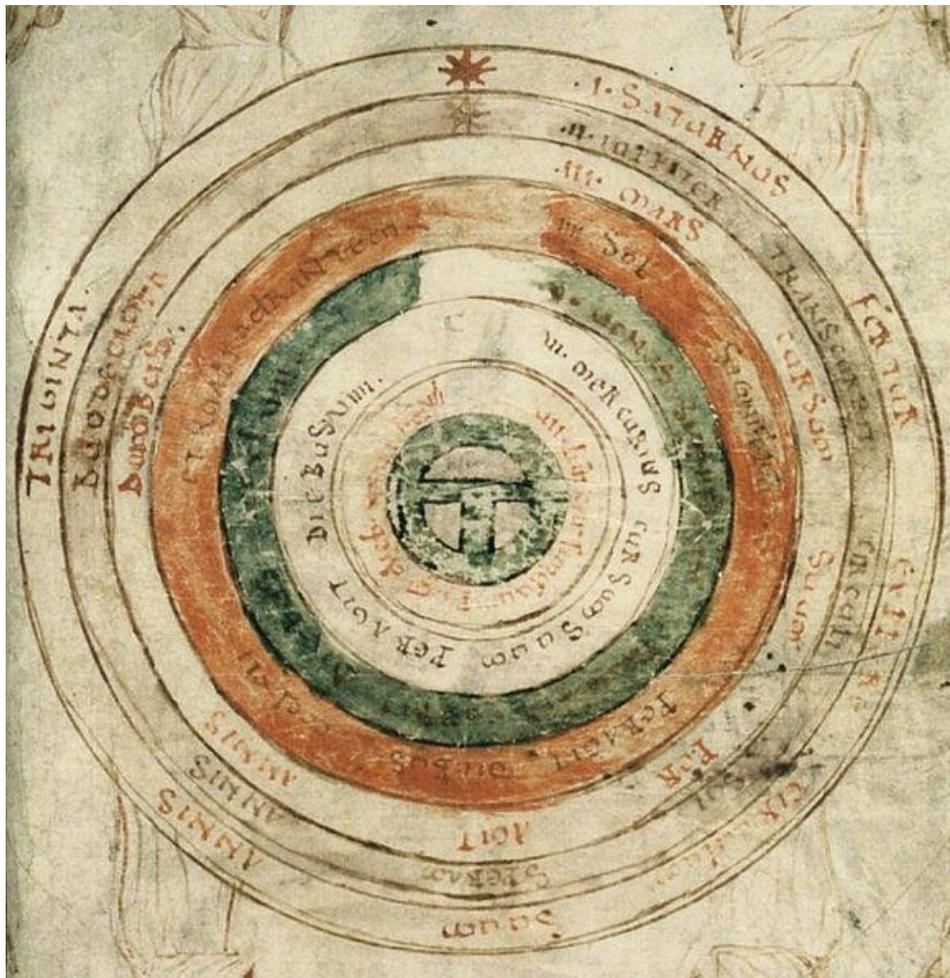


Medieval Midlands 2018

Boundaries and Frontiers in the Middle Ages



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Students in the Arts and Humanities produce valuable contributions to knowledge which, once a degree has been awarded, are often forgotten. High quality research deserves an audience regardless of the level of education it was produced for. The research published by the *Midlands Historical Review* encourages and enables later cohorts of students to build upon previous students' work.

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Introduction: Pushing the Boundaries

JAMIE SMITH

On behalf of co-organisers Jen Caddick, Marco Panato, and Grace Owen

Boundaries and frontiers are a constant in our everyday lives. To open up a newspaper or to login to twitter on any given day is to be bombarded with discussions and debates about the nuances of their navigation. From wide-reaching geopolitical issues such as US President Donald Trump's proposed wall on the US-Mexico border or the "Brexit" negotiations which will determine the future relationship between the UK and the EU, to the personal boundaries we put into place which dictate our daily relationships with others. Boundaries infiltrate our most private acts. For some, they are a remnant of a bygone age, artificially fencing individuals and groups into boxes, and preventing progress. For others, boundaries are sacred safety nets that keep us, our identities, and our futures safe.

Preoccupation with boundaries has increased scholarly interest in historical frontiers. A major part of this is the rise of 'Frontier Studies'. Works such as Daniel Power and Naomi Standen's *Frontiers in Question*, David Abulafia and Nora Berend's *Medieval Frontiers: Concepts and Practices*, and Jonathan Jarrett's *Before the Reconquista: frontier relations in medieval Iberia* have explored the spaces between societies. They have considered whether kingdoms' borders were simple linear boundaries, or large multifaceted zones where realms diffused into one another. Beyond this, they have considered how 'boundaries' impacted those that lived within them.

It was this historiographical growth that the 2018 Medieval Midlands Postgraduate Conference sought to engage with. In contrast to last year's conference, which explored what united people through the concept of 'identity', we chose to consider how medieval people may have been divided by investigating boundaries and frontiers. What boundaries and frontiers did medieval people face? Where did they come from, and who were they imposed upon? And perhaps most importantly, how did medieval people respond to them? To exemplify the sheer breadth of research being undertaken in this field, the conference was not limited merely to traditionally

understood political frontiers, if such things existed, but extended also into the realms of the social, professional, economic, physical, and religious.

We were overwhelmed by the variety of responses which thoroughly represented the often underappreciated complexity of the medieval world. These papers, both individually and as a collective, also embodied the increasingly interdisciplinary nature of medieval studies. No singular methodology was favoured with literature, archaeology, gender theory and emotionology all utilised to build an understanding of where the frontiers of medieval people's lives lay. Over the course of the conference, these papers challenged and built upon one another's understanding of boundaries and frontiers in the medieval world and, in doing so, they shed light upon the vague notions of boundaries and frontiers themselves.

