known as St Margaret’s Hope, where they were given refuge by Malcom. Margaret was a pious queen. She and her husband were living true faith in action. Margaret was put in charge of domestic affairs and often consulted in state affairs. Through her influence and that of the later house of Canmore, many churches were established, for good or for ill, in the normal continental Roman fashion. She brought Benedictine<sup>5</sup> monks to establish an abbey at Dunfermline. She built what is now called St Margaret’s Chapel in the highest part of Edinburgh Castle. She also arranged the rebuilding of the monastery of Iona; however, there is no evidence to prove that, and Iona “remained a Columban foundation until becoming a Benedictine monastery a century after her death” (Keene 67). More widely, St Margaret caused a resurgence of religious life across Scotland.

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<sup>4</sup> Oswui, also known as Oswy or Oswig, was the brother of Oswald and the king of Bernicia from 642 and of Northumbria from 654 until his death in 670 AD.

<sup>5</sup> Benedictine is a monk or a nun of one of the congregations (people who regularly attend religious services) following the rule of St Benedict.

In 1249, she was canonised by the Pope and made a saint. It is believed that when St Margaret came to Scotland, she brought with her the 'Holy Rood'; a fragment "of the true cross" (32), from the Anglo-Saxon kingdom to Scotland. The Holy Rood or the Black Rood of Scotland is believed to be a fragment of the true cross on which the Christ was crucified. At the present day, this Christian relic is still considered part of the Scottish identity and culture.

### **2.5. St Andrew (14<sup>th</sup> century)**

Andrew was the Patron Saint of Scotland though he never put a foot on the Scottish land. According to the Christian Faith, St Andrew was the first apostle to follow the Christ. He was teaching the Gospel in lands of the Black Sea and Greece. When he was sentenced to death by crucifixion in the city of Patras, he was to be crucified on a cross but he requested an x-shaped one. The diagonal cross became the symbol of the saint; the one on the Scottish national flag. A monk called St Rule was ordered by angels to take "the relics of the saint-his kneecap, upper arm bone, three fingers and a tooth" (Brown and Stevenson 04) from Constantinople to the ends of earth for safe keeping. On the journey, his ship hit a storm on east-coast of Scotland and became shipwrecked on the coast of Fife. There is a town in Fife called St Andrews where the bones have landed. In 832, Pictish King Angus and his troops faced a much larger army in a battle. Upon praying for help and strength, a cloud shaped like the Roman letter X, St Andrew's symbol, appeared against the clear blue sky, leading them to victory. From that time, the symbol was adopted as the national symbol for an emerging Scotland and the Saltire in nowadays Scottish national flag. He became Patron Saint of Scotland in 1320 when the Declaration of Arbroath was signed. He was also Patron Saint of Romania, Barbados, Russia, Prussia and other nations. Moreover, St Andrews in Fife became the capital religious center after Dunkeld. Nowadays, the Scots celebrate St Andrews Day on November 30<sup>th</sup>. It is Scotland's National day, a day the Scots celebrate Scottishness and Scottish culture, with traditional Scottish food, music and Ceilidh dancing<sup>6</sup>. This further highlights that religion was the element that created that strong sense of Scottishness among the Scots.

## **3. Affirmation of the Scottish Church**

By the seventh century, all the peoples of the British Isles have embraced the Christian Faith. With Columba's missionary zeal and the work of those who went from Iona, with small

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<sup>6</sup> Traditional Scottish or Irish gathering that usually involves dancing and playing Gaelic folk music.

monastic communities and isolated religious cells of individual holy men, all preached the one God. Christianity was beginning bind men together. Adherence to a particular saint was an important means of expressing identity and allegiance. Gaelic intellectual and administrative dominance of the Northumbrian church lasted for thirty years until 664 when the “Synod<sup>7</sup> of Whitby” brought a complete break with the old Celtic authority and a real agreement towards the mainstream international church. By the ninth century, the Columban church was no longer a separate unit. Conformity with the practices of Rome had been accepted by the Pictish King Nechton, says Bede, and even in Iona. However, it took them longer to get the Roman form of church government systematically established.

