Scotland's first 'national' history? Fordun's principal source revisited

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Abstract

Fordun's principal source ('proto-Fordun') has been dated to 1285 based on assumptions that are challenged in this article. The material following Fordun's history in key manuscripts is investigated afresh as a survival of part of proto-Fordun. Proto-Fordun emerges as a seven-book work whose narrative may have reached as far as Edward I's conquest of 1304. It finished, however, with a series of documents relating to the case at the Curia in 1301 led by Baldred Bisset. At the heart of this analysis is prioritising the way this material is configured in the manuscripts, taking account particularly of all book-divisions, however confusing they may seem to be. It is suggested that proto-Fordun was probably composed in the late 1320s or 1330s. Superficially proto-Fordun could be regarded as Scotland's first 'national' history in the sense developed by Norbert Kersken in his study of similar works across Europe. It is suggested, however, that if our understanding of 'national' histories is determined chiefly by what is found in manuscripts (which can seem inconsistent and confusing) rather than by scholarly editions, then the development of 'national' histories can be seen (at least in a Scottish context) as an essentially organic process involving a range of authorial, editorial and scribal activity across generations, rather than solely about key works by individual authors.

Keywords: Scotland, late 1320s/30s, Fordun, Kersken, Skene, manuscripts.

Fordun's *Chronica Gentis Scotorum*, datable to the mid-1380s, provided a narrative of Scottish history running chronologically from the origins of the Scots in the time of Moses to the death of David I in 1153.[1] This was presented in five books; an incomplete sixth book provided an account of St Margaret's ancestry, with detail on English kings from Alfred the Great to 1066. There are strong indications that John of Fordun was not the first to write a codex-length account of the kingdom's history: it has been suggested that the earliest traceable attempt was by Richard Vairement, writing possibly in the 1260s.[2] Although Vairement's work only survives to some extent in Fordun's history, it appears that Fordun himself did not use it directly; his principal source (referred to for convenience as 'proto-Fordun') has been identified as an expanded version of Vairement's work, completed (it was argued) in 1285.[3] This article offers a fresh assessment of the dating and extent of the only extant section of proto-Fordun.

Continuations beyond David I's death

Proto-Fordun survives at all, if only in part, because Fordun's history fell short chronologically as an account of Scottish history, stopping more than two centuries before Fordun's own time of writing. By the mid-fifteenth century this was no longer a problem. A narrative of Scottish history on the scale of a codex that extended from ancient origins to sometime near the present day was achieved by Walter Bower in the 1440s in two works: *Scotichronicon* in sixteen books (incorporating a copy of

[1] The only edition of Fordun's history based on manuscripts where it is found as a distinct work is *Johannis de Fordun Chronica Gentis Scotorum*, ed. William F. Skene, The Historians of Scotland, vol. 1 (Edinburgh, 1871) (hereafter *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i); the accompanying translation is *John of Fordun's Chronicle of the Scottish Nation*, trans. Felix J. H. Skene, ed. William F. Skene, The Historians of Scotland, vol. 4 (Edinburgh, 1872) (hereafter *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), ii). Skene explained (*Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, pp. xxxi–xxxii), on the basis of the way the list of chapters in book I is introduced in some manuscripts, that Fordun intended *Chronica Gentis Scotorum* as the work's title. Skene therefore adopted this for his edition (with *Scotorum* rather than *Scottorum*). For its dating, see Dauvit Broun, 'A new perspective on John of Fordun's *Chronica Gentis Scotorum* as a medieval 'national history', in Steven J. Reid (ed.), *Rethinking the Renaissance and Reformation in Scotland. Essays in Honour of Roger A. Mason* (Woodbridge, 2024), 43–60, at 47 n.15.

[2] Dauvit Broun, *Scottish Independence and the Idea of Britain from the Picts to Alexander III* (Edinburgh, 2007), 247–60.

[3] Broun, *Scottish Independence*, 260–1; for 1285 as the date, see below, 000–000.

Fordun's books I to V and incomplete book VI),[4] and Bower's extensively revised 40-book version of *Scotichronicon* (known to scholarship as the Book of Coupar Angus).[5] Both reached as far as the assassination of James I in 1437. Nearly three-quarters of the extant codices of the kingdom's history prior to the first printed versions (by John Mair in 1521 and Hector Boece in 1527) are either copies of *Scotichronicon* or the Book of Coupar Angus, or are derived from them.[6] The remainder are manuscripts of Fordun's history without Bower's continuation: eight manuscripts are known (referred to here, following Donald Watt's system of sigla, as **FA** to **FH**), all datable to sometime between the 1430s and the late fifteenth century.[7] For convenience, these can be listed here:

FA: Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek MS Helmstedt 538 (Skene's A).
Books I–V and the incomplete book VI, followed by a series of documents (discussed below),[8] and material running from St Margaret's English royal ancestors to the mid-1380s.[9]

FB: London, British Library MS Cotton Vitellius E XI (first element) (part of Skene's B): damaged by fire, its original order is ff.3–23, 28–33, 35–37, 169, 38–51, 176, 173, 52–65, 170–171, 66–83, 175, 174.
Books I–V of Fordun's history, with a lacuna in book II between f.23 and f.28.

FC: Cambridge, Trinity College MS O. 9. 9 (also known as MS 1421) (Skene's C).
Books I–V and the incomplete book VI, followed by the same texts as in **FA** and **FG** (but configured differently, discussed below),[10] as well as material largely from book VI of *Scotichronicon*.[11]

FD: Dublin, Trinity College MS 498: second element (pp.223–398) (Skene's D).
Book V of Fordun's history followed by material for 1153–1363, followed by the series of documents found in **FA**, **FC** and **FG**, plus additional items.[12]

FE: London, British Library MS Harleian 4764: first element (ff.1–113) (Skene's E).
Books I–V only.

FF: Aberdeen, Aberdeen University Library Scottish Catholic Archives MS MM2/1: first element (up to f.lxxvii^{r}) (Skene's F).
Books I–V only.

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[4] *Scotichronicon by Walter Bower in Latin and English*, ed. D. E. R. Watt, 9 vols (Aberdeen/Edinburgh, 1987–98) (hereafter *Scotichronicon* (Watt): the convention of referring to this as *Chron. Bower* is avoided because this could be applied equally to *Scotichronicon* ando Bower's 40-book version of his history (which is arguably more fully Bower's work than *Scotichronicon*: for references, see next note). The first five books and some of book VI of Bower's *Scotichronicon* is predominantly a copy of Fordun's history, with Fordun's text and Bower's additions carefully delineated: see below, 000–000.

[5] The 'Book of Coupar Angus' ('CA') is the name given to its most complete extant manuscript: Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Adv. 35.1.7. The fullest discussion is *Scotichronicon* (Watt), ix, 193–6, 208. Watt explains that Bower worked on *Scotichronicon* from no later than November 1441 until at least October 1447, and on the 40-book version (CA) from 1444, so that he was working on both for about three years at least.

[6] Dauvit Broun, 'Rethinking medieval Scottish regnal historiography in the light of new approaches to texts as manuscripts', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies*, 83 (Summer 2022), 19–47, at 27–8; the earliest has been dated to the 1430s (or possibly a little earlier): see Broun, 'A new perspective', 58–9. Both Mair's and Boece's works are departures from Fordun and Bower: Joannes Major [Mair], *Historia Majoris Britanniæ tam Anglię quam Scotię* (Paris, 1521) and Hector Boethius [Boece], *Scotorum Historiae a Prima Gentis Origine* (Paris, 1527)

[7] Broun, 'A new perspective', 48–9 (for a similar summary of Fordun MSS below) and 56–9. Watt intended his sigla to refer to each MS as it survives today, but this is not possible for **FH** (which only came to light subsequently).

[8] 000–000.

[9] The latest event is in 1385, but the text ends with the recapture of Lochmaben Castle in February '1383' (in fact, 1384: see Stephen I. Boardman, *The Early Stewart Kings: Robert II and Robert III 1371–1406* (East Linton, 1996), 118): *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 383; ii, 371–2.

[10] 000–000.

[11] See below, 000–000.

[12] Martin L. Colker, *Trinity College Library Dublin: Descriptive Catalogue of the Mediaeval and Renaissance Latin Manuscripts*, 2 vols (Dublin, 1991), ii, 916–18.

FG: London, British Library MS Add. 37223 (not known to Skene until soon after his edition had been published).[13]
This has the same contents as **FA**, which follows **FG's** text particularly closely (including when this is disturbed due to a binding error: **FG** is in its original binding).[14]

FH: London, British Library MS Cotton Otho B III* (a damaged copy of books I–V) plus **British Library MS Cotton Vitellius E XI ff.24–27, 84–95, 172, 96–115, and 116–166** (the same version of 1153–1363 as found in **FD**). (Skene treated the section covering 1153–1363 as part of his MS B.)

All survive today with some form of continuation beyond 1153. In some cases the manuscript was originally produced with books I to V alone and has only subsequently been continued by adding a version of Bower's work added to it (**FE** and **FF**),[15] or the section from 1153 from another manuscript of Fordun's work (in the case of **FB**, taken from **FH**).[16] The other extant manuscripts included a continuation beyond 1153 when they were first written; all are derived ultimately from a copy, produced before Bower's time, where (as we will see) part of 'proto-Fordun' was added after the incomplete book VI, followed by further material that would originally have reached as far as David II's second marriage in 1363.

The addition of part of proto-Fordun, however, did not necessarily result in a smooth continuation from David I's death in 1153. In three manuscripts (**FA**, **FC** and **FG**) there is a significant degree of overlap not only with Fordun's incomplete book VI but also with much of book V; the additional material in these manuscripts also include a collection of documents relating to Scottish independence.[17] (The manuscript of Fordun's work used by Bower for his *Scotichronicon* was almost certainly similar.[18]) In his edition of Fordun's history (based primarily on **FA**), W. F. Skene removed Fordun's incomplete book VI, the collection of documents and the overlapping material into appendices, and added the remainder after book V, spanning the period from 1153 to the mid-1380s. He referred to this continuation as *Gesta Annalia* (literally 'Yearly Deeds').[19] As far as the remaining manuscripts are concerned, it has recently been shown, thanks to the discovery of another manuscript of Fordun's work (**FH**, datable to no earlier than 1473), that Skene's refashioning of this material into a chronologically seamless account of Scottish history from Biblical times was anticipated by a version datable to sometime between around 1390 and around 1430 in which

[13] W. F. Skene, 'Notice of an early MS of Fordun's chronicle', *PSAS* 10 (1872–4) 27–30.
[14] *Scotichronicon* (Watt), ix, 200; Dauvit Broun, *The Irish Identity of the Kingdom of the Scots in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (Woodbridge, 1999), 28.
[15] *Scotichronicon* (Watt), ix, 196, 197–8.
[16] Broun, 'A new perspective', 54, 57.
[17] See below, 000–000.
[18] *Scotichronicon* (Watt), vii, p. xvi, on the use of the additional material to 1363 and beyond. Two passages in the continuation after 1363 in **FA**, **FC** and **FG** appear almost verbatim in *Scotichronicon*: the statement about Walter Wardlaw's appointment as cardinal (Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 188), and the account of Richard II's invasion of Lothian (part of Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 189): *Scotichronicon* (Watt), vii, 402 (book XIV chapter 46, lines 5–9), and 406 (book XIV chapter 47, lines 5–14); *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 383. Because **FA**, **FC** and **FG** also include the collection of documents, it is likely that Bower's exemplar had them, too, even though Bower may have used other sources; he had access to many more documents (see *Scotichronicon* (Watt), vi, pp. xviii–xx, for discussion).
[19] Skene (*Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, p. xxxi) regarded *Gesta Annalia* as Fordun's own term (he regarded Fordun as the author), on the basis of the comment, after a section of genealogies, *Istis breuiter decursis ad gesta annalia* (**FC**, **FG** and **FA:** *annualia*) *recurrendum* (**FC**: *decurrendum*) *est*, 'After pursuing these matters briefly, it is necessary to return (**FC**: to have recourse to) the yearly deeds': *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 319 and nn.16 and 17. Bower included this in *Scotichronicon*, with *recurramus* 'we may return' for *recurrendum est*: *Scotichronicon* (Watt), vi, 38.

Fordun's books I to V was continued with Skene's *Gesta Annalia* from 1153 to 1363.[20] This was partly reproduced in **FD**, from Fordun's book V onwards.[21]

Not long after Donald Watt pointed out in 1995 the discrepancy between Skene's edition and the way these texts are found in the manuscripts,[22] a fresh study of the disposition of this material in **FA**, **FC** and **FG** challenged the long-held view that *Gesta Annalia* and the text overlapping with books V and VI were Fordun's own unfinished drafts.[23] It was pointed out that the inexplicable appearance of the collection of documents during the account of events in 1285 in one of the manuscripts (**FC**) coincided precisely with a change in the relationship of the text with Wyntoun's *Original Chronicle* and Bower's *Scotichronicon*.[24] This led to the realisation that *Gesta Annalia* should be seen as two distinct entities, *Gesta Annalia* I (running from St Margaret's ancestors until February 1285), and *Gesta Annalia* II (from Alexander III's second marriage in October 1285 to 1363, extended in **FA**, **FC** and **FG** to the mid-1380s); this was reinforced by showing that there is a relationship between *Gesta Annalia* II from October 1285 to David II's second marriage in 1363 and an unpublished, potentially independent, succinct chronicle.[25] The irresistible conclusion was that *Gesta Annalia* I was initially followed by the collection of documents, and *Gesta Annalia* II had been added at a later stage. This analysis was developed in 2007, arguing that *Gesta Annalia* I should be recognised as the final part of Fordun's principal source (dubbed 'proto-Fordun').[26] In 1999 it was suggested tentatively that *Gesta Annalia* I may have ceased to be written sometime between 2 February and 9 April 1285; in 2007 this dating was treated with more confidence, and applied to 'proto-Fordun'.[27]

In what follows this dating is challenged, bringing into question 'proto-Fordun' as a work ending with an event on 2 February 1285. This has been prompted by a new methodology for dating a very different kind of text. In studies of cartularies it was often argued that they were initially compiled not long after the latest document included by the first scribe, and that the date of the next document added by a subsequent scribe could provide a *terminus ante quem* for the first scribe's work.[28] A new methodology, however, has been developed by Joanna Tucker for dating the stages of

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[20] Broun, 'A new perspective', 49–52, 57–8.

[21] Broun, 'A new perspective', 58–9. The first part of **FD** is a copy of Bower's 40-book work (the 'Book of Coupar Angus') books I to VI chapter 17 (the equivalent of Fordun's books I to IV): *Scotichronicon* (Watt), ix, 200–1.

[22] *Scotichronicon* (Watt), iii, pp. xvi–xvii.

[23] Dauvit Broun, 'A new look at *Gesta Annalia* attributed to John of Fordun', in B. E. Crawford (ed.), *Church, Chronicle and Learning in Medieval and Early Renaissance Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1999), 9–30. The idea these were Fordun's unfinished drafts goes back to the prologue of Bower's *Scotichronicon*; it is clear that Bower was was making an inference from what he found in his exemplar. Bower explained that Fordun 'left much in writing, although not yet fully arranged' (*multa reliquit in scriptis, nondum tamen usquequaque distincta*): *Scotichronicon* (Watt), ix, 2; *usquequaque distincta* may be translated more literally as 'everywhere divided up/clarified'. This comment would be particularly appropriate if the material following Fordun's history in Bower's exemplar was configured much the same as in **FC**, with the collection of documents breaking the flow during its account of events in 1285 (see in more detail below, 000–000).

[24] Broun, 'A new look', 13–16.

[25] Edinburgh, University Library MS 27, added into blank spaces in a breviary. Since then, Oxford, Bodleian MS Fairfax 23 ff.110r–116r has been identified as another version of this chronicle (I am very grateful to Steve Boardman for informing me about it); another that has come to light was, until being sold at Christie's on 11 June 2024, Spikkestad (near Oslo), The Schøyen Collection MS 679, ff.25r–29r.

[26] Broun, *Scottish Independence*, 216–30, 260–1.