In their simplest form, boundaries are frequently interpreted as concepts and structures that separate people from one another. This impermeable nature is explored in Julia O'Connell's *Emotional Boundaries in Chaucer's Book of the Duchess*. Using Geoffrey Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*, O'Connell looks at two characters who represent fourteenth-century English communities with different understandings of emotions. The narrator character is a learned layman, whilst the Man in Black is in the community of courtly males. Consequently, when the characters meet the narrator misinterprets the Man in Black's emotions, believing he is lovesick when in reality he is grieving. Thus, an emotional boundary prevents effective communication between these groups.

Conversely, other papers depicted boundaries as far more porous. How they could be crossed is the focus of Markus Eldegard Mindrebø's *'The cruel queen her thrall let slip': Boundaries of female agency in the Ynglinga Saga*. Turning to Scandinavia, Mindrebø uses saga literature to explore how women stepped beyond the limits of their power. In contrast to prevailing modern perceptions of historical female agency, he utilises several examples from the *Ynglinga Saga* to discuss high-ranking women who took control of their own fates. Although women faced restrictions on their power, Mindrebø argues these were behavioural, not sexual. Consequently, by exhibiting masculine behaviour Scandinavian women gained access to power that was denied to those who behaved in a feminine manner.

As well as how boundaries and frontiers were or were not crossed, the context within which they persisted, changed and emerged is important for deepening our understanding of both the middle ages and our modern world. These crucial issues are highlighted in Christopher Booth's paper, *Physician, Apothecary, or Surgeon? The medieval roots of professional boundaries in later medical practice*. Booth begins with consideration of the laws of Henry VIII, which attempted to divide the English medical profession into three roles: Physicians, Apothecaries and Surgeons. However, the laws were not completely successful, with significant overlap between these roles persisting. To better understand the development of the early modern context he looks back at medicine in medieval England and other European societies. Booth stresses continuities between the periods, noting that a similar tripartite, but often contradictory, system existed in earlier centuries. Evidently, sometimes the boundaries imposed from above are less revolutionary than they appear on first glance.

Likewise, the strengthening of boundaries between polities is discussed by Callum Watson in '*Their treason undid them*': *Crossing the Boundary between Scottish and English in Barbour's Bruce*. The *Bruce*, a fourteenth century poem written by the Scottish writer John Barbour, emphasises the importance of loyalty, in response to growing Anglo-Scottish hostility. Fearing Scottish desertion to the wealthy English crown Barbour referenced chivalric values, such as loyalty to the king, in an effort to strengthen the boundary between Scottish and English. Thus, Watson presents boundaries as evolving during periods of change. Feeling insecure in a fluctuating world, Barbour sought to affirm boundaries in an effort to secure Scotland's position.

Furthermore, boundaries are not simply no-man's lands between peoples, societies and cultures, but multifaceted places where people could thrive in their own right. In *Frontiers of Faith: The Impact of the Insular Frontier upon the Identity and Development of Furness Abbey*, Christopher Tinmouth looks at how an abbey on the border of multiple polities and cultures managed to flourish. When it was established in 1127, Furness was in a tenuous position, on the peripheries of English control along the Cumbrian coast, far from its preoccupied patron Stephen of Blois (later King Stephen of England). Furness responded by adapting to the cultures and region that surrounded it. For instance, engaging with local families as well as the region's prevailing Irish and Norse culture ensured Furness gained recognition and security.

Rather than being squeezed between larger zones, this monastery made a home for itself by expressing a frontier identity.

Finally, a large number of the papers given innovatively used primary evidence and theories to challenge the clarity of boundaries and frontiers in the Middle Ages, arguing the dividing lines were not particularly clear cut. A prime example of this is Alex Feldman's *Bullion, Barter and Borders in the Rus' Coinless Period*, which uses archaeological evidence to investigate the medieval Rus' boundaries. Many scholars have implicitly accepted the Rus' position as the precursor to the modern Russian state, possessing a clearly defined territory. Entwined with this argument is Rus coinage, which has been used as evidence of Rus statehood. However, Feldman questions the 'nationality' of coinage, arguing that hoards containing coins from a variety of sources imply there was no division between foreign and domestic coins. He supports this view with consideration of silver ingots, known as *grivny*, and barter as instruments of exchange, contesting they too are universal. Feldman successfully divides 'statehood' and exchange into two different topics which should not be assumed to intersect. Instead, he concludes with the assertion that the medieval Rus was not comparable to a defined modern state, but was a dynastic kingship with centres of power built around certain towns, lacking clear frontiers.

The Medieval Midlands 2018 Postgraduate Conference provided an opportunity to negotiate the complex issues associated with historical boundaries and frontiers. This conference proceedings, although just a sample of the high-quality research presented by delegates, aims to provide a fresh perspective on how medieval peoples responded to, created, implemented, and sometimes flagrantly disregarded boundaries and frontiers. It is clear that we are not dealing with a simple phenomenon. However, this collection directly tackles this complexity, containing examples of where boundaries have come from, how they can be traversed, and when they have been misinterpreted. Perhaps the most useful reminder to take away is that the link between complexity, and boundaries and frontiers, is not exclusive to the modern world, but a concern which we have grappled with for millennia.