### **3.1. Celtic Church vs. Roman Church**

The church, as established by Irish monks in Northumbria, differed from the church on the continent in some matters. Among the Irish Christians, ecclesiastical oversight was by the abbot of the controlling monastery who might or might not be a bishop. If not, then one of his monks was in bishop’s orders and fulfilled the bishop’s liturgical<sup>8</sup> functions. Liturgically, there were some differences like the style of the clerical tonsure. The Roman tonsure involved the shaving of the crown of the head, while the Celtic, possibly following Druid<sup>9</sup> custom, appears to have involved shaving the front of the head-or part of it-forward of a line from ear to ear. There was also a difference when it came to the calculation of the date of Easter (also known as the Paques). The Celtic Churches had adopted their own methods of calculation, and had fallen out of step in the respect of standardised continental practices. They “diligently followed whatever pure and devout customs they learned in the Prophets, the Gospels, and the writings of the Apostles. They held to their own manner of keeping Easter” (Bede 147). It was the disagreement on this issue between the Roman mission coming up from Kent, and the Irish mission moving down from Lindisfarne, that occasioned the Synod of Whitby in 664. There was, at that period, no generally one accepted method throughout Christendom. Their domestic confusion was indicating a wider and more damaging confusion, and a synod was called to discuss the matter. Bishop Colman, who had succeeded Finan in Lindisfarne, headed the Irish delegation and explained their usage as agreeable to the teachings of the Apostle John, and deriving from the usage of St Columba, the Apostle of Scotland. The Roman

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<sup>7</sup> It is a formal meeting of church leaders.

<sup>8</sup> Liturgy is a fixed set of ceremonies that are used during public worship in a religion.

<sup>9</sup> Druidism was the ancient or pre-Christian religion of Britain as a whole. It is usually summarised as the worshiping of a loose pantheon of gods and goddesses.

delegation was headed by a Northumbrian priest by the name of Wilfrid of Ripon who was more Roman than the Pope. He ridiculed the Celts and their usage, pointing out that, apart from these aberrant, the whole world followed Roman custom. These Roman customs were agreed and imposed upon the Church of England by Archbishop Theodore in 669. The Lindisfarne community split, Bishop Colman taking Irish monks back to Ireland, while the English monks remained to make Northumbria briefly a centre of holiness and learning. Later, the Celts had to adapt to the universal Christendom.

The churches in the Celtic lands were simple and non-Roman churches. They did not have the Bishopric organisation<sup>10</sup> or structure of the Roman church. It was known as women-friendly because it had a Celtic tradition of a remarkable equilibrium as far as the masculine and the feminine are concerned. It is believed that the great hero and warrior Cochulainn<sup>11</sup> went from Ulster (Ireland) to Alba (Scotland) to learn the arts of war from a redoubtable woman called Scathach, who was at war with another warrior Queen by the name of Aife. Remarkable women were to be found in position of leadership within the Christian community, for instance, Bride of Kildare, Hilda of Whitby. The latter was Anglo-Saxon by race but Celtic in Religion.

When the Celts embraced Christianity, they inserted parts of their identity within the new faith. The Celtic cross was part of the Scottish, Irish, and Welsh heritage. It was both a symbol of culture and faith. If one observes the Celtic cross, he or she would clearly notice the carvings of the Celtic symbols (see appendix 02). One legend says that the Celtic cross was first formed by St Patrick who was bringing Christianity to the Druids. Patrick was the holy and educated preacher who dominated the Celtic society. The Druids, who were the “philosophers, teachers, judges, the repository of communal wisdoms about the natural world and the traditions of the people, and the mediators between humans and the gods” (Cunliffe 03), used to worship a large circular stone. When St Patrick saw the significance of the stone, he drew a large cross through the middle in order to bless it. Due to this act, the two cultures were combined to form the Celtic cross. The shape of the cross represents Christianity and the circle is the Celtic representation of eternity (see appendix 03).

Because of the conversion of the Celts, there are many stone carved crosses all over Scotland with intricate carvings, showing scenes of battles and everyday life. The Celts have

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<sup>10</sup> It is related to the Bishop who is ranked higher than a priest and who is usually in charge of church matters.

<sup>11</sup> It is also spelled Cu Chulainn or Cuchulainn. It is an Irish mythological demigod who appears in the stories of the Ulster Cycle, as well as in Scottish mythology.

long affirmed their identity with regard to religion which they did not give upon until people started converting to Christianity. Even when they converted, they combined between symbols of their traditional religions with the new faith. Celtic Christianity became their new identity, and when the Anglo-Saxons started to assimilate with the Roman Church, they refused to erase their distinctiveness by adapting the Roman ways of worship.