[27] Broun, 'A new look', 17; Broun, *Scottish Independence*, 216–19, 228, 236, 261. For 2 February and 9 April 1285, see below, 000–000.

[28] Joanna Tucker, *Reading and Shaping Medieval Cartularies: Multi-scribe Manuscripts and their Patterns of Growth. A Study of the Earliest Cartularies of Glasgow Cathedral and Lindores Abbey* (Woodbridge, 2020), 76–7: the many examples cited in 76 n.100 in relation to English, French and Scottish cartularies include the dating of the initial creation of the Dunfermline Abbey cartulary in Dauvit Broun, 'The adoption of brieves in

creation and addition in multi-scribe cartularies.[29] This has shown that the previous approach was based on a priori assumptions about when or why material was included which can no longer be taken for granted.[30] What happens if similar assumptions about dating are resisted for 'proto-Fordun'? The result is that detail previously overlooked or too hastily explained away is given space to be considered properly, leading to a new understanding of 'proto-Fordun' itself. The original analysis of *Gesta Annalia* II as a later addition to the documents that follow *Gesta Annalia* I will be reaffirmed, and the proposal in 2007 that the lost part of 'proto-Fordun' was subsumed into books I to IV of Fordun's history will be reinforced. It will become apparent, however, that 'proto-Fordun' was a more complex work than had previously been envisaged.

'National' histories

This redating and reassessment of proto-Fordun matters not only for understanding the development of a narrative of the kingdom's past on the scale of a codex, but also for how this relates to the formation of similar histories across Europe. Norbert Kersken, in his study of what he referred to as histories 'providing an overview of the "national" past from the very beginnings to the time of their writing',[31] showed that many kingdoms had been provided with at least one extensive narrative of this kind by the thirteenth century; a number of 'national' histories were written much earlier still, in the early twelfth century.[32] On the face of it, Richard Vairement as the author of the first detectable large-scale narrative of the kingdom's past, no later than the 1260s, means that Scotland can now be recognised as fitting into the general pattern identified by Kersken.[33] Vairement's work, however, insofar as it can be discerned, appears to have extended only as far as the reign of Máel Coluim III (1058–1093), concluding perhaps with Máel Coluim's marriage to St Margaret in around 1070.[34] It has been suggested that Vairement may have intended that his work be read alongside a history of St Margaret's English ancestors and her Scottish royal descendants;[35] even so, by not incorporating this text in some way, it would remain the case that Vairement did not consider it necessary for his account of Scottish history, as a single continuous narrative, to extend as far as his own times.[36] This

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Scotland', in Marie Therese Flanagan and Judith A. Green (eds), *Charters and Charter Scholarship in Britain and Ireland* (London, 2005), 164–83, at 173 and n.71.

[29] Tucker, *Reading and Shaping*, 76–90.

[30] Tucker, *Reading and Shaping*, 197–200, 223–4.

[31] Norbert Kersken, 'National chronicles and national consciousness', in János M. Bak and Ivan Jurković (eds), *Chronicon. Medieval Narrative Sources: a Chronological Guide with Introductory Essays* (Turnhout, 2013), 119–26, at 125.

[32] Norbert Kersken, *Geschichtsschreibung im Europa der 'nationes'. Nationalgeschichtliche Gesamtdarstellungen im Mittelalter*, Münstersche historische Forschungen (Köln, 1995). A summary in English is Norbert Kersken, 'High and late medieval national historiography', in Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis (ed.), *Historiography in the Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2003), 181–215. A briefer summary is Kersken, 'National chronicles' (see previous footnote). Ireland is not included in Kersken's study, but is an earlier example: Broun, *Scottish Independence*, 44–5, and works cited there.

[33] For Kersken, Scotland was the sole example of the initiation of a 'national-historical tradition' in the fourteenth century: Kersken, 'High and late medieval national historiography', 208–9. Even so, it was not the latest example: Kersken cited Germany, Italy, Sweden and Switzerland as endowed with 'national' histories only in the mid- or late fifteenth or early sixteenth centuries (Kersken, 'National chronicles', 122).

[34] Broun, *Scottish Independence*, 257–8.

[35] Broun, *Scottish Independence*, 258–9. The History of St Margaret's ancestors and Scottish royal successors is referred to by Donald Watt as the 'Dunfermline Chronicle' (*Scotichronicon* (Watt), iii, pp. xvii–xviii): it is in a Dunfermline manuscript datable to the reign of James III (1460–1488): Madrid, Royal Palace Library MS II. 2097, ff.21v–26r. See now Alice Taylor, 'Historical writing in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Scotland: the Dunfermline Compilation', *Historical Research* 83 (2010) 228–52, referring to it as the 'Dynastic Chronicle': she pointed to the moving epitaph of Alexander II as an indication that it was originally written not long after Alexander II's death in 1249 (*ibid*., 234).

[36] Perhaps Vairement saw St Margaret as a new beginning, as it were, merging Scottish and English royal lines: see below, 000–000. For St Margaret and Máel Coluim III regarded as founding figures by this time, see Broun, *The Irish Identity*, 195–7.

contrasts with Bower, who not only referred to his work as 'continuing [Fordun's history] up to contemporary times' (*usque ad moderna tempora continuandum*),[37] but envisaged how his history could be maintained in the future as an official record of events after each king's death, which Bower imagined was already the practice in other kingdoms.[38] This is a vivid reflection of how the idea of 'national history' identified by Kersken was regarded as the norm by Bower. He was the first person in Scotland to put it into effect by continuing Fordun's history to the end of the most recent reign.[39]

At a superficial level the reassessment of proto-Fordun proposed below, and its redating, could allow it to be seen as a 'national' history of the kind identified by Kersken, and therefore Scotland's first example. It is striking, however, that it was superseded by Fordun's rewriting of it, and only partially survives in a few manuscripts. This contrasts with Walter Bower's attitude to Fordun's work. Although he incorporated it in full into his *Scotichronicon* (including Fordun's incomplete book VI), Bower was at pains to distinguish Fordun's text from his own 'so that … whoever wishes to copy the present manuscript [Bower's own copy of *Scotichronicon*] will easily be able both to omit my insertions and bring the work begun by the master to completion on their own'.[40] Fordun's lack of similar respect for his own principal source, or acknowledgement of its existence, suggests that proto-Fordun was not regarded as a foundational text. This, in turn, raises questions about the significance of 'national' history. It might be supposed that Scotland, more than any other kingdom in Latin Christendom in the fourteenth century, needed to boost its credentials by any available means after experiencing conquest (in 1296 and 1304) and invasion, and continuing threats to its territory and existence. It is also striking that Scotland's 'national' history on the scale of a library-book (rather than short chronicles or lists of kings and key events)[41] remained exclusively in Latin until a revised form of Bower's work was translated into French in 1519,[42] and John Bellenden wrote *Chronicles of Scotland* in Scots, a version of Boece's *Scotorum Historia* (published in 1527): it was presented by John Bellenden to James V in 1533, and reworked for publication (incorporating other material) in or a few years before 1540.[43] The closest equivalent was Andrew of Wyntoun's *Original History* in Scots verse, a general account of the past from a Christian perspective in nine books written sometime

[37] *Scotichronicon* (Watt), ix, 2 (lines 16–17).
[38] *Scotichronicon* (Watt), viii, 338–41.
[39] Provision was made in an early MS of *Scotichronicon* for it to be continued with a 'book XVII', but this was left blank: see Broun, 'A new perspective', 55.
[40] *ut … quicumque volens presentem codicem copiare poterit et de facili mea scripta interposita omittere, et opus magistri inceptum per se deducere ad perfectum*: *Scotichronicon* (Watt), ix, 4 (lines 61–63; the translation is Donald Watt's (*ibid*., ix, 5), except that *se* is taken to refer back to *quicumque* rather than to *opus*.
[41] Dan Embree, Edward Donald Kennedy and Kathleen Daly (eds), with Latin translations by Susan Edgington, *Short Scottish Prose Chronicles*, Medieval Chronicles 5 (Woodbridge, 2012). An example of a king-list and list of key events, see Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland MS Adv.MS.34.7.3 (known as James Gray's commonplace book, early 16th century), 19v–23v.
[42] Paris, Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, MS 936, presented to John Stewart, duke of Albany, regent of Scotland, who was in France at the time: see Bryony Coombs, 'The artistic patronage of John Stuart, Duke of Albany 1518–19: the "discovery" of the artist and author, Bremond Domat', *PSAS* 144 (2014) 277–309, at 282–90, discussing the strikingly illustrated royal genealogy in the manuscript.
[43] Nicola Royan, 'The relationship between *Scotorum Historia* of Hector Boece and John Bellenden's *Chronicles of Scotland*', in Sally Mapstone and Juliette Wood (eds), *The Rose and the Thistle. Essays on the Culture of Late Medieval and Renaissance Scotland* (East Linton, 1998), 136–57, at 136–7; Nicola Royan with Dauvit Broun, 'Versions of Scottish nationhood, c. 850–1707', in Thomas Owen Clancy and Murray Pittock (eds), *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature*, vol.i, *From Columba to the Union (until 1707)* (Edinburgh, 2007), 168–83, at 178–9. As Nicola Royan explains, John Bellenden, *The Chronicles of Scotland, Compiled by Hector Boece*, ed. R. W. Chambers, Edith C. Batho and H. Winifred Husbands, Scottish Text Society, 2 vols (Edinburgh and London, 1938, 1941), is an edition of the original 1533 version; other version of Boece's history were produced in Scots in the 1530s—a verse translation by William Stewart, and the anonymous 'Mar Lodge translation'.

between 1408 and 1424.[44] As far as book VI, Wyntoun incorporated Scottish origin-legends and king-lists (in Latin) and a version of the royal genealogy;[45] it is only from book VII to IX that he provided a sustained focus on Scottish (or Scottish related) events up to his own times. It is striking that Wyntoun, despite his commitment to history, shows no knowledge of Fordun's work.[46]

This is not to say that late-medieval Scots necessarily lacked a strong sense of themselves as a people and kingdom with a deep continuous past;[47] it is simply that a fully developed 'national' history from ancient origins to sometime near the time of writing seems not to have been regarded as essential, or even desirable, except for a few *literati* who perhaps had a particular scholarly interest in the subject. The significance of 'national' histories in relation to other ways of expressing the kingdom's past in late-medieval Scotland, and why codex-length endeavours of this kind had such apparently limited impact before Bower's *Scotichronicon* and 'Book of Coupar Angus' in the 1440s, are questions that would benefit from a thorough exploration on another occasion. This article is primarily concerned with the essential first step of understanding the date and nature of proto-Fordun. This will lead to a fresh perspective on the question of identifying the earliest 'national' history in a Scottish context, and potentially elsewhere, too.

Terms of reference

W. F. Skene, in his edition of Fordun's history, also edited all the material that follows books I to V found in his base manuscript (**FA**) (except the documents on Scottish independence); however, he reorganised it in order to create a chronologically continuous account of Scottish history from origins to the mid-1380s. Of the 107 chapters to 1285, the first 41 concern St Margaret's English royal ancestors and the reigns of her husband and sons, through to David I's death in 1153. There is a particularly close relationship between the first ten chapters and Fordun's book VI chapters 2–13, and between the remaining chapters up to 1153 and Fordun's book V chapters 9–34 (apart from chapter 11).[48] Skene moved these 41 chapters to the end of his edition as Appendix III. He presented the remaining 66 of the 107 chapters as a continuation of Fordun's narrative, from the accession of Máel Coluim IV in 1153 to the embassy which left for France on 2 February 1285 to find a wife for Alexander III. (In the text this is dated '1284', with the year beginning on 25 March.) Skene referred to these 66 chapters from 1153, as well as a further 123 chapters on the kingdom's history from 1285 to the mid-1380s, as '*Gesta Annalia*'.[49] He observed that the final five chapters were added later, and that '*Gesta Annalia*' originally ended with David II's second marriage in 1363.[50]

In what follows Skene's term, *Gesta Annalia*, will be abandoned. The practice of referring to the material up to February 1285 as *Gesta Annalia* I is inherently awkward because it accepts Skene's term but contradicts the way he used it exclusively for the material after 1153: '*Gesta Annalia* I' includes the 41 chapters up to David I's death which Skene removed to Appendix III as 'chapters prefixed to '*Gesta Annalia*''.[51] The entire block of material up to February 1285 will be referred to in this article instead as the 107 chapters from St Margaret's ancestors to 1285 (or simply the *107*

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[44] *The Original Chronicle of Andrew of Wyntoun*, ed. F. J. Amours, Scottish Text Society, 6 vols (Edinburgh, 1903–1914). For its dating, see Broun, *The Irish Identity*, 96 n.40.
[45] Broun, *The Irish Identity*, 96–109, 112–13 (for Wyntoun's use of a text in which the origin-legend was followed by Scottish and Pictish king-lists) and 181–2 for the royal genealogy.
[46] This is not a novel observation. In his discussion of Wyntoun's sources, Amours refers to Fordun only as occasionally sharing a common source with him (e.g., *Chron. Wyntoun* (Amours), i, pp. lxxxi, lxxxiii).
[47] For example, see Broun, 'Rethinking medieval Scottish regnal historiography', 40–1, 46.
[48] The relationship is noted by Skene in his apparatus to Appendix III: *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 406–37. Book V chapter 11 of Fordun's history has been derived from William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum Anglorum*: see *Scotichronicon* (Watt), iii, 197–8 for a collation of the texts.
[49] On Skene's choice of '*Gesta Annalia*', see n.19, above.
[50] *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, pp. xxxi–xxxiii.
[51] *Capitula ad "Gesta Annalia" Præfixa*: *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 406 (and running headers on odd number pages throughout the appendix).

chapters to 1285). Instead of using the term *Gesta Annalia* II for the material from October 1285, they will be referred to as the *118 chapters from 1285 to 1363*, plus the five additional chapters to the mid-1380s (as appropriate).[52] The division at 1285 will be reaffirmed below.[53]

Skene regarded the material after Máel Coluim IV's accession in 1153 as Fordun's incomplete draft of the remainder of his work. He referred to book divisions in support of this: these, however, point more readily to a different conclusion. The first book-division, following the death of Máel Coluim IV in 1165, states that this is where book V ends and book VI begins.[54] This, of course, is at odds with how Fordun divided his own books V and VI: it will be recalled that his book V ends at 1153, and book VI then doubles back chronologically with an account of St Margaret's English royal ancestors. The division between books V and VI at 1165 therefore indicates that the *107 chapters to 1285* were treated as part of a larger work that overlaps with Fordun's history and is different from it. (Other book-divisions will be discussed in due course.[55]) None of this is to deny that there is an intimate relationship between Fordun's history as a whole and the multi-book work which was Fordun's principal source. The surviving 107 chapters of this multi-book work may, in that sense, be regarded as the basis of what Fordun might have written had he carried his history beyond 1153—but not because they are his own prose.[56]

Proto-Fordun in relation to Fordun and Vairement[57]

The scope of Fordun's debt to proto-Fordun is particularly apparent when detail about the ancient Scottish past found in the *107 chapters to 1285* is compared with what can be identified confidently as Fordun's own words. It is the former that tallies precisely with the narrative of Fordun's books I and II, not Fordun's fresh prose. Two passages in the *107 chapters to 1285* are salient here:

> (i) a comment on the Norwegian acquisition of the Hebrides in 1098 (in Skene's Appendix III chapter 28), where three figures from the ancient Scottish past are mentioned: Simón Brecc (who in book I brings the Stone of Scone from Spain to Ireland), Eochaid 'Rothay' 'the first of the Scots to settle the islands', and Fergus son of Feredach (who is said in book II to have brought the Stone of Scone to Scotland).[58]
>
> (ii) a passage at the end of the royal genealogy in the account of Alexander III's inauguration in 1249 (Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 48);[59] two key ancestors are highlighted: Éber 'Scot' (who is referred to as the 'first Scot'), son of Gáedel Glas, and Fergus son of Feredach again, referred to here as the 'first king of Scots in *Albania*'.[60]

Both these passages show a clear understanding of the distinctive chronological scheme in books I and II of Fordun's history. Two names are particularly significant. The legend of the Stone of Scone originally had Fergus son of 'Ferchar' as Simón's descendant, not Fergus son of 'Feredach'; 'Ferchar' became 'Feredach' because Fergus was identified with a 'Forgso' son of Feredach in the royal