Emotional Boundaries in Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*

JULIA O'CONNELL

Geoffrey Chaucer (early 1340s – 1400) is widely regarded as the greatest English poet of the Middle Ages. Chaucer worked for most of his life as a civil servant in the turbulent political world of the English royal court, whilst also composing some of the most famous and influential works of English literature, such as the *Canterbury Tales*, *Troilus and Criseyde*, and *The House of Fame*. One of his earliest works, the *Book of the Duchess*, was written between 1368 and 1372 and represents Chaucer's first experimentation with the dream vision form, the amalgamation of comic and courtly themes, and with the poetic capacity of the English language. It is also a text in which Chaucer skilfully draws upon previous literary models and adapts his French sources to create a work of emotional perspicacity. The poem has a complex narrative structure connecting three main elements: a narrator experiencing a melancholic insomnia, an interpretation of Ovid's tale of Ceys and Alcyone, and a poignant dream-narrative in which a Man in Black grieves for the lost Lady Whyte. Through a number of coded references in the poem, the Man in Black and his lady are identified as John of Gaunt and his wife Blanche of Lancaster, who died of the plague in 1368. The poem therefore interweaves the narrator's 'seemingly mundane private frustrations' against the 'public spectacle' of grief suffered by a real member of the royal household, and one of the nobility's most powerful members.¹ Through an analysis of the poem's linguistic and formal features, this paper will demonstrate that the narrator and the Man in Black represent different emotional communities, each with their own standards of emotional expression and belief in the value of

¹ J. C. Fumo, *Making Chaucer's Book of the Duchess: Textuality and Reception* (Cardiff, 2015), p. 2.

similar types of emotion. It will argue that these figures establish boundaries that inhibit effective and affective communication between their respective emotional communities, thereby reflecting the connections between authority and feeling in fourteenth-century England.

The term emotional communities was first introduced by historian Barbara Rosenwein and describes 'groups in which people adhere to the same norms of emotional expression and value – or devalue – the same or related emotions'.² Rosenwein suggests

More than one emotional community may exist – indeed normally does exist – contemporaneously, and these communities may change over time. Some come to the fore to dominate our sources, then recede in importance. Others are almost entirely hidden from us, though we may imagine they exist and even may see their effects on more visible groups.³

Through the depiction of the bookish narrator, who belongs to the community of learned laymen, and the Man in Black, who is part of the community of courtly males, Chaucer's poem reflects the multiplicity of emotional communities that exist within society. Whilst social class impacts upon effective communication between the two characters, they represent distinct emotional communities because they value, perform and understand different types of emotion. Throughout the text, the narrator and Man in Black frequently misinterpret and misunderstand the emotions associated with a different emotional community. The *Book of the Duchess* therefore illustrates the boundaries that limit emotional communication between different communities. The *Book of the Duchess* begins with the voice of the narrator who

² B. Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca, 2007), p. 2.

³ Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, p. 2.

appears to be in the throes of an intense, almost debilitating emotional crisis. The opening lines describe symptoms which exacerbate his suffering, including restless thoughts and an inability to sleep:

I have gret wonder, be this light,
How that I lyve, for day ne nyght
I may nat slepe wel nygh noght;
I have so many an ydel thought
Purely for defaute of slep (1-5).⁴

In his sleeplessness, the narrator seems to be trapped within the contemplation of his immediate troubles; he has no interest in the outside world and asserts that he has 'feling in nothyng' (11) such is his focus on his sorrow and melancholy. Yet the narrator is unable to provide a clear cause of his sorrow, explaining 'Myselfen can not telle why' (34) he is unable to sleep, he only understands his symptoms to be part of 'a sicknesse | That I have suffred this eight yeer' (36-7). The narrator also appears to be unable to self-regulate his feelings or provide a remedy for his sickness. Instead, he relies upon another to act as his cure: 'there is phisicien but oon | That may me hele' (39-40). Chaucer's description creates a vivid and convincing portrait of the suffering lover, especially as insomnia, the eight-year sickness and the implication that there is only one lady who can dispel suffering, are all conventional signs of lovesickness.

However, the opening lines of the *Book of the Duchess* are actually drawn from the start of Jean Froissart's *Le Paradis d'amour*,

⁴ All Chaucer quotations are from *The Riverside Chaucer*, L. Benson et al. (eds.) (Oxford, 2008).

Je sui de moi en grant merveille
Comment je vifs quant tant je veille,
Et on ne poroit en veillant
Trouver de moi plus traveillant,
Car bien saciés que par veillier
Me viennent souvent travillier
Pensées et melancolies
Qui me son tens au coer liies. (*Paradis d'Amour*, 1-8)

[I marvel at how I stay alive, for I lie awake so many nights, and one could not find any man more tormented in his sleepless plight; for, you see, as I lie awake there often come to worry me heavy thoughts and melancholies that are shackles on my heart.]⁵

The characteristics of the narrative voice in the *Book of the Duchess* are not only inspired by, but are directly drawn from the French tradition. Froissart's central ideas, such as the sleepless, melancholic dreamer who is preoccupied by sad thoughts and concerned that he will not survive his sustained period of insomnia, are clearly emulated in the opening section of Chaucer's text. Furthermore, the emphatic 'I' used by the narrator at the very start of the *Book of the Duchess* is a direct translation of Froissart's opening 'Je'. Ardis Butterfield has argued that Froissart's use of the first person mode at the beginning of the poem is 'radical and

⁵ Jean Froissart, *Le Paradis d'Amour*, K. M. Figg, & R. B. Palmer (eds. & trans.), *Jean Froissart: An Anthology of Lyric and Narrative Poetry* (London, 2001).

experimental⁶ as it gives the narrator a far more active and direct function in the text, an innovative feature which is then echoed in Chaucer's work.

The *Book of the Duchess* appropriates the ideas and style of French texts for a specific reason, bringing the subject of emotional experience into direct contact with the literary tradition of *fin amor* (courtly love). Chaucer deliberately draws attention to his French sources and to the instances of translation in the *Book of the Duchess* to demonstrate that the narrator's thoughts and emotions are influenced to such a degree by French courtly literature that it has shaped his emotional expression and understanding. Feelings of loss, sleeplessness and despair are traditional symbols of lovesickness, but crucially, these emotions have been *learnt* from the courtly French texts with which the narrator seems so familiar.