### **3.2. Scottish Relics and Religious Symbols**

The Stone of destiny is one of the Christian relics that symbolised the religious identity of the Scottish nation. The Stone of destiny was a coronation stone for the kings of Medieval Scotland. Now, it is used for the coronation of all British kings. It is believed that the only right person would be crowned on the stone because he or she is chosen by God. It is also known as 'Jacob's Pillow Stone'.

The legend says that, in a place called Laz, Patriarch Jacob wanted to lie down and sleep. He took a stone and rested his head on it as a pillow. When asleep, he then had a vision, and in the vision, he saw a ladder from the stone to heaven and angels coming up and down. He woke up from his dream believing that it was the House of God, and he put oil on the stone. "And Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillow, and set it up as a pillar, and poured oil up on the top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel" (Genesis 28:18-19), Bethel is Hebrew for the house of God. It is also called the Stone of Scone because it was nabbed from Scone; a place in Scotland where kings were crowned. It is also known as Lia Fail, Gaelic for the Stone of Destiny. The stone moved from Tara, Ireland to Iona and went to Scone. But who brought the stone to Ireland in the first place? According to the Irish mythology, the Stone was brought by a princess and a daughter of a Pharaoh named Scota who arrived with her royal family 'Hyksos' in Ireland after being expelled from Egypt. Later, Scota's name was given to the Scots then to Scotland.

Edward I 'Hammer of the Scots' in 1296 stole the Stone and took it to Westminster Abbey, along with the Holy Rood and other treasures, but the Holyrood was returned in 1328 where it was held in Durhann Cathedral. Edward had a special chair made in which the stone was to be kept for the next seven hundred years in a cavity underneath. It was called the 'Coronation Seat' (see appendix 04). Nearly all the subsequent kings and queens of England (and after 1603 Scotland too) were crowned sitting on the chair. The king makes an oath and the stone bears witness of the oath. On the 25<sup>th</sup> of December 1950, a group of Scottish

nationalists, including Ian Hamilton, Kay Matheson, Alan Stuart and Gavin Vernon, went to King Edward VII's Chapel to reach the Coronation Chair and took the Stone of Destiny. These nationalists insisted on restoring the stone because it was Scotland's icon and a symbol of Scottish nation. Until that day, religion was still a central part of their national identity. Later, the stone was deposited by three men in Arbroath Abbey. Arbroath was the place where the Declaration of Scottish Independence was signed and the Scottish nation affirmed its nationality by sending a letter to the Pope, including these magnificent words: "For we fight not for glory, not for riches, not for honours, but only and alone for freedom, which no good man gives up but with life itself". The nationalists thought that Arbroath, with these words in their ears, would be the appropriate place to deliver back the Stone of Destiny to the Scottish nation. The Angus country police found it and took it back to London. In 1996, Prime Minister John Major sent it back to Scotland. He was worried about the growth of Scottish nationalists and hoped this would help to stop calls for Scotland's independence.

The stone of destiny was one of the most important holy objects in the Scottish history; however, there were other relics that symbolised the strong link between religion and Scottish national identity. After the passing of Columba, the great saint of Scotland, his bones became sacred relics. They were kept in a well-decorated casket called the "Monymusk Reliquary" which has for centuries been considered a powerful symbol of nationhood (see appendix 05). The very reliquary was carried by Robert de Bruce's Scots army at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314, believing that the sacred relics held a spiritual force which provided their victory over the army of King Edward II. Years before, when the Vikings attacked Iona, the relics were taken to Dunkeld to protect them from Viking raids. Columba became the patron saint of Dunkeld and its monastery became the new religious centre of Scotland. Now, the Monymusk Reliquary is kept in the Museum of Scotland's collection in Edinburgh as one of the symbols of Scottish national identity.