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[52] Skene's chapter divisions for the material from 1285 to 1363 follow those in **FA** (as noted above); different chapter divisions are found in **FD** and **FH**, but for convenience Skene's will be retained for ease of reference.
[53] 000–000.
[54] *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 259.
[55] See below, 000–000.
[56] See n.23, above.
[57] What follows supersedes Broun, *Scottish Independence*, 219–30c.
[58] *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 427–8. Eochaid 'Rothay' is also mentioned in the account of the treaty of Perth (1266) in Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 57, where he appears as Eugenius 'Rothay' (*Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 302). For Eugenius used occasionally as a Latin equivalent of Eochaid (used alongside Latinised forms of Eochaid), see Broun, *Scottish Independence*, 230. Note, for example, *Eugenio vel Eochodio Hebdre* and *Eugenius qui et Eochodius Hedbre* (book III chapters 24 and 26: *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 108, 112).
[59] *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 295; ii, 290.
[60] Broun, *Scottish Independence*, 220–1.

genealogy.[61] ('Forgso' was, in fact, an error in this version of the genealogy for *Forgo* or *Forggo*, genitive of Forg(g) or Fuirg(g).[62]) The idea that Eochaid 'Rothay' was the first to settle the islands, for its part, seems to have been created entirely from the genealogy itself by noticing that 'Rothay' is similar to Rothesay, making him a plausible eponym; again, this originated as a misreading in this version of the royal genealogy: the original epithet was *Buadaig*, genitive of Buadach.[63]

The identification here of Fergus 'first king of Scots in *Albania*' as son of 'Feredach' is particularly telling because it shows a better understanding of the genealogy-constructed chronology than anyone could gain today from reading Fordun's history itself. In Fordun's hands the royal genealogy's 'Feredach' became the less recognisable 'Ferechad' (alongside a Latin form of Ferchar).[64] 'Feredach' survives intact only in the two passages highlighted above. The second is from Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 48, which consists of a description of Alexander III's inauguration in 1249, followed by the same version of the genealogy that was used to create Fergus son of 'Feredach' and Eochaid 'Rothay' as part of the narrative of Scottish origins.[65] The genealogy is given only as far as Fergus, at which point it is explained that 'this Fergus, moreover, was son of Feredach, although 'son of Ferchar' is stated by some—but there is little difference in sound; perhaps this discrepancy consists of a scribal error due to language difficulty'.[66] It will be recalled that in the origin-legend Fergus's father was 'Ferchar'; it may not be too fanciful, therefore, to see whoever composed the *107 chapters to 1285* grappling here with the problem of identifying Fergus son of Ferchar with a son of Feredach in the genealogy, and resorting to some special pleading. Be this as it may, not only did they have the text of this particular version of the royal genealogy to hand, but they knew how it had been used to place Fergus son of Ferchar into the chronology of Scottish origins at a stage before 'Feredach' had been obscured as 'Ferechad' in Fordun's history.

It is hard to resist the conclusion that whoever included the royal genealogy in Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 48 is likely also to have contributed to books I and II of Fordun's history not only by changing Fergus from son of Ferchar to son of Feredach, but by creating Eochaid 'Rothay' from the genealogy as the first Scot to settle the islands. Detailed familiarity with book I is also evident in the final sentence of Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 48, where we are told that 'This Éber was son of Gáedel Glas son of Nél at one time king of Athens, begotten of Scota, daughter of Pharaoh 'Centhres' the king of Egypt'.[67] Scota is routinely referred to as daughter of Pharaoh, but only as daughter of Pharaoh 'Centhres' at the end of Fordun's book I chapter 9;[68] Nél as king of Athens is found in book I chapter 8 in one of the accounts of Scottish origins that have evidently been added to Vairement's.[69]

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[61] Broun, *The Irish Identity*, 70 (and 84–109 for a discussion of the legend in Thomas Gray's *Scalacronica* and Wyntoun's *Original Chronicle* as well as in Fordun's history).
[62] Broun, *The Irish Identity*, 70; 186 n.197.
[63] Broun, *The Irish Identity*, 70–1; Both 'Forgso' and 'Rothay' are in the oldest extant witness: see n.65, below.
[64] See Broun, *Scottish Independence*, 229–30. For manuscript readings, see Broun, *The Irish Identity*, 59 n.497.
[65] See Broun, *The Irish Identity*, 183–7 for an edition, with readings collated with London, Lambeth Palace MS 8, the oldest extant manuscript containing this version of the royal genealogy. This is Ralph of Diss's own manuscript of his *Imagines Historiarum*, maintained by him as a kind of final file copy from about 1186 to 1199: see Dauvit Broun, 'The most important textual representation of royal authority on parchment 1100–1250?', *Models of Authority: Scottish Charters and the Emergence of Government 1100 to 1250*, feature article 15 September 2015 (http://www.modelsofauthority.ac.uk/blog/royal-authority-on-parchment/, accessed 25 May 2024. Another rendering of this version of the genealogy is book V chapter 50 of Fordun's history (see below).
[66] *Qui quoque Fergusius fuit filius Feredach, quamuis a quibusdam dicitur filius Ferechar, parum tamen discrepant in sono. Hec discrepantia forte scriptoris constat uicio propter difficultatem loquele*: Broun, *The Irish Identity*, 187.
[67] *Qui quidem Iber fuit filius Gaithel Glas filii Neoili regis quondam Athene genitus ex Scota filia regis Egipti Centhres Pharaonis*: Broun, *The Irish Identity*, 187.
[68] *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 10.
[69] Broun, *The Irish Identity*, 35 (VIII.3, attributed to *Legenda Brandani*).

There are grave doubts that John of Fordun himself was at home with the account of Scottish origins in his own work. His main contribution to book V was to incorporate most of Aelred's eulogy of David I and an extract from Aelred's account of English kings,[70] but he also added a copy of David I's genealogy back to Noah (as book V chapter 50) which he said he had been given by Cardinal Walter Wardlaw, bishop of Glasgow (d.1387).[71] Fordun omitted two sections of David I's genealogy, referring the reader instead to where it had been given earlier in his history.[72] In the second of these he stated that the descent of Fergus (who took the Stone of Scone to Scotland) from Simón Brecc is given in book I chapter 26; the pedigree there, however, is Simón Brecc's back to Míl, not Fergus's back to Simón Brecc. He also, during the genealogy, included a comment on 'the first to settle the islands of Scotland' (*primus inhabitauit insulas Scocie*). Instead of saying this was Eochaid 'Rothay' (as in book I chapter 28), however, he opted for a much earlier figure, 'Rothotha', who, according to the chronological scheme of book I, should still have been in Spain.[73]

There are clear indications, therefore, that whoever composed the *107 chapters to 1285*, and not Fordun, was the person who was responsible for two key aspects of the account of Scottish origins in books I and II using the royal genealogy. It will be recalled that, in those manuscripts (**FA**, **FC** and **FG**) that give all the 107 chapters from St Margaret's English royal ancestors to 1285, book V ends and book VI begins at the death of Máel Coluim IV in 1165—a clear indication that the 107 chapters can be considered as part of a prior version of Fordun's history (and not simply a source for large parts of Fordun's book V and nearly all his book VI).[74] There can be little doubt, therefore, that the *107 chapters to 1285* is a significant surviving part of proto-Fordun. The material that originally preceded the 107 chapters no longer survives separately from Fordun's history; however, it evidently consisted of four books with the same chronological span as Fordun's books I to IV. There is a strong presumption, therefore, that proto-Fordun had the same narrative outline as Fordun's history, and much of the substance.

It is very difficult, of course, to say how far proto-Fordun differed from Vairement. Because Vairement's version of the exodus of Gáedel and Scota and the arrival of the Scots in Ireland is given first in each chapter followed by extracts from other versions, it has been assumed that the alternative accounts were added in proto-Fordun.[75] Emily Wingfield, however, has seen the use of contradictory accounts as a narrative strategy.[76] This opens the possibility that this was part of Vairement, not proto-Fordun. In book III chapter 2 alternative views of the extent of the realm of Fergus, first king of Scots in Scotland, are woven together rather than being given separately, but without suppressing

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[70] As well as being included as a block in book V from chapter 35 to chapter 49, an extract on David I's recollection of his sister Matilda, queen of England, is included in book V chapter 30. *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 235–51, 229–30; ii, 226–42, 220–1. Aelred's eulogy of David I and account of kings of England originally formed a single work: see Dauvit Broun, 'Attitudes of *Gall* to *Gaedhel* in Scotland before John of Fordun', in Dauvit Broun and Martin MacGregor (eds), *Mìorun Mòr nan Gall, 'The Great Ill-Will of the Lowlander'? Lowland Perceptions of the Highlands, Medieval and Modern* (Glasgow, 2009), 49–82, at 69 n.60.

[71] *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 251–2; ii, 244–6.

[72] Fordun refers first to book IV chapter 8 where Cináed mac Ailpín's ancestry from Fergus mac Eirc is detailed, but this has been constructed from the narrative in Fordun's history itself (probably original part of Vairement's work) and is not, in fact, a section of the text of the royal genealogy: see Broun, *The Irish Identity*, 180 n.117.

[73] Broun, *The Irish Identity*, 73; Broun, *Scottish Independence*, 225–6. If (for the sake of argument) it was Walter Wardlaw rather than Fordun who added the comment that 'Rothotha' was the first to settle the islands, it is hard to imagine that this would have been repeated unthinkingly by the person who identified Eochaid 'Rothay' in the genealogy as the first Scottish settler.

[74] See above, 000–000.

[75] Broun, *Scottish Independence*, 235, 260, identifying the 'synthesist' in Broun, *The Irish Identity*, 63–81, with proto-Fordun.

[76] Emily Wingfield, *The Trojan Legend in Medieval Scottish Literature* (Cambridge, 2014), 26–9, 32 (where this is seen as a narrative strategy by Fordun, but without considering possible antecedents).

differences.[77] This is embedded in a narrative structure that was almost certainly Vairement's.[78] Such treatment of contradictory material in book III increases the likelihood that Vairement was responsible for including alternative accounts of Scottish origins along with his own in book I. The only certain aspect attributable to proto-Fordun, therefore, is that the royal genealogy was given priority over Vairement's text so that Fergus son of Ferchar was identified with a similar named person whose father was Feredach, and Eochaid 'Rothay' was added to the account of Scottish origins. It is possible, therefore, that books I to IV of Fordun's history are even more indebted to Vairement rather than proto-Fordun than was concluded in 2007.[79] It is very challenging indeed, of course, to trace additions or revisions to what might have been Vairement's prose, let alone identify any with proto-Fordun.[80] Proto-Fordun's most obvious and significant contribution was to extend Vairement's narrative beyond Máel Coluim III and St Margaret by writing the *107 chapters to 1285*.

The problematic dating of proto-Fordun to 1285

When was proto-Fordun written? It is tempting to assume that this was not long after its most recent item, the embassy to France that departed on 2 February 1285 to find a wife for Alexander III. There is no narrative logic (such as the end of a king's reign) for why it stopped there, which makes it seem all the more tempting to suppose that the work was completed soon afterwards. There is always the general possibility that text has been lost, but it seems unnecessary to consider this seriously without a specific indication that it might have happened. With the notion that proto-Fordun can be dated to sometime shortly after 2 February 1285 in mind, it is natural to look for a *terminus ante quem* by searching for a statement that could only have been penned before an event after 2 February 1285 had occurred. A comment apparently relating to the long-running dispute over the succession to the earldom of Menteith after the death of Earl Walter Comyn in 1258 has duly been seized upon: the matter was only finally resolved on 9 April 1285.[81]

This proposed *terminus ante quem*, however, can readily be dismissed simply by recognising that there is a more compelling interpretation. The key comment appears at the end of a detailed account of the disputed succession to the earldom of Menteith after the death of Walter Comyn in 1258 in Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 53.[82] Walter Comyn had been earl in right of his wife, Isabel, who on his death married John Russell, an Englishman who appears to have had no prior interests in

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[77] *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 88–9; ii, 78–9. Although the Scottish kingdom prior to Cináed mac Ailpín is identified in book III with the region west of Drumalban, we are told in chapter 2 that Fergus reigned for three years from Stainmore (in Cumbria) and the Hebrides to the Orkneys, and also that he reigned for sixteen years overall (a feature of Vairement's chronological scheme: see references in n.78), with the last three years beyond Drumalban north of the Firth of Forth: see Broun, *Scottish Independence*, 240–2, and 166–9 for the underlying sources.

[78] Broun, *Scottish Independence*, 247–60. In light of the dating of proto-Fordun proposed below, Baldred Bisset's knowledge of the chronological structure of Fordun's history must come from Vairement.

[79] Broun, *Scottish Independence*, 256–7: 'it is hard to resist the impression, therefore, that Fordun's chronicle is not only substantially a reiteration of the synthesist datable to 1285, but that the synthesist, in turn, did little more than repeat this earlier work stretching from Scottish origins to kings of Scots in the tenth century and beyond …'. 'Synthesist' refers to the idea that different accounts of Scottish origins were brought together into a synthesis by the author of proto-Fordun, an idea whose previous certainty is abandoned here.

[80] A potentially fruitful approach would be the use of key terms that were particularly significant after Vairement's day, such as *maiestas*, which has been investigated by Matthew Hammond in an unpublished study (see below, 000–000). Mention of periods of 2,000 years, 1,000 years and 500 years (Broun, *Scottish Independence*, 224) seen, e.g., in the statement on Eochaid Rothay in Skene's Appendix III chapter 28 as well as occasionally in Fordun's history, defies Vairement's careful chronology and can be attributed to proto-Fordun.

[81] Broun, 'A new look', 17; Broun, *Scottish Independence*, 216; 228, 236, 261. Walter Stewart was affirmed as earl, but the lands of the earldom were divided between him and William Comyn, who had married Isabel, daughter of Walter Comyn's widow, Isabel: *Chron. Wyntoun* (Amours), v, 138–9; A. A. M. Duncan, *Scotland: the Making of the Kingdom* (Edinburgh, 1975), 609.

[82] *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 298–9; *Scotichronicon* (Watt), v, 322–3 (lines 32–41 text, 40–50 translation); 332–5 (lines 1–17 text, 1–19 translation).

Scotland.[83] There was a heated reaction in Scotland to the prospect of Isabel's new husband becoming earl, and Walter Stewart was recognised as earl of Menteith instead in right of his wife, Mary (a cousin of Isabel's). Isabel and her new husband went into exile, and in desperation appealed to the pope in 1260. This only served to stoke the flames of the dispute further. Sometime in or soon after July 1263, the pope's legate cited Walter Stewart and 'nearly all the magnates of Scotland' (*proceres fere omnes Scotie*) to appear before him at York.[84] This affront to the kingdom's liberties caused an uproar, and the king appealed to the pope. The chapter ends by saying: 'and so this dispute/lawsuit still hangs under discussion' (*et sic sub discussione hec lis adhuc pendet*).[85]

Donald Watt took this comment to mean that the account of the dispute in the early 1260s was written before the pope's response of 2 January 1264 to Alexander III's appeal was known in Scotland. The pope cancelled the legate's proceedings and appointing instead three Scottish clergy as judges-delegate to hear the case without infringing the king's jurisdiction.[86] It is striking that only the king's appeal is mentioned in Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 53, but not its outcome. It seems inherently likely, therefore, that the statement 'and so this dispute/lawsuit still hangs under discussion' was written not with the disputed succession to the earldom of Menteith in general terms in mind (as was assumed for dating proto-Fordun), but specifically in the context of the appeal against the legate hearing the case. It is difficult, therefore, to disagree with Donald Watt's assessment that the crucial comment—and the account it forms part of—was originally written between July 1263 and January 1264, and therefore has no bearing on the dating of proto-Fordun; it would have been copied into proto-Fordun in the same way as it was copied verbatim by Bower in the 1440s.

Proto-Fordun written no later than 1296?