A useful framework for understanding how the narrator has learnt the emotions he describes is Sarah McNamer's view that literary texts act as scripts for the performance of feeling. McNamer suggests the most fruitful way to understand emotions in literary texts is through performance as,

Performance is the means through which the feelings embedded in literary texts became, potentially, performative, thus entering and altering history ... What I suggest is a more imaginative, large-scale experiment with the literal; with conceiving of [...] texts as literal scripts that vigorously enlist *literariness* as a means of generating feelings and putting them into play in history.⁷

McNamer demonstrates that many medieval genres sought to provoke an emotional response in their readers and that texts played a significant role in teaching readers

⁶ A. Butterfield, *The Familiar Enemy: Chaucer, Language, and Nation in the Hundred Years War* (Oxford, 2009), p. 281.

⁷ S. McNamer, 'Feeling', in P. Strohm (ed.), *Middle English* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 245-46.

how to feel.⁸ In the context of *The Book of the Duchess*, considering medieval texts as 'scripts for the performance of feeling' facilitates an understanding of the narrator's emotional engagement with French texts.⁹ Lovesickness and loss are descriptively performed in Froissart's text and have then become performative for Chaucer's narrator. French texts act as emotion scripts for the narrator's understanding, interpretation and expression of feeling. Chaucer is therefore exploring the ways in which literary texts can affect and shape emotional states.

The reading of literary texts is an essential part of the narrator's emotional community. He is part of a new community of the 'literate layman who was not a clerk, the courtier who was not a knight; [...] not poor but not rich; a salaried man, not landed gentry'.¹⁰ For the literate layman, access to manuscripts and literary texts was essential to their position within the court and to their sense of authority. Classical and French texts were the sources from which these new men learnt about how to operate in the courtly world, and where this emotional community learnt their emotional regimes and vocabulary.

Therefore, when the narrator seeks a solution for his melancholy and insomnia he asks his servant to 'recche me a booke, / A romaunce, and he it me tooke / To rede and dryve the night away' (47-49). At this point in the poem the narrator offers his own unique reading of a parallel narrative of grief in Ovid's tale of Ceys and Alcyone, after which he immediately proceeds to fall asleep 'upon my booke' (274). He wakes within the dream, finding himself in a chamber

⁸ S. McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion*, (Philadelphia, 2010), p. 2

⁹ S. McNamer, *Affective Meditation*, p. 2.

¹⁰ D. Brewer, *Tradition and Innovation in Chaucer* (New York, 1982), p. 71.

Ful wel depeynted, and with glas
Were al the wyndowes wel yglased
Ful clere, and nat an hole ycrased,
That to beholde hyt was gret joye.
For hooly al the story of Troye
Was in the glasinge ywrought thus
[...]
And al the walles with colours fine
Were peynted, both text and glose,
Of al the Romaunce of the Rose. (322-334)

The narrator wakes to find himself in a dream chamber in which light streams through stained glass images of the story of Troy and the walls are decorated with paintings of the French dream vision, the *Roman de la Rose*. The narrator's dream is therefore refracted through the lens of classical and French literature. The act of reading has sent the dreamer-narrator to sleep, but, as the images within the chamber demonstrate, reading has also permeated the narrator's dream as 'therwith even | Me mette so inly swete a sweven' (273-4). The narrator moves from the reading of an Ovidian tale, to a chamber filled with literary images and finally outside into an Edenic landscape drawn directly from the romance tradition. The dream chamber demonstrates that literature has been internalised by the narrator to shape his understanding of the world. The inclusion of this literary space, set between the narrator's waking and dreaming state, is key to the narrative's literariness and

suggests the narrator views emotions through the lens of literature, specifically through the lens of French texts.

The narrator then moves from the transitional space of the dream-chamber to a forest in which he eventually encounters the Man in Black. The Man in Black is described as having 'y-turned his bak' (446), 'he heng his hede adounne' (461) and instead of the ruddiness of good health, his skin is 'Ful pitous, pale' (471). The Man in Black then proceeds to speak a complainte 'without song' (472):

I have of sorwe so grete woon
That joye gete I never noon,
Now that I see my lady bright,
Which I have loved with al my might,
Is fro me deed and is agoon.
Allas, Deeth, what aileth thee
That thou noldest have taken me
Whan thou took my lady swete
That was so fair, so fresh, so free,
So good that men may wel y-see
Of al goodness she had no mete! (475-86)

The Man in Black explicitly states that his lady is 'deed and is agoon' (480) and that death has 'took my lady swete' (483), yet the narrator fails to understand this spoken complaint to be a statement of death, loss and grief. The narrator equates the Man in

Black's declarations with the conventions of lovesickness stemming from unrequited love or an absent lover. This misreading of the Man in Black's emotions demonstrates that though the narrator reads and recognises literary language describing emotional distress, he appears to be unable to understand emotional vocabulary when it is detached from the written page and the literary context of *fin amor*.

However, as soon as the Man in Black has finished his complaint, the narrator is shown to be a far more observant reader of emotion. In great detail, the narrator describes the ways in which emotional pain is written directly onto the Man in Black's body. Chaucer's use of medieval medical language 'reveals the painful embodied emotion that spurs the Knight's voiced lament' and suggests the body acts as a signifier of authentic, internal feeling.¹¹ The Man in Black's spirits or humors withdraw and his blood is driven by his sorrowful thoughts to move to the heart, the main organ of emotion. His grief then causes the skin to change colour, robbing it of a healthy rosiness and turning it green and pale as his limbs are drained of blood. It is the description of embodied emotions (488–499), rather than the preceding complaint (475–86) which allows the narrator to comprehend the extent to which the Man in Black is suffering and of the potentially harmful internal bodily and mental practices which are being aggravated by his sorrow.¹²

Yet, rather than connecting the Man in Black's embodied emotions with the earlier declaration of his lady's death, the narrator instead interprets these emotions as a signifier of the Man in Black's authority, power and courtliness, describing him

¹¹ R. McNamara, 'Wearing Your Heart on Your Face: Reading Lovesickness and the Suicidal Impulse in Chaucer', *Literature and Medicine* 33 (2015), p. 262.