### **3.3. Scottish Reformation (16<sup>th</sup> century)**

In its earliest history, the Celtic church was independent of the Roman one. There were simple preachers and monks in different monasteries and religious cells, devoting their lives to God and preaching Christianity all across Scotland. In mid seventh century, the Celtic church had lost contest and started to follow the universal church organisation. After St Margret, new monasteries started to appear with the same organisation and hierarchy of the Roman church. The monastery became a political or an administrative institution rather than a

simple house of God. Religious men in these monasteries became obsessed with wealth which eventually corrupted them. The church started moving towards what pleases mankind instead of what pleases God. The true religious preachers and the people of God refused this situation and started to protest. The first waves of Protestantism<sup>12</sup> were actually traced back to Geneva, Switzerland, with the famous French theologian, pastor and Protestant reformer John Calvin.

In England, King Henry VIII wanted to divorce his wife Katharine of Aragon so that he could marry Anne Boleyn. This was refused by the Pope and Henry had, therefore, broken with Rome and taken England out of the Roman Catholic Church. He had put himself head of the church in England. However in Scotland, it was a different situation. There was a kind of civil war, with the country divided between Protestants supported by England and Catholics supported by Catholic monarchs of the time (James V and Mary of Guise) and Catholic France. In the middle of this civil conflict, a Protestant preacher by the name of George Wishart returned to Scotland in 1543, after he fled when another preacher at St Andrews called Patrick Hamilton was burned at the stake in 1538. With a new zeal, he started preaching all across Scotland. He was very famous, especially for his powerful preaching against the Pope.

Another great reformer and a personal friend of Wishart, who cried out against the heresies of the Roman Catholic Church, was John Knox. Knox denounced the Pope, Romanism and all what he thought was the paganisms of the Roman Catholic Church. In 1547, the French invaded St Andrews and captured many Protestants, including Knox who was the preacher in the castle. He became a Galley slave on a French ship for nineteen months. During that period, Henry VIII died and his son Edward VI took the throne. All those in power were doing their best to lead England towards the direction of Protestant Reformation. Knox was released and became a Chaplain in England. In 1554, he fled to Europe, after Queen Mary or 'Bloody Mary' came to the throne, and went to Geneva where he met John Calvin. He became a follower of Calvin and learned more about Protestant theology. In 1559, he returned to Scotland after the Protestant Elizabeth became the new Queen. She was one of the allies of Knox and great supporter of the Protestant cause. With much passionate, emotional and powerful preaching, Knox gathered the people in Scotland who wanted to reform and began to attack Roman Catholic Churches and monasteries. They advocated tearing them down and destroying all items related to the Catholic Church. In other

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<sup>12</sup> It comes from the word 'protest'. It denies the universal authority of the Pope and affirms the principles of reformation of justification by faith alone, and the primacy of the Bible as the only source of revealed truth.

words, he set a religious revolution in motion throughout Scotland. And in 1560, the Scottish parliament adopted Protestantism as the state's religion.

During the reign of the Catholic Mary Queen of Scots, Knox was extremely powerful. He had been summoned by Mary five times and no matter what method she played against him, his view of the Gospel and Faith in Christ never changed. He also preached against the celebration of the mass (Eucharist which means thanksgiving). In 1560, Scottish parliament embraced the 'Book of Discipline' or the 'Scots Confession' written by John Knox, in which he clarified how politics should function in both the church and state. Before this book, every monarch believed in the 'divine right of kings'; God has given these kings authority that put them above the law. He believed that the ruler should be bound by the law and authority should be invested in an institution not a person. John Knox was the first to introduce the idea of Presbyterian<sup>13</sup> government in Scotland. He was also the first to speak of the representative government, system of checks and balances, and constitutional monarchy. Thus, all the modern politicians who spoke of the representative government should give credit to John Knox who mapped out how a nation should be according to the principles of the Reformation. Of course, the noble class in parliament refused these radical changes, especially the idea of all men are born equal; no noble, no commoner, just people and offices held by anyone who is capable of holding that office. Until his death in 1572, the government was not in the perfect image that he wanted; however, it was still reforming.

### **3.4. Scottish Rebellion of 1638**

King Henry VIII brought reformation that rejected the papacy of the church, but he put himself in the place of the Pope. John Knox and his fellow Protestants viewed things in a different way. They believed that the Church of Scotland was under the sole headship of Christ alone. They wanted to revolutionise both the church and state. James I of England and the VI of Scotland tried to exercise his authority in different ways, mainly by the reintroduction of bishops into the Kirk (the Scottish reformed church). In 1618, James used his bishops to force the drastic changes in worship like private baptism and the worship of bread and wine as divine. Then his son Charles I wanted to rule both in religious and civic matters and make the Scottish Church conform to the English one. He appointed Archbishop Laud to drive forward the movement towards the Roman Catholic Church. As a result, "the

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<sup>13</sup> Presbyterian means belonging or relating to a Protestant Church or state that is governed by a body of official people all of equal rank.