Another passage has been taken to indicate that proto-Fordun cannot have been written later than 1296. During the account of Alexander III's inauguration on 13 July 1249 (Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapters 47 and 48), the inaugural stone is referred to as in Scone, which suggests that this was written before the stone's removal to Westminster by Edward I in 1296.

> Also, while the king was sitting upon the royal seat—that is, the stone—earls and other nobles on bended knee spread their garments under his feet before the stone. This stone is reverently kept in the same monastery for the consecration of kings of Alba. And none of the kings were accustomed to reign anywhere in Scotland if he had not first, on receiving the title of king, sat upon that same royal stone at Scone, which had, indeed, been established by ancient kings as the chief seat, namely of Alba. And behold, after everything had been completed,[87] a certain highland Scot …
>
> *Ipso quoque rege super cathedram regalem scilicet lapidem sedente, sub cuius pedibus comites ceterique nobiles sua uestimenta coram lapide curuatis genibus sternebant. Qui lapis in eodem monasterio reuerenter ob regum Albanie consecrationem seruatur. Nec uspiam aliquis regum in Scocia regnare solebat, nisi super eundem lapidem regium in accipiendum nomen prius sederet in Scona, sede uere superiori, uidelicet, Albanie constituta regibus ab antiquis. Et ecce, peractis singulis, quidam Scotus montanus …*

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[83] In the *People of Medieval Scotland* database (https://www.poms.ac.uk/record/person/7514/, accessed 25 May 2024), Russell is not mentioned in a Scottish document before 1258.
[84] This can be dated to after the legate arrived in northern England in July 1263: *Scotichronicon* (Watt), v, 458 (note on line 3).
[85] *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 299; *Scotichronicon* (Watt), v, 334.
[86] *Scotichronicon* (Watt), v, 459.
[87] In Broun, *Scottish Independence*, 186 n.59 it was claimed that *peractis singulis* referred more naturally to the spreading of their clothes in turn by each of the nobles rather than to the ceremony of inauguration as a whole, which was palpably not over. This, however, is to overlook the significance of enthronement as the key moment (the king is referred to as *regem mox futurum* prior to that point); *peractis singulis* can be read as saying that all the events leading up to and associated with the enthronement had been completed: for the casting of clothes at the king's feet as a key element of enkinging that was intended to invoke a Biblical parallel, see *ibid*., 181.

There is little doubt that Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapters 47 and 48 is based on a contemporary account of Alexander III's inauguration. It has been assumed, however, that the writer of proto-Fordun not only added the royal genealogy with some explanatory remarks (discussed above), but intruded all references to the throne in the passage quoted above, including the brief digression beginning 'This stone is reverently kept in the same monastery'.[88] This is only relevant for dating proto-Fordun, of course, if the digression was penned as fresh prose whoever composed proto-Fordun. A simple alternative is that the whole passage, including the digressions, was originally part of the contemporary account that was proto-Fordun's source, and that this has then been repeated in proto-Fordun without being updated.

It is difficult to choose between these options without falling into a circular argument. A feature of the prose, however, can shed fresh light. The digression about the stone is followed by the exclamation, *Et ecce* ('And behold!'). *Et ecce* is also found used in the same way in Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 47 following a digression listing the leading churchmen who were present at the inauguration: David of Bernham bishop of St Andrews, Geoffrey bishop of Dunkeld (who is eulogised), and the abbot of Scone (who is not named). These are the only occasions when *et ecce* appears in the *107 chapters to 1285*. *Et ecce* is only found in Fordun's history in quotations from Aelred of Rievaulx's eulogy of David I and account of English kings (in book V chapter 30, and book V chapter 38, in neither instance following a brief digression);[89] as mentioned earlier, a key difference between Fordun and proto-Fordun is that he incorporated most of Aelred's text into book V.[90] If Fordun was not averse to *et ecce* when quoting Aelred, he would presumably have been likely to retain it in books I to IV if he had found it in proto-Fordun's prose. As far as we can tell, therefore, that the only place in proto-Fordun where *et ecce* appeared would have been in the account of Alexander III's inauguration. The key here is that it was used twice in a single account, not once, and so could represent a stylistic tendency rather than an occasion rhetorical flourish. It is possible that whoever composed proto-Fordun regarded Alexander III's inauguration as a particularly dramatic event. A more mundane explanation is that the prose of the original account was incorporated as it stood into proto-Fordun along with its unusual exclamations.

This reinforces the likelihood that both digressions followed by *et ecce*—the first on three prelates present at the inauguration, the second on the Stone of Scone—should be treated equally: either both were interpolated, or both were part of proto-Fordun's source. In the first the digression, Bishop Geoffrey of Dunkeld is not only named, but is given a striking encomium: 'a man kindly in many ways to both clergy and people, attentive to worldly and spiritual matters, who used to appear beloved to both magnates and poor, but terrible himself to wrongdoers'.[91] He died four months later on 22 November 1249.[92] On the face of it, it is more likely that a near contemporary source would be aware that Bishop Geoffrey had been there at the ceremony, and would speak of him in this way, than that this was added by someone writing proto-Fordun a generation or more later.

Taking everything into account, the balance leans towards whoever wrote the original account of Alexander III's inauguration, not proto-Fordun, as the author of the prose on the Stone of Scone.

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[88] Broun, *Scottish Independence*, 174–9, 219–20, following A. A. M. Duncan, 'Before coronation: making a king at Scone in the thirteenth century', in Richard Welander, Andrew Breeze and Thomas Owen Clancy (eds), *The Stone of Scone. Artefact and Icon* (Edinburgh, 2003), 139–67. The 'same monastery' refers back to the mention of Scone in the previous chapter (not to the title of this chapter, as argued in Broun, *Scottish Independence*, 176).

[89] *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 229, 239, located by searching *ecce* in the digitised *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i: https://archive.org/details/johannisdefordun01ford/mode/2up?q=ecce.

[90] See above, 000. On Aelred's eulogy and genealogy of the kings of England as a single work, see above, n.70.

[91] *vir tam clero quam populo in multis gratiosus, in temporalibus et spritualibus sollicitus, qui omnibus tam magnatibus quam pauperibus amabilem, malefactoribus vero se terribilem exhibebat*: *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 293.

[92] *Scotichronicon* (Watt), v, 192–3 and 288, note on lines 61–8.

The mention of it as kept in Scone was no doubt written before it was taken to Westminster; this cannot be treated with any confidence, however, as indicating that proto-Fordun was written before 1296. It could simply have been repeated without being updated. It certainly cannot be assumed that the digression on the Stone of Scone was a later addition first penned in proto-Fordun just because of any awkwardness in the prose.[93]

References to events after 1285

Now that the indications for dating proto-Fordun to sometime before 9 April 1285, or no later than 1296, are no longer so compelling as was previously supposed, the spotlight moves to textual clues that suggest a later dating. In the original discussion of proto-Fordun published in 2007, four passages towards the end of the *107 chapters to 1285* were highlighted as referring to events after 1285.[94]

(i) In the account of Robert I's birth (Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 60), we are told that Robert's mother 'bore a son—future saviour, defender and king of the oppressed Scottish people, as the sequence of recorded events will make clear—to whom the name of his father, Robert, was assigned' (*filium genuit, futurum conterende gentis Scotorum saluatorem, propugnatorem et regem, prout historie series declarabit, cui nomen patris impositum est Robertus*).[95] This cannot have been written until after Robert became king in 1306, or arguably after the battle of Bannockburn in 1314.

(ii) In Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 63 the deaths of Alexander III's two sons are referred to as 'the beginning of Scotland's future woes' (*initium fuit dolorum Scocie futurorum*) with 'so many days of sorrow and tears in store' (*tot tibi venturos luctuum dies et lachrimarum*).[96] This cannot have been written before Edward I's first conquest of Scotland in 1296, if not some years afterwards.

(iii) In Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 64 it is said of Margaret, Alexander III's granddaughter, that 'when she had arrived at years of maturity' (*cum ad annos maturitatis peruenerat*),[97] she died 'as will be told below' (*ut infra dicetur*). Her death in '1291' is mentioned both in Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 69 and in chapter 84: she died in 1290 (probably in late September).[98] If 'below' refers to either of these then this would be perplexing because it will be recalled that the *118 chapters from 1285 to 1363* (Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapters 67–185) have been identified, on good grounds, as a separate work that was added later.[99] We will return to this in due course.

(iv) At the end of Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 65 (on Edward I's conquest of Wales) it is explained that 'this chapter has briefly been inserted at this point in case any neighbouring people, reading this said account, unchecked by the example of the Welsh, should fall unwarily into a most

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[93] As in Broun, *Scottish Independence*, 177, where it is claimed that 'interpolations and adaptations … seem sufficiently obvious'. Note also that too much weight is put in *ibid*., 220, on the use of *Albania* as suggestive of proto-Fordun's prose. Although it is unusual, *Albania* is not so remarkable when referring to the ancient kingdom: for example, Baldred Bisset argued that the kingdom was originally called *Albania*, and came to be called *Scotia* from the Scots after they had overthrown the Picts (*Scotichronicon* (Watt), vi, 182). Bisset's understanding of how the kingdom came to be called *Scotia* is unlikely to have been unusual (see, e.g., in *Liber Extravagans*: *Scotichronicon* (Watt), ix, 68). It would be unwise, therefore, to treat the use of *Albania* to refer to the kingdom prior to the advent of the Scots as a diagnostic feature.

[94] Broun, *Scottish Independence*, 218–19.

[95] *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 304–5; *historie* here does not necessarily refer to any text.

[96] *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 307 and n.5, preferring *venturos* because it is found not only in **FD** and **FH** (which are related), but also **FC**, to *futuros* in Skene's edition, based on **FA**; 'in store' (Felix Skene's translation of *futuros*: *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), ii, 302) works just as well for *venturos*.

[97] It might seem inappropriate to refer to Margaret's 'maturity', given that she died aged seven, but *maturitas* here is presumably in relation to infancy.

[98] *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 311, 321; A. A. M. Duncan, *The Kingship of the Scots, 842–1292: Succession and Independence* (Edinburgh, 2002), 195.

[99] See above, 000–000.

> wretched servitude under the lordship of the English'.[100] This was taken in 2007 literally to mean that the chapter was an interpolation,[101] but an author could equally say this when digressing from their main narrative. It was evidently written no earlier than 1296 (if not 1297, when Edward I's rule had become so unbearable for many that there was violent opposition to it).

These passages were all regarded as later additions, chiefly because the argument that proto-Fordun was written in 1285 seemed so persuasive. It was also argued that Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 15 (centring on an ahistorical speech made by a Scottish cleric named Gilbert at the Council of Northampton in 1176) was also a later interpolation made on the same occasion as the other items, chiefly because it appears to be out of place chronologically.[102] No attempt was made to explain when or why these additions were made.[103] Now that the argument for dating proto-Fordun to 1285 has dissolved, and there is no longer a compelling reason to see the statement about the inaugural stone being kept in Scone as originally written as part of proto-Fordun, these references to later events point naturally to a date of composition long after 1285—indeed, probably sometime after 1314.

This is reinforced by some perceptive observations in Finlay Young's discussion of proto-Fordun.[104] Although he kept largely within the parameters of the original analysis of proto-Fordun in 2007, he noted that Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 15, far from being out of place, is signalled in the text as a return to the main narrative on the Council of Northampton (1176) after a digression on the activities of Pope Alexander III's legate for Scotland and Ireland.[105] Finlay Young also identified a further passage in the *107 chapters to 1285* referring to later events: in Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 65 (on the conquest of Wales, which we have met already) we are told that Edward I seized all the monies raised by a papal tax on the Church levied for six years in his kingdom, and used this for funding not only the construction of castles and towns in Wales, but 'also a most grievous war which he waged a little later against the Scots' (*bella quoque grauissima que paulo postea Scotis intulit*)—a clear reference to Edward I's campaigns from 1296.[106] The perspective that this was 'a little later' than the conquest of Wales in 1282–1283 could suggest that this was written at least a decade or two after 1296. Finally, Finlay Young observed a striking error in the lengthy account in Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 60 of how Robert I's mother (who is named as Martha rather than Marjorie) took Robert Bruce, lord of Annandale, as her husband (finishing with the birth of Robert I as 'saviour and defender' of the Scots): she is misidentified as the only daughter and heir of Adam (of Kilconquhar), rather than his widow.[107] An error like this is easier to envisage with the passage of time; this, in turn, would be consistent with the entire chapter, and not only the final future facing comments about Robert I, being written sometime after (probably) 1314.

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[100] *Chron. Fordun*, i. 308–9, ii. 303–4: *Hoc igitur insertum est breuiter ubi capitulum, ne qua gens comprouincialis* (as in **FC** and **FH**; other manuscripts read *prouincialis*), *dictam perlegens historiam, exemplo Gualencium incastigata decidat sub Anglorum incaute dominio misserime seruitutis*.
[101] Broun, *Scottish Independence*, 218.
[102] It was also pointed out (Broun, *Scottish Independence*, 219) that it, like Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 65, includes a version of the phrase *misera seruitudo* ('wretched servitude'); because the reason for regarding chapter 65 is weak, however, this could equally suggest that chapter 15 is not an insertion after all.
[103] It was suggested (Broun, *Scottish Independence*, 219) that it might be a stylistic feature of the interpolator to include some verse (as in Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapters 15, 60 and 63). There are other occasions when verse is quoted in the *107 chapters to 1285* (e.g., Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 49 on Alexander II's death, and chapter 55 on King Hákon and his successor Magnús); the only difference is that, in the case of the supposed interpolations, these are not introduced as quotations (which would only be significant if there was an expectation that verse quotations be treated this way, which has not been demonstrated).
[104] Finlay Young, ''A Nation Nobler in Blood and in Antiquity': Scottish National Identity in *Gesta Annalia* I and *Gesta Annalia* II', unpublished PhD thesis (University of Edinburgh, 2018), 24–56.
[105] Young, ''A Nation Nobler in Blood and in Antiquity'', 27 n.45.
[106] *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 308; Young, ''A Nation Nobler in Blood and in Antiquity'', 26.
[107] *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 304; Young, ''A Nation Nobler in Blood and in Antiquity'', 25 n.37.

Did proto-Fordun originally continue beyond 1285?

A picture is emerging of proto-Fordun as a text written not in 1285, but probably at least two decades later. Why, then, does it finish so abruptly where it does? Not only is it strange to stop with the embassy that set off on 2 February 1285 to find a second wife for the king, but the final chapter is far-and-away the briefest among the 107 from St Margaret's English royal ancestors to 1285. It is only seven-and-a-half lines long in Skene's edition; the next shortest is Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 51, which has 18 lines.[108] This would be consistent with the loss of text (although it can only be guessed how this might have occurred).

The only explicit indication so far that proto-Fordun might have extended beyond February 1285 is the reference to the death of Margaret, Alexander III's granddaughter, 'as will be told below', in Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 64, after mentioning her as the only child of Alexander's daughter, also called Margaret, and Erik king of Norway. It might be thought that 'as will be told below' could only have been penned *after* the *118 chapters from 1285 to 1363* had been added to 'proto-Fordun', and refers to the two mentions of Margaret's death in Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 69 and chapter 84. On closer inspection, however, this would fail to account for an eye-catching verbal coincidence between chapter 64 and chapter 69: both use the phrase *ab hac luce migrauit* ('departed from this life'); Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 84, by contrast, has plain *obiit*, 'died'. It would be natural to suppose that *ut infra dicetur ab hac luce migrauit* ('as will be told below, she departed from this life') in Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 64 is a direct reference to chapter 69's *Sed proh dolor incompleto negotio dicta puella ab hac luce migrauit anno Domini MCCXCI* ('But alas, before the task [her marriage to Edward, son of Edward I] was accomplished, the said girl departed from this life in the year of the Lord 1291').[109] The phrase *ab hac luce migrauit* appears once elsewhere in the surviving section of proto-Fordun and twice in the *118 chapters from 1285 to 1363*.[110] Given its limited use in these texts, there is a reasonable suspicion that it is not a coincidence that *ab hac luce migrauit* is found in Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 64 referring 'below' to the same event as in chapter 69.