¹² R. McNamara, 'Wearing Your Heart on Your Face', p. 263.

as a 'wonder wel-faringe knight' (452). This is because the authority of the emotional community of courtly males was practiced through emotional performance. The performance of emotions such as anger, love and sorrow operated 'to inform and express the relationships between cooperating hierarchies of authority and to signal and affirm the rights, responsibilities, and authority of men to regulate communities that ranged from the household to the spiritual, the urban, and the national.'¹³ Therefore, whilst the narrator understands that the Man in Black's embodied emotions signal sorrow, he is unable to equate them to the death of Lady Whyte because the imbalance in the authority between the two emotional communities acts as a boundary impeding the narrator's successful reading of the Man in Black's noble emotions.

To conclude, the narrator has learnt the feelings of lovesickness he professes to feel at the beginning of the poem from reading the literary texts of *fin'amor*. In his observation of the Man in Black, the narrator transcribes the feelings and tropes of lovesickness onto the Man in Black's emotional experience. The narrator's perspective has been so shaped by the emotional vocabulary of *fin'amor* that he creates an emotional boundary that inhibits his understanding of the Man in Black's deeply felt grief. The two characters are not only separated by social standing, but by their understanding and expression of emotion. The narrator attempts to console the Man in Black over the rest of the poem, whilst the rather brisk concluding line 'This was my sweven; now it is doon' (1334) leaves the reader to consider how much the narrator has learnt from his dream. It is a concluding line that cements the emotional boundary separating the narrator from the experience of the Man in Black.

¹³ S. Broomhall (ed.), *Authority, Gender and Emotions in Late Medieval and Early Modern England* (New York, 2015), p. 13.

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‘The cruel queen her thrall let slip’: Boundaries of Female Agency in the *Ynglinga Saga*

MARKUS ELDEGARD MINDREBØ

Introduction

The Old Norse sagas, written primarily in Iceland and Norway in the thirteenth century, represent a unique branch of Medieval European literature. They are distinct in that they are mostly written in the vernacular rather than Latin, but also for a variety of other reasons, including the fact that they contain a multitude of strong and independent female characters. This paper will examine the women of the *Ynglinga saga*. Based on the semi-legendary Scandinavian poem *Ynglingatal*, it makes up the first part of Snorri Sturluson’s *Heimskringla*, the most renowned of the Old Norse kings’ sagas. It primarily consists of a genealogical summary of the family known as the Ynglingar. As a narrative centred around kingship and war, and as part of a masculine, sometimes misogynistic genre, it unfortunately has few mentions of women. The women who are present, however, show a scope for agency that is far greater than might be expected at the time of writing, as many do not rely on men, but rather determine their own fates. What these women have in common are masculine behaviour and ideals, and this article will build on existing work on gender ambiguity in early Medieval Scandinavia to show how biological sex was overridden by fulfilling expectations of social behaviour. This stands in contrast to the late Medieval period and its considerably stricter and more misogynistic gender hierarchy, caused by the increasing influence of the Christian clergy.

Although there are clear methodological issues with attempting to use semi-fictional heroines to explain a society’s broader features, this approach does provide the opportunity to use the agency of individual characters to forge a more generalised understanding of what the role of many high-ranking women might have been, as well as to explore the attitudes of the writer himself. The two central arguments of this article are that, in contrast to the later sources, the *Ynglinga saga* suggests it was possible in early medieval Scandinavian society and ideology for women to possess considerable agency and power, and that the only boundary to actually wielding it was engagement in masculine behaviour.

Mythological Beginnings

The beginning of the saga is essentially a rewriting of Norse mythology in Christian terms where the old gods are seen as powerful human progenitors of the royal dynasty rather than divine beings. In these mythological beginnings, women, for instance Frigga, Freyja and Skaði, are described in rather disparaging terms, without any form of agency whatsoever. However, one could argue that Snorri's treatment of women at the beginning of the saga is not primarily about misogyny, but due to his viewpoint as a Christian historian looking back on the pagan past. Such an argument is strengthened by the writer's similarly disparaging treatment of the men. This introduction to the old gods is an attempt to denounce paganism and prove that the *aesir*, the prime Norse deities, were not gods, but mortal men and women, just as significant or insignificant as those who came after them.

Into the Line of Ynglinga

After the mythological roots of the saga, the tale proceeds into the line of the Ynglingar themselves, supposedly descended from Freyr, Freyja's brother. As the first few generations are primarily concerned with war and government, there are very few mentions of women. However, when we arrive at the reign of Freyr's supposed great-grandson Vanlandi, women are suddenly placed at the forefront. Vanlandi has apparently left just after making his young wife pregnant and has not returned after ten years. Driva, his wife, then opts to request the sorceress Huld to kill Vanlandi. Huld complies and soon the king lies dead. This story is virtually repeated in the next generation, when the sons of king Vísurr, himself the son of Vanlandi and Driva, asks Huld to use her magic to help them get rid of their father. Huld again agrees, but this time on a grave condition: that from here on, there will always be kinslaying among the Ynglingar.¹ The two brothers agree to this, and they burn their father inside a house, aided by Huld's sorcery. It is important to note that

¹ *Heimskringla*, F. Jónsson (ed.) (København, 1911), pp. 11-12.

no woman is being blamed for the beginning of the Ynglingar's kinslaying; it is presented as the logical result of the two brothers' actions.

Further, one should note that Huld does not actually do anything. She agrees to kill two kings, but in the first instance there is no description of the king's death, and in the second, the ones who made the request also perform the murder themselves. There is, however, great respect for, and belief in, Huld's power. She is sought out by high-ranking people to do, or at least bless, their dirty work. In addition to that, the reader of this saga will notice that she faces no condemnation for her actions; the blame for the murder and the kinslaying to come is all on the two brothers.