Book of Common Prayer” was imposed on the Scots, from which all ministers were ordered to read, and everyone had to attend church to hear it.

Such maneuver from the side of the king led the Presbyterian followers of Knox to refuse the authority of the king, and signed “The National Covenant of 1638”. They wanted to maintain the Presbyterian form of government in Scotland instead of the Episcopal one. The Scottish religious rebellion was the beginning of a civil war that took place in Britain between 1639 and 1651, known as The Wars of the Three Kingdoms. These religious conflicts led to the abolition of the monarchy and the execution of King Charles I by the English parliament in 1649. Six years before, the Scottish Covenanters signed the “Solemn League and Covenant” to support the English parliamentarians during the first English Civil War in their resistance of the Episcopal system of governance. For the Scots, the Christ was the head of their church and the head of their nation. During the reign of Charles II, Protestantism was outlawed in Scotland and the Covenant was condemned illegal. Although many of them were killed, tortured and considered rebels, the Covenanters remained faithful to God and refused to worship in ways that God has not commended.

The Magdalen Chapel in Edinburgh is still considered a symbol of the Scottish Reformation society. In the chapel, there is a table called ‘The Death Table’ where they prepared the dead bodies of the Covenanters before burial. It is filled with blood stains of the Scottish Covenanters who stood for Christ. Religion was not part of their identity but the identity itself. It takes a great courage to stand up affront of a monarch and claim absolute freedom. They were fervent followers of Christ. Until the seventeenth century, the Scots were still fighting for the freedom of both their religious and national identity, or rather the Scottish Identity. Many Covenanters fled to America and took their faith and culture with them. The American Revolution was called a Presbyterian Revolution as many of its leaders were Presbyterians, having imbedded the fierce Scottish sense of independence.

Hence, seeing how crucial events started to take place afterwards, widening the gap between Scotland and England and despite the Union of Crowns in 1603 and Union of Parliament in 1707, it is clear water that Scotland had already developed an identity, distinct from the English one. Such identity was mostly driven by a distinct religion that cemented the bonds between the different opposing groups and factions of ancient Scotland. Many believe that the threat of the Vikings hastened the merging of the four peoples, namely the Gaels, Picts, Britons and Angles, into one union. However, long before this union, these peoples

were already gathered under the umbrella of Celtic Christianity. In fact, the religious union made it easier for them to politically unite at the hands of Kenneth MacAlpin in 843 AD because the majority were Christians and had common interests. As the historians Peter and Fiona S. Fry contended “the Viking threat pushed the Picts and Scots together” however “the other unifying factor was the advance of Christianity” (36), which happened centuries before. In addition to that, Peter Hume Brown, the Scottish historian and professor at Edinburgh University who played an important part in making the Scottish history a significant academic discipline, argued that the “conversion of the Picts may fairly be regarded as the governing fact in Scottish history ... which gradually led up to a consolidated Scotland and a united Scottish people” (17). Short after their conversion at the hands of Columba one of the leading figures among the Scots, the Pictish Kingdom seemed to have had “a stable peace with the Scots of Dalriada-themselves nominally a Christian people” (17). This gives the conclusion that the religious unity was paving the way for the future political union.

### **Conclusion**

By the middle of the ninth century, Scotland was beginning to become a nation. During that period, the Picts and the Scots were ruled by one king by the name of Kenneth MacAlpin. They were facing increasing danger from the Vikings, and they decided to confront these fierce invaders by uniting their forces and fighting as one. This resulted in a political union that gave birth to ‘Alba’ in Gaelic or ‘Scotia’ in Latin, and later to Scotland. However, long before this, these people were already united by a spiritual prosperity provided by the Christian mission. With the early saints and the coming of the Irish missionary from Iona, Christianity became the prevailing religion, and the Scots, for the first time, shared a common element that connected them all together. The strong sense of Scottish nationhood was not fostered by common origins, language or history. Religion was the only common element between them. Until the present day, the Scots still celebrate their Scottishness in national days which are usually related to religious figures or events. Furthermore, the Reformation proved the importance of religion as the heart of the Scottish nation. With its great religious reformers like John Knox, Scotland was transformed from “barbarous” to a more enlightened and cultured society. Scotland has invented the modern world with the influence of Knox and his fellows.