It is difficult to take this further, but not impossible. There is a curious chronological overlap in the *118 chapters from 1285 to 1363* between, on the one hand, Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapters 67 to 69 and, on the other hand, chapters 81, 83 and 84: both cover the same events from 1286 up to the beginning of the dispute between John Balliol and Robert Bruce (Robert I's grandfather) about the succession to the throne following Margaret's death in 1290 ('1291').[111] This duplication is why Margaret's death is mentioned twice.[112] The first account of the events of 1286 to 1290 (Skene's

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[108] *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 297. Some chapters have 19 lines, e.g., Skene's chapters 11 and 40 in Appendix III (*Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 415, 436), and *Gesta Annalia* chapters 44 and 55 (not including the verse) (*Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 291, 299–300). There are short chapters in the material from 1285 to the mid-1380s, but this was originally a different text, and the brief chapters are a feature of its frequently annalistic character (on which see below, 000–000).

[109] *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 311.

[110] In proto-Fordun it is used when referring to the death of Mary, countess of Boulogne, daughter of Máel Coluim III and St Margaret, in 1116 (Skene's Appendix III, chapter 32): *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 430. In the *118 chapters from 1285 to 1363* it appears in the account of Robert I's descendants in Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 78, when noting the death of Robert I's daughter, Margaret, countess of Sutherland, and at the end of Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 147 (in **FD** and **FH**), noting the death of James Ben, bishop of St Andrews, in 1332: *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 318, 355 n.14.

[111] *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 309–11, 319, 320–1; ii, 304–6, 313, 314. Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 82 is an account of the killing of Donnchad (Duncan) earl of Fife in '1288' (1289) which is not mirrored earlier; it is mentioned in chapter 68, though, *ut postea patebit*, 'as will be made clear afterwards', presumably referring to chapter 82: *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 310. The fullest discussion of these overlapping chapters is in Young, ''A Nation Nobler in Blood and in Antiquity'', 59–65.

[112] The chapters in between begin with a partisan pro-Bruce account of the Great Cause in 1291–1292, ending with the judgement in favour of John Balliol, followed mainly by genealogies which are ostensibly to explain the claims of Balliol and Bruce, but also give the Scottish and English descendants of Máel Coluim III and St

Gesta Annalia chapters 67 to 69) begins with Alexander III's second marriage on 14 October 1285; it is in a more narrative style than the second account (Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapters 81, 83 and 84), beginning with Alexander III's burial in 1286, which is more matter-of-fact and annalistic, with some chapters beginning 'In the year….' or 'In the same year', or with an exact date (e.g., 'On 7 April 1288'). Thereafter, chapters introduced in this way, and a similarly terse style, are woven together with more narrative material until, from Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 122 onwards, nearly every chapter is at least superficially annalistic in nature. It is clear that two originally distinct texts have initially been repeated one after the other until 1290 ('1291'), and have then been merged. Other material (such as a collection of genealogies: Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapters 75 to 80) has been incorporated, too. It is conceivable that other narrative material has been added after 1290, although this would be challenging to detect.

Finlay Young raised the possibility that the first more narrative-style account of events to 1290 could have been part of an 'initial continuation' of proto-Fordun (potentially including everything up to Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 80), but dismissed this, partly because its chronological range seemed too limited.[113] He pointed out, however, that the same 'looping' chronology and other material (including genealogies similar to Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapters 75 to 80) is found in Wyntoun's *Original Chronicle*; because Wyntoun's history is independent of the *118 chapters from 1285 to 1363*, it is clear that both have used a lost common source which shared this feature.[114] After comparing the *118 chapters from 1285 to 1363* with Wyntoun and also with the summary chronicle (mentioned previously),[115] Finlay Young concluded that this common source began with Alexander III's second marriage on 14 October 1285.[116] This common source, then, is where the more narrative account from 1285 and more annalistic account from 1286 were originally presented separately until 1290 ('1291'), and then merged thereafter. For convenience this source can be referred to as the 'History of the kingdom from 1285'.[117]

Although Finlay Young has advanced our understanding of this material significantly, his purpose was to study aspects of Scottish identity in '*Gesta Annalia* I' (i.e., the last extant part of proto-Fordun) and '*Gesta Annalia* II' (i.e., the *118 chapters from 1285 to 1363*, later extended to the mid-1380s in five additional chapters), not to investigate fully what can be discerned about this lost 'History of the kingdom from 1285' used by Wyntoun and whoever was responsible for the *118 chapters from 1285 to 1363*. Its annalistic source could have been a year-by-year chronicle of a kind kept in many major churches: St Andrews, or somewhere closely associated with St Andrews, would be a likely candidate.[118] The narrative-style source is more intriguing. Could it possible have been proto-Fordun itself? This might explain why the surviving part of proto-Fordun breaks off so abruptly at the embassy sent to France in February 1285 to find a wife for Alexander III. If proto-Fordun continued with what is now found in Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapters 67 to 69, beginning with Alexander III's marriage to Yolande de Dreux in October 1285, then whoever first decided to add the *118 chapters from 1285 to 1363* to proto-Fordun might understandably have chosen not to copy this

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Margaret to Robert II and (originally) Edward III, and Robert I's descendants through to about 1360: *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 312–19 and 319 nn.13 and 15; ii, 306–13.

[113] Young, ''A Nation Nobler in Blood and in Antiquity'', 59–61. (He referred to proto-Fordun here as *Gesta Annalia* I.)

[114] Young, ''A Nation Nobler in Blood and in Antiquity'', 61–4 (at 62 for 'looping'); he also discussed the treatment of this material in Bower's *Scotichronicon*. See also Broun, 'A new look', 14.

[115] See above, 000–000.

[116] Young, ''A Nation Nobler in Blood and in Antiquity'', 64–5.

[117] It is possible that the *118 chapters from 1285 to 1363* is largely a copy of this text, but this would need to be investigated properly.

[118] This would, for example, explain the remarkable detail about bishops of St Andrews: *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 329 n.15, 353 n.4, 355 n.14, i, 365 n.8. This needs closer scrutiny to establish if it was part of the original text or has been added in the version shared by **FD** and **FH**.

material twice, especially if it was essentially identical.[119] It might be objected that, if repeating chapters was something to be avoided, how can the extensive overlap between proto-Fordun and Fordun's books V to VI be explained? This need not be an issue, however, if the 'History of the kingdom from 1285' (and whatever else might have been used to create the *118 chapters from 1285 to 1363*) was added to proto-Fordun *before* proto-Fordun to 1285 plus the *118 chapters from 1285 to 1363* was used as a form of continuation for Fordun's history, with resulting overlaps.

This glimpse into the murky world of early lost texts and manuscripts is inevitably tentative without more detailed study. The speculation that the narrative-style source used by the compiler of the 'History of the kingdom from 1285' may have been proto-Fordun, however, is useful as a way of potentially accounting for the verbal echo of *ab hac luce migrauit* when referring 'below' in Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 64 to the same event—the death of Margaret granddaughter of Alexander III—when it is told in chapter 69. But this is not all. An even more resonant verbal echo can be found between proto-Fordun to 1285 and the *118 chapters from 1285 to 1363*. In Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 60, Robert I at his birth in 1274 is referred to as the future *saluatorem, propugnatorem et regem* ('saviour, defender and king') of the Scots. In Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 112, following straight after Edward I's conquest of Scotland in 1304, we are told that God *suscitauit eis saluatorem et propugnatorem*, 'raised up for them [the Scots] a saviour and defender', Robert Bruce. This is not sufficient on its own to show that proto-Fordun was a source for the 'History of the kingdom from 1285' (and, through this, the *118 chapters from 1285 to 1363*); these coincidences can, however, at least place this possibility firmly on the agenda. We will return to this in due course.

Book divisions in FC and FG

The most striking indication that proto-Fordun originally extended beyond the brief chapter on the embassy sent to France on 2 February 1285 is the appearance of book divisions after that point. It will be recalled that Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 6 on the death of Máel Coluim IV in 1165 is followed by a statement that 'the fifth book ends; the sixth begins' (*Explicit liber quintus. Incipit sextus*).[120] This is found in all three manuscripts (**FA**, **FC** and **FG**) of the *107 chapters to 1285*, as well as in **FH**.[121] There is contradictory information, however, about what constituted book VI in proto-Fordun, as well as book VII.[122] Once this has been tackled it will become clear that the work itself finished with a series of eleven documents on the papacy and the kingdom's independence, beginning with the Declaration of Arbroath and finishing with Baldred Bisset's *Processus*.

Three manuscripts (**FA**, **FC** and **FG**) include the series of documents, the 107 chapters attributable to proto-Fordun and the *118 chapters from 1285 to 1363* plus five updating chapters to the mid-1380s (i.e., a total of 230 chapters, combining the material from St Margaret's ancestors to David I's death in 1153 and Skene's *Gesta Annalia* from 1153).[123] The text in **FA** has been derived from **FG**,[124] so only **FC** and **FG** are relevant for discerning how this material was originally configured. This is challenging because there are significant differences.[125]

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[119] It would need to be assumed that it was planned in advance to omit proto-Fordun after February 1285, rather than (at least) the initial part of the 'History of the kingdom from 1285' (if this was a repetition of proto-Fordun to 1290); if a scribe only noticed the repetition while wearily copying one text after the other, then presumably the second text (Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapters 67 to 69) would have been truncated, not the first.

[120] *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 259 (with *liber* only once, as in **FA**, **FG** and **FH**; **FC** has *liber sextus*: see below).

[121] British Library MS Cotton Vitellius E XI, f.118v; for **FC** and **FG**, see below.

[122] There is no *incipit* for book V in any of the manuscripts. It can only be inferred that this began with St Margaret's remote ancestry followed by English kings from Alfred the Great. There is no reason to doubt that this is the beginning of a book, however: see Broun, *Scottish Independence*, 257.

[123] Note that **FD** has the dossier and subsequent items, but not the book divisions.

[124] See above, 000–000.

[125] What follows elaborates Broun, 'A new look', 16–17 and nn.57 and 58.

In **FC** the 230 chapters follow Fordun's incomplete book VI, but are divided in two at 1285 with the series of documents in-between (as noted before).[126] This can be summarised in the order in which it appears, highlighting the book divisions in boxes:[127]

(a) **The *107 chapters to 1285***: an account of St Margaret's ancestors, with increasing detail of kings of England from Alfred the Great to the Norman Conquest, and then Scottish kings and events from St Margaret and Máel Coluim III to February 1285. After the account of the death of Máel Coluim IV in 1165 we are told 'the fifth book ends, the sixth book begins'.

(b) **A series of eleven documents** beginning with the Declaration of Arbroath and finishing with Baldred Bisset's *Processus*, after which it is stated that 'the seventh book comes to an end here'. (The sixth book would be expected, not the seventh, but *vii*^{us} is clear.)

This is followed by a note of a text which we are told can be found at the end of the Life of Kentigern in a Dunfermline book; after this there is a copy of Pope Adrian IV's bull *Laudabiliter*, then the 'Irish Remonstrance', and finally about two-thirds of Aelred's eulogy for David I.

(c) **The *118 chapters from 1285 to 1363*** plus five chapters added piecemeal to the mid-1380s. No book divisions are noted.

In **FG** the series of documents and the material following Bisset's *Processus* appear at the beginning, and the chronological material in **FC** summarised as (a) and (c), above, is brought together without a break. Two book divisions are in the same place as in **FC** (underlined below); only one of them, however, is identical. There is also a third book division that has no parallel in **FC**. Here, then, is how this material is arranged in **FG**:[128]

(i) **A series of eleven documents** beginning with the Declaration of Arbroath and finishing with Baldred Bisset's *Processus*, after which it is stated (prior to the erasure of a minim) that 'the sixth book comes to an end here' (not the seventh, as in **FC**). This is followed by the same items as in **FC**, but in a slightly different order: Pope Adrian IV's *Laudabiliter*, followed by the 'Irish Remonstrance', and then a note of a text at the end of the Life of Kentigern in a Dunfermline book, and finally the first part of Aelred's eulogy for David I (breaking off much earlier than in **FC**).

(ii) 230 chapters (i.e., the *107 chapters to 1285* plus the *118 chapters from 1285 to 1363* continued piecemeal to the mid-1380s in five chapters): an account of St Margaret's ancestors, with increasing detail of kings of England from Alfred the Great to the Norman Conquest, and then Scottish kings and events from St Margaret and Máel Coluim III to the mid-1380s. After the account of the death of Máel Coluim IV in 1165 we are told 'the fifth book ends; the sixth begins', exactly as in **FC**.

After the account of the death of Alexander III's granddaughter Margaret and the beginning of the dispute between Balliol and Bruce (in '1291') we are told 'the sixth book ends and the seventh book begins'. (There is no equivalent book division in **FC**.)

Was this material originally configured more like what we find in **FC** or in **FG**? A striking difference is in the placing of the series of eleven documents finishing with Bisset's *Processus*. It will be recalled that there is a coincidence between the break in the chronological flow in **FC** on the one hand, and on the other hand where proto-Fordun stops in the manuscripts (February 1285) and where the *118 chapters from 1285 to 1363* (using the 'History of the kingdom from 1285') begins (October

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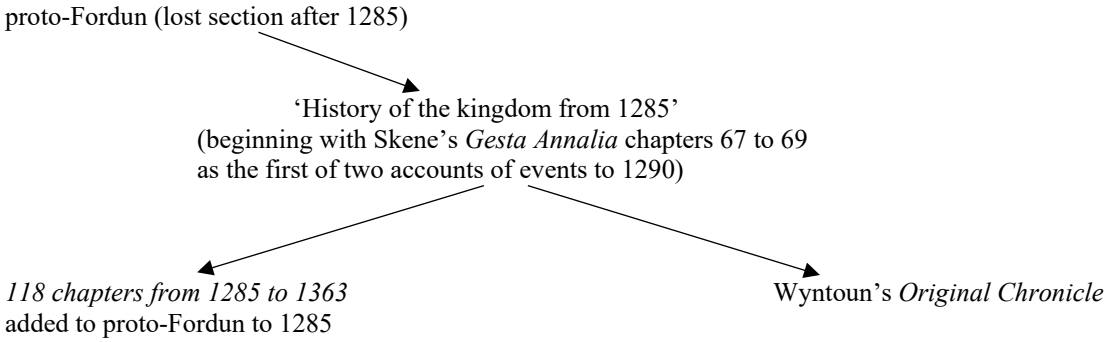
[126] See above, 000–000.

[127] The book divisions are at (first series of folios) f.149v and f.25v (second series of folios): https://mss-cat.trin.cam.ac.uk/manuscripts/uv/view.php?n=O.9.9&n=O.9.9#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=309&xywh=1210%2C1323%2C2178%2C1314 and https://mss-cat.trin.cam.ac.uk/manuscripts/uv/view.php?n=O.9.9&n=O.9.9#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=398&xywh=-2500%2C-1%2C8847%2C5256 (accessed on 3 June 2024).

[128] The book divisions are London, British Library MS Add. 37223, f.146v (*Hic finitur liber vi*^{us}, with *i* erased sometime after **FA** was copied from **FG**), f.168r (*Explicit liber v*^{us}*. Incipit vi*^{us}), and f.189v (*Explicit liber vi*^{us} *et incipit vii*^{us}).

1285); the break is all the more vivid given how proto-Fordun stops so abruptly where it does.[129] As noted previously, this must therefore be where the documents originally appeared, however strange this might seem.[130] This represents a vital clue to how this material took shape. In **FG** the documents have evidently been moved (possibly by the scribe of **FG** or its exemplar), no doubt to create an uninterrupted chronological flow. Perhaps placing the documents there was prompted by the book division after Bisset's *Processus* ('the seventh book comes to an end here' in **FC**) in order to create an ending for Fordun's incomplete book VI (with *vii*^{us} becoming *vi*^{us} by omitting a minim).[131]

FC might bring us closest to how this material was originally configured, but it does not provide a complete sequence of book divisions: it lacks an ending for book VI and beginning for book VII. This is found in **FG** after Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 69, which finishes with the death of Margaret and the beginning of the succession dispute in '1291' (i.e., 1290). Because this is in the *118 chapters from 1285 to 1363* it has not previously been regarded as relevant for understanding proto-Fordun. This, however, was before it was recognised that the first of the two accounts repeating events up to 1290 could be from a lost part of proto-Fordun (via the 'History of the kingdom from 1285' used also by Wyntoun). This possibility is particularly attractive in light of the reference in Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 64 to Margaret's death 'as will be told below', using the same phrase *ab hac luce migrauit* as in Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 69. The suggested interrelationships can be summarised in a diagram:



If Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapters 67 to 69 originated ultimately from an otherwise lost continuation of proto-Fordun's text beyond February 1285, then the statement at the end of Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 69 that 'the sixth book ends and the seventh book begins' in **FG** (and its copy, **FA**) could have been inherited from a lost section of proto-Fordun via the 'History of the kingdom from 1285'.