Although there is very little fantastical about the presentation of Huld, most women of the saga are presented more realistically. Unlike Huld, they are also all kings' wives, for the simple reason that queens would be the most important and visible female members of remembered history. The first of these is Skjálf, wife of king Agni. She became the king's wife when Agni killed her father and seized her by force; not the beginning of a loving marriage. Just a year later, Skjálf went on to orchestrate her husband's hanging.² There are many cases throughout the saga literature of women asking male confidantes to perform similar actions, but Skjálf is remarkable in that she personally places the noose around Agni's neck. She is thus the main agent not just in the planning of her husband's murder, but also in the execution of it. Furthermore, she is not placed in a negative light at all, as her actions are apparently justified by the way in which Agni captured her.

A less violent case is provided by the mother and daughter Álof and Yrsa. Álof is known as *in ríka*, 'the mighty', implying she held a degree of power.³ Yrsa is known from a multitude of semi-legendary sources including *Beowulf*, and her story focuses on her being stolen away from her husband Aðils by a king named Helgi, with whom she proceeds to have a son. Three years later her mother Álof arrives to tell her that Helgi is actually her father. Yrsa then leaves her son and returns home to Aðils, apparently living happily ever after. These women show little sign of agency *per se*, but it is important to note that again, Snorri does not judge them. Álof and

² *Heimskringla*, Jónsson, p. 15.

³ *Heimskringla*, Jónsson, p. 22.

Yrsa are consistently shown as faithful and loyal women without any malicious intent. In the *Saga of Hrolf Kraki*, on the other hand, Álof plants Yrsa with Helgi and deliberately avoids revealing their relation, which could be seen as a typically misogynistic characterisation of female cunning and deception.⁴ It is also worth noting that while the *Saga of Hrolf Kraki* was written later than the *Ynglinga saga*, Snorri also bases his account on the earlier *Skjöldunga saga*, implying that misogynistic constructions were primarily imposed later in the Old Norse tradition.

However, there are certainly malicious women in Snorri's text as well. A particularly interesting case is provided by Ása, daughter of Ingjaldr Illrádi ("bad ruler"), who was responsible for the deaths of both her husband's brother and her husband. She was apparently given the epithet Illrádi, just like her father, and while she is the only woman of this saga who is advertised as thoroughly unpleasant without any form of justification, she is here just following in the footsteps of Ingjaldr.⁵ Ása is presented as the female equivalent and partner in crime of her father, and there is thus little separation in the personality and attributes of these two characters, regardless of their different sexes.

Finally, the last important woman of the *Ynglinga saga*, and arguably the most historical, is Ása Haraldsdottir, the mother of Halfdan the Black and thus grandmother of Harald Fairhair, the first king of Norway. Ása is the strongest example of female agency extending beyond normal boundaries in this saga. Just like Skjálf in the beginning, she had her husband Guðrøðr the Hunter murdered as vengeance for taking her against her will.⁶ Then she travelled back to her father's kingdom in Agder with her young son, and became queen regnant.⁷ There are also theories which identify her as the woman buried with a ship in the exceptionally rich Oseberg burial in Vestfold in southern Norway.⁸

There is also an interesting point to be made about condemnation in regards to Ása. In the skaldic poem about Guðrøðr's death in the 1844 translation, the line

⁴ *Hrolfs saga kraka*, F. Jónsson (ed.) (København, 1904), pp. 28-29.

⁵ *Heimskringla*, Jónsson, p. 30.

⁶ *Heimskringla*, Jónsson, p. 34.

⁷ *Heimskringla*, Jónsson, p. 36.

⁸ For an assessment of this theory, see J. Jesch, *Women in the Viking Age*, (Woodbridge, 1991), p. 34; a more recent iteration can be found in P. Holck, 'The Oseberg Ship Burial, Norway: New Thoughts On the Skeletons From the Grave Mound', *European Journal of Archaeology*, 9 (2006), pp. 185-210.

about Ása sending her slave to kill Guðrøðr has been translated as “the cruel queen her thrall let slip.”⁹ This obviously implies textual denunciation of Ása, but in reality there is no equivalent to this quote in the original Old Norse text. It is simply a misogynist construction. This leads to the implication that beliefs and theories about the role of women in the Viking world have been shaped by modern misogyny. In their social reality, women may very well have had fewer boundaries, and faced significantly less societal judgment, than the modern perception of the era suggests.

Conclusion

The women of the *Ynglinga saga* show a significant amount of agency in political and social contexts, even compared to the later sections of *Heimskringla*. The women mentioned in this article are themselves actors, whereas the later sagas focus on the so-called ‘inciter’, a woman who goads her male relatives into taking action. A woman like the infamous Gunhildr, wife of Eric Bloodaxe, shows considerable agency, but it lies primarily in influencing men, not in commanding or taking personal action. By contrast, women from the *Ynglinga saga*, like Skjolf and Ása Haraldsdottir, are themselves the masters of their own fate, and are not reliant on the aid of men to determine it. Often they are subjugated and mistreated by men, but in those cases they take personal revenge, and are seen as justified in doing so.

The female agency of the *Ynglinga saga* is seemingly also a form of power neither receiving nor requiring any form of justification, thus suggesting that the saga refers to a time when women’s agency was more widely framed than in later periods. Typically, power in the Middle Ages was primarily male, and female power and agency on the political level had to be justified in some manner. Examples of these justifications would be being the sole heir to a prestigious lineage or being the mother of a young male heir. There is no mention of either of these in the *Ynglinga saga*. It is also apparent that this period held considerably less opportunity for female regencies, or regencies in general, as early Scandinavia generally did not accept boy kings. One can see the development of this rising trend in the later Middle Ages, with queens such as Agnes and Margrethe of Denmark ruling kingdoms on behalf of their

⁹ *The Heimskringla, or Chronicle of the Kings of Norway*, S. Laing (trans.) (London, 1844), p. 260.

sons, but at the time of Snorri's writing there had been remarkably few regents. This suggests a change in female power, from a time when masculine women could wield real power in their own right, to one when they could only wield it on behalf of men.