## **General Conclusion**

Located in Europe and above both England and Ireland, Scotland has a unique geography that makes it distinct from the other countries of the United Kingdom. It has magical places, magnificent wildlife and countless islands. These fabled isles are protectors of tradition, each offering dramatic landscapes, a rich heritage and a warm welcome to anyone who is willing to explore the mysteries of Scotland. One of the most rewarding isles is Iona, with its tranquility and ancient Christian heritage. Another precious island is Orkney, with its pre-historical wonders and fascinating World War II history.

Scotland is bursting with history, pride and love of life, a nation famous for its strong sense of nationhood. In spite of being part of a larger union called 'Great Britain', Scotland has a separate identity, as the Scottish people like to say "we are British by passport Scottish by the grace of God". Therefore the present research has shed light on how this strong sense of national identity came to life and what elements put the first seeds of its growing or development.

Ancient Scotland was inhabited by several apposing clans, each with its own origin, territory, traditions and language. However, with the coming of Christianity, these tribes started to unite and eventually became one huge kingdom, a kingdom fostered by unique traditions and passions. The Scottish culture is extremely powerful that makes every Scot proud of his nation and Scottish identity.

Today, Scotland has many energetic cultural scenes, especially, in the main cities like Edinburgh and Glasgow, which are considered the cultural hearts of Scotland. It is quite interesting to see how the Scots are clinging to their ancient traditions, arts and literature and how they succeeded to make it part of their modern lives. Observing the Scottish festivals and national days gives the conclusion that religion, to this very day, is still a crucial part of the Scottish national identity. Their celebrations are usually related to religious figures, events or relics. Religion was the driving force towards their freedom and the element that kept them fighting against all kinds of danger that would threaten the sovereignty of their beloved nation. In ancient times, the religious unity made it easier for the Scots to unite their political powers and to fight as one cohesive family. This union was the beginning of future unions that led to the construction of the Scottish nation.

Christianity gave them a new identity, but the Scots refused to assimilate with the Continental Roman Church. In lieu, they created a distinctive identity furnished by Celtic religious symbols and ways of worship. Then, the Scots went through a period of conflicts with the Roman Christian Church fighting for their religion and identity. Religion also showed its significance when King Edward I stole the stone of destiny, Scotland's national icon, and used it as a coronation chair for the English kings and queens. Later, when the English monarchs started to interfere in Scottish religious matters and tried to change their ways of worship, the Scottish nationalists started a religious revolution that ended in decisive civil wars between the three kingdoms of Great Britain. If this highlights something, it must be the power that religion acquired along the centuries, starting with the Celtic Church and the long fight against the English interference, moving to the Presbyterian Church and the period of the civil wars in England which was the element that ushered a long struggle with the monarchy and a period of instability in the kingdom. In fact, religion was the Scots' halo accompanying them in their long struggle for freedom and independence.

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### Appendix 01: The Roman Chi Rho Symbol



Source: [www.earlychurchhistory.org](http://www.earlychurchhistory.org) (Accessed on 23 May. 2020)

### Appendix 02: Druid's Circular Stone and the Carvings of the Celtic Symbols



Source: [www.alltrails.com](http://www.alltrails.com) (Accessed on 10 June. 2020)

**Appendix 03:** Difference between the Christian and Celtic Crosses



Source: [www.pinterest.com](http://www.pinterest.com) (Accessed on 10 June, 2020)  
(Accessed on 10 June, 2020)

Source: [www.claddaghdesign.com](http://www.claddaghdesign.com)

**Appendix 04:** The Coronation Chair with the Stone of Destiny underneath



Source: [www.pinterest.com](http://www.pinterest.com) (Accessed on 17 June, 2020)

**Appendix 05: The Monymusk Reliquary**



Source: [www.sath.org.uk](http://www.sath.org.uk) (Accessed on 25 Aug. 2020)