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[129] See above, 000–000. Note also the inexplicable gap at this point in **FH** (Broun, 'A new look', 25 n.53): the documents were evidently originally moved to the end in the exemplar shared with **FD** (they are found at the end in **FD**: see n.135, below); **FH** was damaged in the Cottonian fire, so it is possible the docs were present but have been lost: Broun, 'A new perspective', 58.

[130] See above, 000–000.

[131] This could help to explain why the series of documents was not moved to the end (which is where they appear in **FD**: see above, 000–000). In **FC** book VI of Fordun's history has attracted special attention, too, by prefacing it with a list of the titles of 58 chapters of *Scotichronicon* book VI (ff.121v–122v: from https://mss-cat.trin.cam.ac.uk/manuscripts/uv/view.php?n=O.9.9&n=O.9.9#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=253&xywh=-3100%2C-1%2C10046%2C5256: accessed 27 May 2024) followed by two misplaced chapters intended by Bower for book V (which follow the list of chapter titles for book VI in Bower's own manuscript: Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 171A) and the first eight chapters of *Scotichronicon* book VI; this is then followed by Fordun's book VI (rather than *Scotichronicon* book VI chapters 9 to 23, which is an expanded version of Fordun's book VI): see *Scotichronicon* (Watt), ix, 202. It appears, therefore, that the scribe (or the scribe of the exemplar) has approached the problem of the incomplete book VI of Fordun's history by alerting the reader to the much expanded (and completed) version in *Scotichronicon*; nevertheless they have still decided to prioritise Fordun's text.

But is this the best explanation for this curious book division? It seems particularly incongruous occurring so soon after the beginning of the 'History of the kingdom from 1285'. Is there any reason why it cannot be regarded, not as an inherited feature, but as an addition by the scribe of **FG** (or its exemplar)? It will be recalled that the scribe of **FG** (or its exemplar) moved the series of documents from their original place between February and October 1285 so that they came immediately after Fordun's history, with the result that the *107 chapters to 1285* and *118 chapters from 1285 to 1363* (plus five chapters) formed a single uninterrupted account from Alfred the Great to the mid-1380s, pivoting from English to Scottish history at St Margaret. In this scenario the book division at the end of Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 69 between book VI and book VII could have been inserted in order to close the book VI which began after Máel Coluim IV's death in 1165. No concern to close book VII, however, can be detected in **FG** (or **FA**), which diminishes the force of this potential explanation. The virtue of recognising the book division after Margaret's death in 1290 as deriving ultimately from proto-Fordun (via the 'History of the kingdom from 1285') is that this could be the ending of book VI and beginning of book VII that has been omitted from **FC** (presumably because it seemed so bizarre).[132]

Last part of proto-Fordun

Putting all this together, the final three books of proto-Fordun begin to emerge into view:

(a) Book V: an account of kings of England in detail from Alfred the Great to the Norman Conquest and St Margaret, and of Scottish kings and events from Máel Coluim III to the death of Máel Coluim IV in 1165.

(b) Book VI from the accession of William I in 1165 to the death of Margaret, Alexander III's granddaughter and heir, in 1290 and the beginning of the dispute over the throne between Bruce and Balliol.

(c) Book VII from 1290 (potentially continuing as a strand of the 'History of the kingdom from 1285' that survives most fully in the *118 chapters from 1285 to 1363*), ending with Bisset's *Processus*.

A telling feature of both **FC** and **FG** is that after Bisset's *Processus* it is simply stated that a book comes to an end (*finitur*); the other book-divisions say that one book finishes and another begins. There can be little doubt, therefore, that Bisset's *Processus* was seen as standing at the end of the work as a whole. Proto-Fordun did not, therefore, finish with a continuous narrative. Instead, it concluded with a compendium of documents relating to Scottish independence beginning with the Declaration of Arbroath, followed by ten documents relating to the case at the Curia led by Baldred Bisset in 1301, culminating with his *Processus*.

It seems unlikely that such a significant a block of material was intended only as an appendix to the work as a whole. In one manuscript (**FC**) Bisset's dossier occupies just over 46 pages (second foliation ff.2v–25v, with only the first four lines of f.25v used); this is roughly the amount needed to cover from 1124 to 1285 in the 107 chapters (first foliation ff.145v–168v, using only the first nine lines of f.168v). The documents are punctuated by three passages of linking narrative: the first

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[132] It would not have seemed so bizarre in **FG** (and **FA**) because moving the documents to allow an uninterrupted flow in effect restored this as the end of the book VI beginning in 1165. This book division was already absent from **FC**'s exemplar, it seems, to judge by a colophon at the end of the *107 chapters to 1285*, leaving the rest of the page blank (about three-quarters of the text-block) (f.168v: https://mss-cat.trin.cam.ac.uk/manuscripts/uv/view.php?n=O.9.9&n=O.9.9#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=348&xywh=290%2C521%2C4093%2C2431, accessed 3 June 2024). The colophon begins, '[the text] runs short here: book VII is possibly completed by the remaining writing' (*hic deficit / residuo scripto finiatur. liber vii*^{us}.), followed by a reference (in different ink, but by the same scribe) to the opening of the *118 chapters from 1285 to 1363*. In the original configuration of this material shared by **FC** and **FG** (and **FA**) the end of book VII (after Bisset's *Processus*) would, of course, have appeared *before* the *118 chapters from 1285 to 1363* because the *118 chapters from 1285 to 1363* (including the ending of book VI and beginning of book VII at 1290) was added to the surviving section of proto-Fordun at a later stage: see 000–000, above.

between the Declaration of Arbroath and Bisset's dossier (which will be discussed in due course), and two briefer passages between groups of documents. Book VII therefore consisted of (at least):[133]

A1. Letter of Pope Boniface VIII to the archbishop of Canterbury (28 June 1299).

A2. *Scimus fili*: letter of Boniface VIII to Edward I (27 June 1299).

A3. Response of barons of England to *Scimus fili* (12 February 1301).

A4. Response of Edward I to *Scimus fili* (7 May 1301).

- Brief linking narrative

B1. Copy of letter of King John to Edward I (10 July 1296), sent by Edward I to Boniface VIII.

B2. Copy of letter of Honorius III (17 January 1217), sent by Edward I to Boniface VIII.

B3. Copy of letter of Gregory IX (4 January 1235), sent by Edward I to Boniface VIII.

B4. Copy of another letter of Gregory IX (27 April 1236), sent by Edward I to Boniface VIII.

- Brief linking narrative

C1. 'Instructions' sent by the Scots to their envoys at the Curia (in fact, a draft of C2).

C2. Baldred Bisset's *Pleading* (1301).

The dossier, in short, runs from the initiation of proceedings by Boniface VIII when he wrote to Edward I to object to Edward's conquest of Scotland, through to the final presentation of the case for the kingdom's independence. As such, it provides a complete record of the arguments and counterarguments that were deployed before the highest jurisdiction in Latin Christendom.

The items that follow book VII have evidently been added later.[134] These are the same in **FC** and **FG** (although in a slightly different order).[135] In **FC**, they are:

(i) a note of a text which we are told can be found at the end of the Life of Kentigern in a Dunfermline book (second series of folios f.25v);

(ii) Pope Adrian IV's bull *Laudabiliter* (ff.25v–26r);

(iii) the 'Irish Remonstrance' sent to Pope John XXII justifying Ireland's independence and Edward Bruce's claim to be its king[136] (ff.26r–30v);

(iv) about two-thirds of Aelred's eulogy (*lamentatio*) for David I (ff.30v–34v):[137] the scribe stops at the foot of the page and refers the reader for the remainder of the text to go to the end of Fordun's book V.[138]

This is followed by the *118 chapters from 1285 to 1363* and five chapters to the mid-1380s. Items (i) to (iv) look like they have been accumulated piecemeal, inspired initially by the theme of independence in the eyes of the papacy that unites the Declaration of Arbroath and the series pf

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[133] All but B1 were incorporated into *Scotichronicon* (with some variant readings from **FC**: see below, 000); these are edited and translated in *Scotichronicon* (Watt), vi, 100–89. Skene listed them with their manuscript titles in an appendix: *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 402–5, where they are numbered I–VIII and X–XII, omitting IX (by accident). It has been argued in *Scotichronicon* (Watt), vi, 246 (comment on lines 29–30) and 262, that a different version of at least the 'Instructions' (C1) was used in *Scotichronicon*. The two versions are given one on top of the other in W. F. Skene, *Chronicles of the Picts, Chronicles of the Scots and other Early Memorials of Scottish History* (Edinburgh, 1867), 232–71. By contrast the difference between the *Scotichronicon* and proto-Fordun texts of Bisset's *Processus* are regarded as minor: *Scotichronicon* (Watt), vi, 280.

[134] What follows develops and supersedes the discussion in Broun, 'A new look', 15.

[135] They are also found at the end of **FD** (Dublin, Trinity College Dublin MS 498, pp.457–95), which additionally has King John of England's submission of England to the pope in 1213, the absolution of Robert I, and an incomplete Life of St Serf (pp.495–8). In **FG** (ii) and (iii) precede (i), and (iv) is much briefer: London, British Library MS Add. 37223, ff. 146v–151v.

[136] Seán Duffy, 'The Irish Remonstrance: prototype of the Declaration of Arbroath', *SHR* 101 (2022) 395–428.

[137] This is part of a single work that includes Aelred's genealogy of kings of England (see n.66, above). The term *lamentatio* suggests that it was regarded here as an obituary oration.

[138] *Reliqua huius lamentacionis scripta sunt supra, In fine libri quinti*, 'The rest of this lamentation is written above, at the end of book five'. This is written by the main scribe, with *In fine libri quinti* in a darker ink.

documents culminating in Bisset's *Processus*. It may be assumed that there was some blank space in a manuscript shared ultimately by **FC** and **FG** (perhaps initially one or more blank folios, with at least a gathering added later, as found in multi-scribe cartularies).[139]

Inclusion of the Declaration of Arbroath

How did the Declaration of Arbroath come to be part of proto-Fordun? It has been assumed that it was already part of a dossier including the other documents, and was incorporated along with them; it has also been argued that the dossier plus the Declaration can be identified with a 'booklet' (*libellus*) of Alan of Montrose that is referred to in Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 105.[140] But was the Declaration of Arbroath so closely associated with the other documents? Unlike the others, it was not connected with the case at the Curia in 1301: it was written nineteen years later in 1320. It has been argued that it was included because it spoke to the theme of justifying Scotland's independence to the papacy; it has been suggested, moreover, that its placing at the beginning rather than tacked on at the end was because it was regarded 'as a key text on the kingdom's freedom that could not be ignored'.[141] Now that the Declaration and the documents relating to 1301 can be identified as part of book VII, however, another explanation for the placing of the Declaration comes into view. It could have been added as part of proto-Fordun.

It might be wondered why the Declaration was placed out of chronological order. A vital clue is the rubric given to the Declaration in all the manuscripts of proto-Fordun in which it appears (**FC**, **FD**, **FG** and its copy **FA**). This makes no reference to independence. It reads: 'The descendants of the Scots of noble prowess protest in this manner to the lord pope John XXII concerning the wrongs inflicted on them by Edward king of England' (*Generose probitatis Scotorum progenies domino pape Iohanni XXII de illatis eis iniuriis per regem Anglie Edwardum conqueritur in hunc modum*).[142] There is only a single sentence in the Declaration where Edward I's wrongs are the primary focus. Why, then, should this be highlighted?

The answer is revealed by the narrative linking the Declaration to the other documents. This focuses on Edward I's occupation in 1304, rather than events in 1320. It relates how 'in these days' (*in hiis diebus*) many Scots nobles were imprisoned by Edward I. Sir William Olifard is specifically named as the keeper of Stirling Castle when it fell to Edward I on 1304; his incarceration is said to have been against Edward I's promise to him.[143] (Edward I at this point is identified as 'father of that Edward', *pater istius Edwardi*: 'that Edward' is Edward II in the Declaration.) It is also said that Robert bishop of Glasgow and 'Maurice' (an error for Mark) bishop of Sodor were tyrannously (*tyrannice*) thrown into prison as well.[144] (The detention of Bishops Robert and Mark is mentioned in the pope's letter to Edward I, *Scimus fili*, the second document after the Delaration.[145]) We are told that, when Pope Boniface VIII heard about this, he demanded that Edward I release the imprisoned bishops and cease from his unlawful invasion. The pope was ignored. It is explained that Boniface VIII then set a date for a hearing and wrote letters to the archbishop of Canterbury summoning Edward I to appear before Boniface or send procurators—letters which the archbishop duly delivered.

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[139] Tucker, *Reading and Shaping*, 192–3.
[140] *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 332; ii, 325: Dauvit Broun, 'The earliest occasion when the Declaration of Arbroath was copied after 1320?', https://cotr.ac.uk/blog/earliest-occasion/, posted 20 January 2020 (accessed 9 June 2021).
[141] Dauvit Broun, 'The Declaration of Arbroath and contractual kingship: reading the deposition clause in the Middle Ages', in Klaus Peter Müller (ed.), *Scotland and Arbroath 1320–2020* (Berlin, 2020), 91–111, at 93.
[142] **FC** has *XII* (for *XXII*), and **FG** has *Edwardi* (for *Edwardum*).
[143] This is also mentioned in Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 111 (*Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 336; ii, 329).
[144] *Scotichronicon* (Watt), vi, 247 (note on lines 38–39); *Mauricius* was presumably a mistake for *Marcus*.
[145] The bishop of Sodor is correctly identified in the copies of these letters as *Marcus* (see e.g., **FC**, f.4r second series, seventh line from bottom: https://mss-cat.trin.cam.ac.uk/manuscripts/uv/view.php?n=O.9.9&n=O.9.9#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=355&xywh=-404%2C1723%2C4166%2C2627: accessed 27 May 2024)

We are told that in these letters the pope exhorted the king to leave the Scottish kingdom in peace, and restore the clergy and all other inhabitants of the kingdom to their 'previous freedom' (*pristine libertati*). After noting that copies of these letters are given below (A1 and A2 in the list above), it is stated that 'at this time, i.e., 1300' (*eo tempore scilicet Anno Domini MCCC*) Walter archdeacon of Lothian, Baldred Bisset and William of Eaglesham were sent as procurators to the Curia by the guardians and community of Scotland to counter the fictions presented by the king of England.

Although Edward's atrocities are the subject of only one sentence in the Declaration of Arbroath (and this does not refer specifically to 1304), the association of the Declaration with Edward I's conquest of 1304 is made explicit at the outset of the linking narrative. Seen in this light, the rubric makes sense: the Declaration is included ostensibly because of its account of Edward I's wrongs. The focus on 1304, nonetheless, seems unnecessary, resulting in an awkward link to the documents that follow—the dossier relating to the mission led by Baldred Bisset at the Curia in 1301.[146] This is the first of three similar passages. The other two are briefer, and are placed between each group in the dossier. It has been pointed out that they are inaccurate: for example, the document which is presented as the 'Instructions' sent by the Scottish government to Bisset and his fellow procurators is, in fact, a preliminary draft of Bisset's *Processus*.[147] These, like the first linking narrative after the Declaration, have evidently been added long after 1301 by someone who was not particularly well informed. It would appear, then, that all three have been written as part of the process of incorporating the Declaration and the other documents into proto-Fordun. As such, they would be the clearest examples of original prose attributable to proto-Fordun.

Proto-Fordun's narrative beyond 1290?