It is clear, then, that if there was any hindrance barring women from political agency, it was the cultural construct of femininity. There was no rule or law barring women from acting on the political stage, but they had to employ masculine behaviour, they had to take what they wanted, and they had to show signs of masculine virtues such as courage, determination and ambition. An excellent theory regarding female power and agency was offered more than two decades ago by Carol Clover, who suggested a blurring of gender divisions in early Medieval Scandinavia.¹⁰ In this society, according to Clover, the focus was not on whether one was a man or a woman, but whether one had masculine or feminine qualities, implying a gender binary system different from our own. The existing boundaries restricting women were thus placed on them as a result of femininity, not because they belonged to the female sex. This would be replaced by a more typical Medieval gender binary, and a clear division between men and women, in the late Medieval period, when the gradual Christian conversion of Scandinavia was brought to completion and the Church gained in power.

One could thus ask what Snorri's motives are for presenting women in the way that he does. In much medieval literature, powerful women in leading roles are placed there in order to be criticised and shown in a negative light, thus seemingly proving that women should not hold such positions. In the *Ynglinga saga*, however, there is no indication of such scrutinising. Snorri's description of the aforementioned women and their actions, are neutral at worst. On the other hand, one could theorise that Snorri was actually trying to paint a realistic picture without any judgment. To paraphrase Norwegian historian Sverre Bagge, Snorri's methods were relatively close to those of modern historians, and he most likely believed himself to be reconstructing history in a good way.¹¹ Following from this, one could argue that medieval Scandinavians believed the *Ynglinga saga* and the women in it to be representations of historical truth.

¹⁰ C. Clover, 'Regardless of Sex: Men, Women, and Power in Early Northern Europe', *Speculum*, 68 (1993), pp. 363-87.

¹¹ S. Bagge, *Society and politics in Snorri Sturluson's Heimskringla* (Berkeley, 1991), pp. 57-60.

Modern scholarship has established that this particular saga is highly untrustworthy, and one should not take its word for any particular event or person. However, when Snorri shows these women as powerful characters with real agency, he implies there were few solid boundaries on female agency in early medieval Scandinavia, or at least that the boundaries were flexible, and the *Ynglinga saga* provides a small insight into an ideology of gender and power that investigation into the more trustworthy sagas will expand upon. Women in a society as heavily masculine as medieval Scandinavia were very much underprivileged in most social and political contexts when compared to men, and many other sources show distinctly misogynistic tendencies. However, textual evidence like this suggests that the potential for a woman to have the same amount of agency as a man, and for this to result in social acceptance, was indeed present.

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Physician, Apothecary, or Surgeon? The Medieval Roots of Professional Boundaries in Later Medical Practice

CHRISTOPHER BOOTH

Introduction

Medicine, as we conceive of it today, is a highly professionalised occupation which requires that an individual undertake extensive training and qualification to be allowed to practice it. This modern conception of medicine relies on defined roles and distinctions, boundaries if you will, between all kinds of medical practitioner that society can access; physicians, pharmacists, nurses, midwives, psychiatrists, and surgeons to name but a few.

This idea, that one type of doctor should treat one type of problem, has existed in some form for at least 500 years in Britain, and likely even longer than that. Although it did not become official policy until the sixteenth century, when Henry VIII started to formalise these distinctions, as we will see throughout this paper, legislation or proclamation, and actual practice, were often divorced from one another. To understand where the supposed divisions of the post-medieval period came from, this paper will first define the state of medical practice during the early post-medieval period, specifically from the reign of Henry VIII to the end of the first quarter of the seventeenth century. It will then explore the medieval antecedents of those practices in an attempt to explain how the latter situation arose and will compare them to the development of medical professions elsewhere in Europe where the professional divisions evolved differently.

Early-Modern Foreground

From the middle of the sixteenth century all three branches of medicine had legally defined rights and duties. Physicians advised and prescribed medications, apothecaries compounded and dispensed those remedies, and surgeons performed all physical intervention from bloodletting to amputation. This system was a

legislative attempt to create a hierarchy of legitimate practice based on supposed levels of skill and knowledge.¹ These rights and duties originated with Henry VIII, who amongst other things allowed the establishment of what would later become the Royal College of Physicians in London in 1518, and in 1540 approved the merger of the Company of Barbers and the Guild of Surgeons, and gave the Physicians the right to inspect apothecary shops for the quality of their medicines, as well as the ability to prosecute those who practiced physic and therefore impinged on their monopoly.²

A good example of this tripartite thinking comes from the writings of William Bullein who stated that

*The apothecary must first serve God. He must foresee the end, be cleanly, and pity the poor. His place of dwelling and shop must be cleanly, to please the sense withal. His garden must be at hand with plenty of herbs, seeds and roots. He must read Dioscorides. He must have his mortars, stills, pots, filters, glasses, boxes, clean and sweet. He must have two places in his shop, one for most clean physick and the base place for chirurgic stuff. He is neither to decrease or diminish the physician's prescriptions... He is to meddle only in his own vocation, and to remember that his office is only the physician's cook.*³

This widely quoted description emphasises the subservient position of apothecaries to the more learned physicians, but also notes that they should be literate, 'Latinated', and be able to perform some minor surgical procedures in addition to their duties as the medical cook.⁴ The quote effectively outlines the place of the apothecary under the tripartite system of medicine that was practiced, at least nominally, at this time; they were theoretically limited to dispensing medicines prescribed by physicians and minor bloodletting.