If it is accepted that book VI finished with the death of Margaret in 1290 and the disputed succession triggered by it, did book VII begin with the Declaration of Arbroath? This would have left a significant hole between 1290 and Edward I's conquest of 1304. If proto-Fordun can be identified as the first of the two accounts of events between 1286 and 1290 in the 'History of the kingdom from 1285' that survives (at least in part) in the *118 chapters from 1285 to 1363*, then it could have continued to be used after 1290, woven together with material from the more annalistic source. It would, of course, be extremely challenging to identify text after 1290 that might have been derived ultimately from proto-Fordun.

There is a particularly resonant clue, however, which has been noted already: a verbal echo between the account of Robert I's birth in 1274 (Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 60) and the way he is described in the chapter devoted solely to Robert I's advent immediately after Edward I's conquest of 1304 (Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 112).[148] In both places Robert is referred to as *saluator* and *propugnator* ('saviour and defender') of the Scots. It is tempting to see this as an intentional echo of Isaiah 19:20: *mittet eis saluatorem et propugnatorem qui liberet eos* ('He will send them a saviour and champion who will free them'), a prediction of Christ's coming which was sung as a responsory

[146] The date '1300' for the mission of Baldred Bisset and his fellow procurators to the Curia may come from a text similar to Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 105 (*Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 332), where the three procurators are named and their dispatch to the pope dated to 1300. Boniface VIII's letters are dated by pontifical year, so the author may not have been aware that they were from 1299. Edward I's reply (included in the dossier), however, is given the A.D. date of 1301.

[147] *Scotichronicon* (Watt), vi, 184 (book XI chapter 63 line 20), 260–1; R. James Goldstein, 'The Scottish mission to Boniface VIII in 1301: a reconsideration of the context of the *Instructiones* and *Processus*', *SHR* 70 (1991) 1–15, at 2, 12; also 7 n.3.

[148] Above, 000–000.

in the 3rd or 4th Sunday of Advent.[149] This Biblical and liturgical parallel is a reminder that using these words together is not unique; it is also, however, potentially full of meaning in the context of the account of Scotland's total subjugation described in the previous chapter (Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 111).[150]

This is not the only striking verbal parallel between Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 112 and proto-Fordun, however. The chapter ends by referring to Robert I as 'another Maccabee', describing him *insidias et tedia, inedias et pericula letanter amplectendo* ('joyfully welcoming traps and weariness, starvation and dangers').[151] This echoes the passage in the Declaration of Arbroath where it is said that Robert I, 'another Maccabee or Joshua', *labores et tedia inedias et pericula leto sustinuit animo*, 'endured hardships and weariness, starvation and dangers with a joyful spirit'.[152] The words *tedia, inedias et pericula* are not found together in a well known context (never mind in the same order, or being suffered 'joyfully' or 'with a joyful spirit').[153] There seems little doubt that Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 112 was written by someone using the Declaration of Arbroath's very similar account of Robert I's hardships in freeing his people from oppression. Not only was the Declaration part of proto-Fordun, but Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 112—beginning with Edward I's triumphant departure from Scotland, and ending with Robert I's selfless suffering for Scotland's freedom—can readily be seen as a bridge from Edward I's conquest to the Declaration, a link which (as we have seen) the writer of proto-Fordun was particularly keen to establish.

Neither of these verbal coincidences on their own offer more than a tangible hint that book VII of proto-Fordun could, indeed, have continued after 1290. Taken together, however, they provide a clear circumstantial case for seeing proto-Fordun as a work whose account of events reached as far as Edward I's conquest of 1304. When considered along with how book VII ends, a picture emerges of a history of the kingdom whose narrative ceased with Scotland's total defeat in 1304 and a vision of its future salvation by Robert I, finishing with the Declaration of Arbroath and the documents relating to the case led by Baldred Bisset at the Curia in 1301.

Potential dating indications in proto-Fordun

The inclusion of the Declaration of Arbroath means that proto-Fordun must have been composed after the document's date of 6 April 1320. On the face of it, therefore, proto-Fordun could have been written anytime between then and Fordun's time of writing in the mid-1380s. Any hope of a tighter dating depends on locating internal clues in the text. This is far from straightforward. It is sorely tempting, for example, to see a link with Robert II in the way the earliest Scot to settle any part of the kingdom was identified as Eochaid 'Rothay', who in Fordun's book I chapter 28 is referred to as the eponym of Rothesay, one of the main strongholds of the Stewarts.[154] This would be irresistible if the name of this first settler had been forged afresh and inserted into the royal genealogy by whoever

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[149] Vulgate Isaiah chapter 19: https://sacred-texts.com/bib/vul/isa019.htm#020 (accessed 24 August 2024). For the responsories for the 3rd and 4th Sunday of Advent (the 4th is more common) see the results of this search on *Cantus: A Database for Latin Ecclesiastical Chant: Inventories of Chant Sources* (https://cantusdatabase.org/): https://cantusdatabase.org/chant-search/?op=contains&keyword=mittam+vobis+salvatorem+et+propugnatorem+pro+vobis&office=&genre=&cantus_id=&mode=&feast=&position=&melodies=; for a specific example, see https://gregorien.info/chant/id/8630/10/en (all links accessed 24 August 2024). I am grateful to Andrew Bull for introducing me to the Cantus database.

[150] *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 336–7; ii, 329.

[151] *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 337.

[152] The text in manuscripts of book VII of proto-Fordun can be seen together in §11 at https://cotr.ac.uk/viewer/?group=declaration&blocks=35:transcription; (accessed 27 May 2024): **FG**, copied by **FA**, has *picula* for *pericula*; **FC** and **FD** are nearer to the text of the Declaration that was originally included here.

[153] A search on Google was made using both medieval and classical spelling (*tedia*, *taedia* and *tædia*), but all that came to light were numerous editions of and quotations from the Declaration of Arbroath.

[154] Broun, *The Irish Identity*, 55 (XXVIIIb).

composed proto-Fordun, but that was not the case.[155] It is conceivable that the association of Eochaid 'Rothay' with Rothesay was triggered simply by reading 'Rothay' in the genealogy.[156] His position in the genealogy as great-grandson of Simón Brecc (who in the origin-legend brought the Stone of Scone to Ireland) could have been sufficient on its own to make him the earliest Scot to move east across the Irish Channel;[157] Rothesay's location could have made this seem all the more compelling. On its own, therefore, the invention of Eochaid 'Rothay' cannot bear much weight as an indication that proto-Fordun was written with Robert Stewart in mind.

Another potential clue relates to a potentially significant absence. Edward III's initial recognition of Scottish independence in his quitclaim of 1 March 1328 was known to Bower and a scribe of Glasgow Cathedral in the first half of the fifteenth century (after 1417),[158] and would therefore have been available earlier.[159] It is tempting to use this as a *terminus ante quem*, as if the decision to end the kingdom's history with Edward I's conquest in 1304, the Declaration of Arbroath and the dossier, could only have been made before the kingdom's independence had been formally recognised. This, however, could risk pre-empting the possibility that the final part of proto-Fordun could have been designed as a powerful narrative gesture written after the end of Robert I's reign, when the kingdom's independence was in grave jeopardy again.

The search for internal indications of when proto-Fordun might have been written could involve books I–IV of Fordun's history, too. The bar has to be set high, however, for assigning a particular narrative detail plausibly to proto-Fordun rather than to Vairement or Fordun. A promising example is the remarkable account in Fordun's book IV, chapter 43, of how Máel Coluim II (1005–1034) was granted an annual subsidy (*annuale subsidium*) as his livelihood. It was explained that, because he gave away all the kingdom's lands except for the mound (*monticulum*) of the royal seat of Scone, he was driven by poverty (*necessitate coactus*) to ask a general meeting (*generalis curia*) for regular funding from lands or rents, or at least an annual subsidy that 'would in every respect uphold the honour of his majesty' (*sue maiestatis per omnia sustentetur honestas*)—but only if 'the incapacitated populace were in no way to be crushed by the heavy burden of a yearly contribution' (*imbecillis plebicola contributionis annue nullatenus graui deprimatur onere*).[160] On this basis an annual subsidy 'was gladly agreed and granted by all, as much by the populace as by the nobles' (*quod autem ab omnibus gratanter tam plebe quam nobilibus approbatum est et concessum*: this follows immediately after *deprimatur onere*). The nobles also volunteered to hand over their wardships, reliefs and marriages. This bears a close resemblance to the indenture between Robert I and the community of the realm that was agreed in the parliament held at Cambuskenneth on 15 July 1326, and repeated in the parliament held in Edinburgh on 28 February 1328. (Only the text of the latter survives.[161]) There it is explained that the lands and rents that had of old supported the king had been donated or transferred due to the war to such an extent that Robert I was no longer able to

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[155] See above, 000–000.
[156] For 'Rothay' as a reading in the genealogy since the late twelfth century, see above, 000–000.
[157] Broun, 'The most important textual representation': see lines 73–76 of the genealogy.
[158] Tucker, *Reading and Shaping*, 92.
[159] The earliest extant Scottish copies of Edward III's quitclaim of his rights to overlordship (from which the Treaty of Edinburgh followed on 17 March 1328) are (i) in Bower's *Scotichronicon* (where it is in a bifolio inserted after the main text of this part of book XIII had been completed) and (ii) in a series of entries added to a cartulary of Glasgow Cathedral (the *Registrum Vetus*) sometime after 27 March 1417 and probably before the mid-fifteenth century: see *Scotichronicon* (Watt), vii, 36–9 and 186 (comment on lines 77–113); Tucker, *Reading and Shaping*, 92 and n.3.
[160] *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 186.
[161] *The Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707*, ed. Keith M. Brown, Gillian H. MacIntosh, Alastair J. Mann, Pamela E. Ritchie and Roland J. Tanner, with Alexia Grosjean, Alan R. MacDonald, Kirsty F. McAlister, Derek J. Patrick, Laura A. M. Stewart and others (St Andrews, 2007) [hereafter *RPS*] 1328/1; A. A. M. Duncan (ed.), *Regesta Regum Scottorum*, v, *The Acts of Robert I King of Scots 1306–1329* (Edinburgh, 1988) (hereafter *RRS*, v), no.335.

support himself without inflicting intolerable burdens on his people (*plebs*) (referring presumably to the seizing of provisions and enforced services as the king travelled around the kingdom). It was gladly (*gratanter*) and unanimously agreed that he should receive annually a tenth of all revenues from lands and rents for the rest of his life.

The crux here is not simply the coincidence between Máel Coluim II's and Robert I's situation, the concern to avoid burdening the populace, and the grant of an annual subsidy for the king's upkeep. It is, above all, that a regular levy for the rest of the king's lifetime was unprecedented; it is difficult to identify any comparable annual subsidy granted to a king by his people that is likely to have been known in Scotland at the time. It is, on the face of it, unlikely therefore that this part of the story would have been conceivable before the deliberations that led to the indenture of 15 July 1326. Perhaps this aspect of book IV chapter 43 was grafted by the writer of proto-Fordun onto an earlier narrative by Vairement about Máel Coluim II that sought to explain the origin of wardships, reliefs and marriages by recounting how the kingdom's lands originally belonged to the king. A final potential parallel with Robert I that might have been in the mind of the writer of proto-Fordun is the reference to Máel Coluim II as *rex victoriosissimus*, 'the most victorious king'. This could have been in Vairement's text: it was certainly current since at least the reign of Alexander II in king-lists.[162] Even so, the soubriquet could be worn so easily by Robert I, too.[163]

The annual subsidy agreed by parliament in 1326 could also help in considering a likely *terminus ad quem*. It continued to be collected until 1330, but ceased thereafter. No regular tax was levied again with the primary purpose of providing for the king's upkeep.[164] A general tax was not agreed again until 1341 (as a one-off, presumably on the occasion of David II's return from exile); the next was between 1358 and 1360 to pay for David II's ransom following his release from English captivity in 1357. No parliamentary records for either survive, however.[165] Paying the ransom was the priority again when an annual levy of six pennies in every pound (i.e., a fortieth) was legislated for on 13 January 1365; it was stipulated, however, that only if more than 2,000 merks was raised would the remainder be made available for the king's 'necessary expenses'.[166] Although this was intended as a regular tax, it was only levied in the remainder of David II's reign in 1365, 1366, 1368 and 1370.[167] When the king's ability to meet his living expenses became an issue, the solution agreed in parliament

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[162] Marjorie Ogilvie Anderson, *Kings and Kingship in Early Scotland*, 2nd edn (Edinburgh, 1980), 267, 276; *uictoriosus* at 284, and French *uicturous* at 288. It can be deduced from this that *uictoriossisimus* was the probable reading in the archetype of Marjorie Anderson's 'X group' of king-lists (ξ), datable to 1214 × 1249: Broun, *The Irish Identity*, 154–60.

[163] It has been argued by A. A. M. Duncan, 'The 'Laws of Malcolm MacKenneth'', in Alexander Grant and Keith J. Stringer (eds), *Medieval Scotland: Crown, Lordship and Community. Essays Presented to G. W. S. Barrow* (Edinburgh, 1993), 239–73, at 242, that *victoriossisimus* and the list of vanquished people in *Leges Malcolmi MacKenneth*, a legal and administrative tract purporting to be laws enacted by Máel Coluim II (also known as Máel Coluim mac Cinaeda, hence 'Malcolm MacKenneth') 'shows beyond doubt' that the tract 'is indebted to Fordun'; but this is unclear, given that the soubriquet was well established in the king-lists (see previous note) and the list of vanquished peoples is much more extensive than in Fordun's account; Duncan's observation (at 243) that the tract 'makes something of a nonsense of Fordun' by referring only to the casualties due from lands rather than lands themselves may be more telling. The use of *mac* in *MacKenneth* could have come from a king-list, but not Fordun (or, presumably, proto-Fordun); it may, however, be of a piece with the use of vernacular *colpindach* (a Scots word for a young cow or ox) that Alice Taylor has noted as a distinctive feature: Alice Taylor (ed.), *The Laws of Medieval Scotland. Legal Compilations from the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* Stair Society vol.66 (Edinburgh, 2019), 534–5.

[164] Alexander Grant, *Independence and Nationhood. Scotland 1306–1469* (London, 1984), 162 n.3.

[165] Grant, *Independence and Nationhood*, 162 n.3; *The Exchequer Rolls of Scotland*, vol.i, *1264–1359*, ed. John Stuart and George Burnett (Edinburgh, 1878), 501–3. For receipts for the subsidy in 1342, see *RPS* 1357/11/20 (https://www.rps.ac.uk/mss/1357/11/20) and 1358/1/1 (https://www.rps.ac.uk/mss/1358/1/1) (both accessed 24 August 2024).

[166] *RPS* 1365/1/15 (https://www.rps.ac.uk/mss/1365/1/15) (accessed 24 August 2024).

[167] Grant, *Independence and Nationhood*, 162 n.3.

on 27 September 1367 was not to increase the annual tax to a tenth (the rate set in 1326), but to revoke all gifts and grants of crown lands, rents and revenues made since Robert I's death in 1329.[168]

If it is accepted, therefore, that the story of the grant of an annual subsidy to Máel Coluim II for his upkeep was directly inspired by the same grant to Robert I in 1326, then it may be useful to ask how long the annual subsidy is likely to have been remembered after it ceased to be levied in 1330. It is not mentioned in the *118 chapters from 1285 to 1363*, or Wyntoun's *Original Chronicle*, or in Barbour's *Bruce*. No reference is made to it in the records of later general taxation: indeed, the idea that the king should be able to live from crown revenues alone, without further subsidies, was implicitly reaffirmed by the act of revocation in 1367. It may be guessed, therefore, that the story of Máel Coluim II's annual subsidy is less likely to have been written the more distant the memory of the levy between 1326 and 1330 would have become. This would point to sometime in the late 1320s or 1330s as the optimum period for the composition of proto-Fordun, with perhaps an inclination towards the period when the annual subsidy was still active. This begins to coalesce with the proposition that proto-Fordun was written before the kingdom's independence was recognised by Edward III in 1328.

If proto-Fordun was written sometime between 1326 and 1328, then the decision to end with Edward I's conquest of 1304, the Declaration and the documents relating to the case at the Curia in 1301 might be interpreted as a dire warning that the cause of independence still needed to be fought for on the battlefield and proved in court. The future would, indeed, have seemed desperately uncertain when Robert I's health began to fail: in July 1327 it was reported that he was not expected to live longer than a year-long truce that had just been agreed in Ulster.[169] Although the king in fact lived for nearly two years, and enjoyed periods of remission, he could not help being bedridden when the Treaty of Edinburgh was agreed on 17 March 1328.[170] A long minority seemed unavoidable: Robert I's son David, born on 5 March 1324, had been recognised as heir to the throne in the parliament on 15 July 1326 when the annual subsidy was agreed.[171] The situation was especially uncertain in the summer of 1327 when war with England resumed until, in October 1327, the English government became serious about recognising Scottish independence.[172]

Perhaps the summer and early autumn of 1327 seem to provide the optimal conditions for when proto-Fordun may have been written. Whatever merits this may have, however, alternative interpretations cannot be discounted. The way the work ends could be seen as appropriate, for example, to the mid-1330s. All that had been gained in the Treaty of Edinburgh appeared to have been lost when David II was taken to France in 1334 for his safety, leaving the Bruce party to be led until late 1335 by Robert Stewart and John Randolph, earl of Moray, both in their teens and on bad terms with each other.[173] The invention of Eochaid 'Rothay' could be seen in this context as a consciously pro-Stewart gesture. The parallel with 1304, however, would not have been exact: Edward I governed Scotland directly, whereas in the mid-1330s most of Scotland was ruled by a vassal-king, Edward Balliol. At the end of the day, although it is tempting to see proto-Fordun as a response to a crisis for the kingdom's independence, it is ultimately a creative work whose circumstances we can only guess.

Are there any hints in the text about the person who composed it? Finlay Young has drawn attention to occasions in proto-Fordun where Gaelic is identified as 'our language' (*idioma noster*) or

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[168] *RPS* 1367/9/2.
[169] Ranald Nicholson, 'The last campaign of Robert Bruce', *EHR* 77 (1962) 233–46, at 242.
[170] E. L. G. Stones, 'An addition to the 'Rotuli Scotiae'', *SHR* 29 (1950) 23–51, at 48. For the fluctuations in Robert I's health, see Michael Penman, *Robert the Bruce, King of Scots* (London, 2014), 296–302.
[171] *Scotichronicon* (Watt), vii, 34.
[172] Nicholson, 'The last campaign', 239–46.
[173] Boardman, *The Early Stewart Kings*, 4–6; Andrew Moray took over as the kingdom's guardian until his death in 1338, when Robert Stewart became guardian.

the 'mother tongue' (*materna lingua*).[174] The most likely to be proto-Fordun's prose, rather than repeated from a source, is in the brief account of Eochaid 'Rothay' in Fordun's book I chapter 28, when we are told that the island is also known as Bute from St Brendan's cell, which is 'bothe' *idiomate nostro*.[175] A different kind of clue is the use of the term *maiestas* ('majesty') in the account of the grant of an annual subsidy to Máel Coluim II in Fordun's book IV, chapter 43. Alice Taylor has shown how *maiestas* reflected an emphasis on 'superior royal authority' which was purposefully developed by Robert I's government.[176] Matthew Hammond has highlighted the potential significance of this term for associating proto-Fordun with Robert I's kingship.[177] At the very least this suggests that proto-Fordun was written by someone deeply in sympathy with Brucean ideology.[178]

Conclusion

The limited survival of proto-Fordun means that determining its original extent and discerning when it was composed is inevitably challenging. A key difference in this attempt to do so compared to 2007 is that the extant book divisions have been prioritised ahead of a dating based on where the extant text ends abruptly. This was only possible, however, because the gravitational force of the assumptions underlying the previous dating was broken in the study of a different kind of text: cartularies. The result is a radical change in how proto-Fordun is understood to have ended, and the proposal of a new dating.

Books I to IV of Proto-Fordun survive only as a pervasive—albeit dimly perceptible—presence in Fordun's history. They may have been little more than a repeat of Vairement's work, even more so than was proposed in 2007.[179] Proto-Fordun's salient contribution to Vairement's text was to create Eochaid 'Rothay' as the first Scot to settle the islands, and locate Fergus son of Ferchar in the royal genealogy by claiming brusquely that 'Ferchar' and 'Feredach' are essentially versions of the same name. A similarly bold approach to creating connections can be seen more glaringly in the narrative linking the Scottish mission to the Curia in 1301 ('1300') with Edward I's conquest in 1304. The passage on the subsidy granted to Máel Coluim II, on the other hand, suggests that other aspects of

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[174] Young, ''A Nation Nobler in Blood and in Antiquity'', 41–2.

[175] Broun, *The Irish Identity*, 56 (XXVIIIb), and 130, pointing out that 'bothe' is Gaelic *both* (see also *Scotichronicon* (Watt), i, 147, note on lines 9–10).

[176] Alice Taylor, 'What does *Regiam Maiestatem* actually say (and what does it mean)?' in W. Eaves, J. Hudson, I. Ivarsen, and S. White (eds), *Common Law, Civil Law and Colonial Law: Essays in Comparative Legal History from the 12th to the 20th Centuries* (Cambridge, 2021), 47–85, at 71–82; Alice Taylor, 'Introduction', in *Regiam Maiestatem. The Earliest Known Version*, ed. John Reuben Davies with Alice Taylor, Stair Society (Edinburgh, 2022), 1–168, at 121–30 (at 128 for the association of *maiestas* with 'superior royal authority').

[177] I am extremely grateful to Matthew Hammond for sharing his unpublished survey of the term *maiestas* in Fordun's history with me. The use of *maiestas* in book IV chapter 43 helped me to appreciate that chapter's significance for dating proto-Fordun. *Regia maiestas* ('royal majesty') appears in proto-Fordun in Skene's Appendix III chapter 13 and *Gesta Annalia* chapters 43 and 60 (*Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 416, 290 and 304). Its use in Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 60 in relation to Marjorie of Carrick's marriage to Robert I's father *inconsulta maiestate regia* ('without providing for the royal majesty') is particularly significant in light of the discussion above (000-000) on why this chapter can be regarded as post-1285 (and therefore more likely to be proto-Fordun's fresh prose). The word is used in the *118 chapters from 1285 to 1363* in referring to the trial for treason (*lese maiestatis*) in 1320 (*Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 348), and in a negative context, referring to when Edward III in 1356 *terram Scocie crudeliter intrauit et usque ad villam de Haddingtoune peruenit cum potentia* (*potestate* **FD** and **FH**) *magna et maiestate*, 'cruelly entered the land of Scotland and reached as far as Haddington with great power and majesty' (Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 176: *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 374).

[178] Intriguingly the royal household in this period included William of Fordoun, clerk of the queen's wardrobe, who submitted accounts on 8 March 1332 (Cosmo Innes (ed.), *Facsimiles of National Manuscripts of Scotland*, part II (Edinburgh, 1870), no. XXXII) and appeared (referred to only as a clerk) in an audited account for the period February 1328 to August 1329 as in receipt of a royal charter (*RRS*, v, no.542). I am very grateful to Steve Boardman for originally drawing my attention to this potential relative of John of Fordun.

[179] See above, 000–000.

Vairement's narrative may have been elaborated more subtly. This, however, would inevitably be challenging to detect.

The most obvious departure from Vairement was to continue the narrative beyond Máel Coluim III and St Margaret. A topic for future investigation is to analyse how the surviving part of proto-Fordun—the *107 chapters to 1285*—relates to other material; this, in turn, could offer insights into its construction.[180] The accounts of Alexander III's inauguration and the disputed succession to the earldom of Menteith suggest that blocks of existing text may have been included as they stood.[181] As well as extending beyond St Margaret, the chronological flow was disturbed by doubling back to include 41 chapters on her English royal ancestors. St Margaret thereby seems to represent a new beginning, merging Scottish and English kingship, which on the face of it compromises the narrative of Scotland as an ancient realm distinct from England. Perhaps this is what lay behind Vairement's apparent decision to stop his history with St Margaret.[182] When seen in the context of the 1320s, however, the inclusion of English kings from Alfred the Great to the Norman Conquest can be equated with the way Robert I's ancestry from St Margaret was presented in negotiations with the English in 1321, when it was claimed that kings of Scots were the true heirs of the kingdom of England, unjustly deprived by William duke of Normandy.in 1066.[183] Seen in this light, the inclusion of St Margaret's English ancestors in proto-Fordun can be recognised as an unsubtle appropriation of the Anglo-Saxon past, rather than hesitation about the Scottish kingdom's identity. It was as king of Scots that Robert I claimed the right to rule England.[184]

There can certainly be no doubt about proto-Fordun's commitment to Scotland as an independent realm. The most striking aspect of the work that has come to light is its inclusion of the Declaration of Arbroath and the documents relating to the case at the Curia in 1301 as its final section. These can be seen as offering complementary perspectives on the cause of Scottish independence: the Declaration, written in the voice of barons, is political and enlivened by martial defiance, whereas the documents relating to the case in 1301, finishing with Bisset's *Processus*, is judicially comprehensive, with a wide range of argument and counterargument concluding with a jurisprudential tour-de-force.[185]

It was Edward I's conquest and occupation in 1304, however, not events in 1320 or 1301, which formed the narrative pivot towards this rich array of documentation. The willingness in the linking passage between the Declaration and the dossier of 1301 to force the narrative through chronological contortions in order to achieve this pivot suggests that, for the writer of proto-Fordun, it

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[180] Book V and part of book VI may have originated as a history of St Margaret's English royal ancestors and her Scottish royal successors written in Dunfermline Abbey (on which see above, n.35); it has also been suggested that proto-Fordun shared a source with the Chronicle of Melrose (especially between 1235 and 1249): A. A. M. Duncan, 'Sources and uses of the Chronicle of Melrose, 1165–1297', in Simon Taylor (ed.), *Kings, Clerics and Chronicles in Scotland 500–1297. Essays in Honour of Marjorie Ogilvie Anderson on the Occasion of Her Ninetieth Birthday* (Dublin, 2000), 146–85, at 165–74 (referring to the *107 chapters to 1285* as 'Gesta'). There are also close verbal similarities with an account of Máel Coluim III and St Margaret's descendants in Schøyen MS 679 (see above, n.25) ff.9v–16v.

[181] See above, 000–000 and 000–000. Note also that the Quitclaim of Canterbury (Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 20: *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, 272–3; ii, 267–8) could have been inherited as part of the source shared with Schøyen MS 679 ff.9v–16v (see previous note): it is at ff.15r–16r.

[182] See above, 000–000.

[183] P. A. Linehan, 'A fourteenth-century history of Anglo-Scottish relations in a Spanish Manuscript', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Studies* 48 (1975) 106–22, at 116.

[184] For St Margaret as heir of the kingdom of England as a dimension of Scottish kingship and identity, see Steve Boardman, 'Late medieval Scotland and the Matter of Britain', in Edward J. Cowan, Richard J. Finlay (eds), *Scottish History: The Power of the Past* (Edinburgh, 2002), 47–72, at 62–4.

[185] See the analysis of Bisset's case in Sarah Tebbit, 'Papal pronouncements on legitimate lordship and the formulation of nationhood in early fourteenth-century Scottish writings', *Journal of Medieval History* 40 (2014) 44–62, at 46–55.

formed an essential element of the work. The result is a dramatic juxtaposition of wrongful defeat with justified redemption. The linking passage following the Declaration on its own suggests that Edward I's conquest and occupation in 1304 was the latest event mentioned in proto-Fordun. It is also possible to see the evocation of Robert I as Scotland's saviour after 1304, echoing the Declaration's prose, as originally the final moment in the work's narrative (Skene's *Gesta Annalia* chapter 112)—a powerful counterpart to the documents which would have followed it.

As a work that can readily be envisaged as written in the late 1320s or 1330s, proto-Fordun could be seen as Scotland's first 'national' history in Kersken's sense, providing an account of the kingdom's past from its origins to within living memory (albeit not exactly its approximate time of writing). Perhaps the narrative stopped in 1304—leaving out the reign of Robert I—as a rhetorical gesture, challenging the reader, inspired by the Declaration's prose and buttressed by the juridical force of Bisset's dossier, to respond to a comparable contemporary crisis. Be this as it may, proto-Fordun with its unusual final section can be recognised as a work that was particularly appropriate for a kingdom whose very existence was threatened. On the face of it, this makes it seem all the more remarkable that it almost disappeared, and that Fordun's unfinished work superseded it, except in the few manuscripts where proto-Fordun's books V to VII survived. But this is only true if the histories of Vairement, proto-Fordun, Fordun and Bower are treated primarily as distinct works. It would be more appropriate to recognise them as a series of adaptations and expansions of the initial narrative attributable to Vairement, leading eventually to Bower's work: his *Scotichronicon* not only included Fordun's text as its core, carefully delineated from Bower's own prose, but incorporated all the documents in the final section of proto-Fordun—dispersed chronologically—and much of proto-Fordun's book VI as well as the final section of book V that wasn't already part of Fordun's history. In this context, Bower's respectful treatment of Fordun's prose in books I to V and parts of book VI of his *Scotichronicon* can be seen as only one way that writers represented their relationship to an earlier version of the kingdom's history on the scale of a codex. John of Fordun, in manuscripts of the work before it was extended by Bower, is named obliquely only in a verse colophon as the work's 'compiler'.[186] It is 'Fordun's history' only in a loose sense; he later became its 'author' (*autor*) in Bower's *Scotichronicon*.[187] Vairement is only known because he was cited by Hector Boece and David Chambers in the sixteenth century, leaving the identity of his work so obscure that it was assumed to be a forgery until Nicola Royan reviewed the evidence in 2001.[188] The history of the kingdom continued to evolve beyond Bower's *Scotichronicon*, too: it will be recalled that Bower himself also produced a 40-book version (the 'Book of Coupar Angus'), and was at one stage working on both during the same period.[189]

Seen in this light, Scotland offers a striking instance of where it would be misleading to identify only the earliest extant version as the first 'national' history. Kersken recognised that there were instances where 'one authoritative national chronicle was the model for all later texts', but his study was, of necessity, based on printed editions and published analyses, which can provide only a limited

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[186] The colophon is six lines of verse following the list of chapter headings for book I: see **FC** at https://mss-cat.trin.cam.ac.uk/manuscripts/uv/view.php?n=O.9.9&n=O.9.9#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=13&xywh=789%2C3007%2C2255%2C1313 (accessed on 8 June) and *Chron. Fordun* (Skene), i, p. xiv. The first letter of each word in lines 1 to 3 spell 'Iohannes de Fordvn' (as pointed out in comments added in **FC**, and by Skene, and as indicated in line 4). The colophon reads: *Incipies opus hoc Adonai nomine nostri* / *Exceptum scriptis, dirigat Emanuel* / *Fauces ornate ructent dum verbula nectant* / *Compilatoris nomen superis elementis* / *Construe quem lector precor ora scandere celum* / *Atque Pater Noster offer amore Dei. Amen*. This can be translated as 'You will begin this work, taken from (various) writings, in the name of Our Lord, (a work) Emanuel directs (and) elegant throats might emit, although (it is) mere words woven together. Construct the compiler's name from the initial letters, who I beg the reader pray that he ascends to heaven; and offer the Lord's Prayer to God's love. Amen'.

[187] *Scotichronicon* (Watt), ix, 4.

[188] Nicola Royan, 'Hector Boece and the question of Veremund', *Innes Review* 52 (2001) 42–62.

[189] See above, 000, and also Broun, 'Rethinking medieval Scottish regnal historiography', 27–31.

view of this process.[190] When the situation is as complex as it is for Scotland, then an edition is probably only fully intelligible if the text in each manuscript is studied in its own right (even when the apparatus and appendices are as extensive as in Skene's edition of Fordun's history). The Scottish example provides at least a glimpse of how the development of a 'national' history can be understood as an essentially organic process involving a range of authorial, editorial and scribal activity.[191]

[190] Kersken, 'National chronicles', 121; the earliest Scottish example he was aware of was, quite naturally, Fordun's *Chronica Gentis Scotorum* (*ibid*., 124; Kersken, 'High and late medieval national historiography', 208–9).

[191] This point is developed further in Broun, 'Rethinking medieval Scottish regnal historiography', 41–7.

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