¹ I. Loudon, *Medical Care and the General Practitioner 1750-1850* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 19-21.

² G. Sonnedecker, *Kremers and Urdang's History of Pharmacy* (Philadelphia, 1963), p. 93.

³ Original Source Unknown. Quoted in C. Schmeidler, *Historical Survey of Pharmacy in Great Britain* (London, 1944), p. 32.

⁴ D. L. Cowen, 'The Foundations of Pharmacy in the United States', *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 236 (1976), p. 83.

However, throughout the early modern period there was always poor separation of the different classes of trained medical practitioner in England.⁵ For example, the idea that learned medicine was only practiced by physicians is refuted by the membership and leadership of the Barber-Surgeon's Company in the sixteenth century. These were 'men of sound learning and assured skill' who discriminated upon which volumes from recent medical literature were worth translating, making high quality works of continental medical authors accessible to an English audience, and who cited Galen as evidence that the division of physic and surgery was a false one.⁶ It is unlikely however that all barbers, those who practised phlebotomy, dentistry, and hair cutting, were literate and this may only be a claim that can be made about barber-surgeons, who practised more invasive procedures.

It is clear then that this was a messy system with poorly defined boundaries at the level of actual treatment, and was made even more indistinct in provincial cities and rural areas when the 1542 'Act that persones being no comen Surgeons maie mynistrer medicines owtwarde' was passed, entitling 'every person being the King's subject having knowledge and experience of the nature of herbs, roots and waters to use and minister, according to their cunning, experience and knowledge', effectively allowing anyone to provide medicines to patients in their communities.⁷ Furthermore, in rural areas across Britain the tripartite medical hierarchy that the Royal College of Physicians was in part established to protect did not exist; one practitioner was usually responsible for all aspects of medical care and since market towns rarely had formally trained physicians this usually fell to the resident apothecary.⁸ In smaller towns and villages an apothecary would likely not be a guild member or even

⁵ Sonnedecker, *Kremers and Urdang's History of Pharmacy*, p. 93; W. F. Bynum, *Science and the Practice of Medicine in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 6; S. King, 'Accessing Drugs in the Eighteenth-Century Regions', in L. H. Curth (ed.), *From Physick to Pharmacology: Five Hundred Years of British Drug Retailing* (Aldershot, 2006), p. 50.

⁶ M. Pelling & C. Webster, 'Medical Practitioners', in C. Webster (ed.), *Health, Medicine, and Mortality in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 175-176.

⁷ Parliament of England. *An Acte that persones being no comen Surgeons maie mynistrer medicines owtwarde*, 34&35 H. VIII, C. 8. (1542); Sonnedecker, *Kremers and Urdang's History of Pharmacy*, p. 94.

⁸ Loudon, *Medical Care*, pp. 20-21; R. Porter, *Disease, Medicine and Society in England 1550-1860* (London, 1987), p. 41.

formally trained, and often treated pharmaceutical practice as a supplement to their usual businesses, often grocery or tavern-keeping.⁹

Despite the sometimes confused and often blurry distinctions between medical practitioners, the legislative attempts in this century to 'professionalise' medicine and create or maintain the supposedly distinct character of those different groups of medical practitioners cannot have sprung from nowhere. The rest of this paper will examine the situation in the preceding centuries and will try and explain how it came to this tangled web of practice and legislation.

Medieval Boundaries

The quantity and variety of medical practitioners in the medieval period was overwhelming; they were literally everywhere, from members of the mendicant orders, to the village blacksmith who would also pull teeth. What might be termed the 'professional medical establishment' included a small group of university educated physicians and a much larger group of apprenticeship trained surgeons, barbers and barber-surgeons whose practice was organised by urban craft guilds.¹⁰ These groups began, in the later medieval period, to feel threatened by specialist retailers who were most commonly called apothecaries.

It is important to note that these identifiers of medical practitioners in the medieval period are not fixed and do not necessarily refer to a specific 'trade'. The same individual might be referred to as a surgeon, apothecary, grocer or by various other titles depending on who is writing and for what purpose. In addition, many practitioners also practiced non-medical trades, with medicine forming only a part of their income, a situation that continued into the eighteenth century.¹¹ In Italy for example, apothecaries sold to a wide variety of patrons from sick patients, to doctors, to painters (who they made pigments for) and so they should not be simply analysed as proto-pharmacists as a modern person would understand pharmacy.¹²

⁹ M. Lindemann, *Medicine and Society in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge 1999), p. 216.

¹⁰ C. Rawcliffe, *Medicine & society in later medieval England* (Stroud, 1995), p. 218.

¹¹ Loudon, *Medical Care*, pp. 11-12.

¹² D. Gentilcore, 'Introduction to The World of the Italian Apothecary: Apothecaries, "Charlatans" and the Medical Marketplace in Italy, 1400-1750', *Pharmacy in History* 45 (2003), p. 91-92.

Furthermore, apothecaries were not the only ones selling medicines; charlatans, folk healers, and others were trying to create for themselves a position and social identity, at least in part, by providing medications.¹³

The varied terminology for different medical practitioners are therefore unreliable indicators of the precise practice of an individual. However, in the absence of any additional evidence that might provide a more detailed understanding of a named individual's practice it remains reasonable to crudely divide medical practitioners in the medieval period into the same four broad groups as existed in later centuries; physicians, here meaning university educated individuals; 'master surgeons' and barber-surgeons; and apothecaries, a category which can include anyone who compounded and dispensed consumable medicinal products.

Physicians & Master Surgeons

The two most distinct groups within the medical practitioners of the medieval period were the physicians and the master surgeons. Both groups claimed higher levels of knowledge than other practitioners though only physicians had a university education. The requirement of a medical degree to be considered a physician meant that there were very few physicians in England in the medieval period compared to the other medical practitioners. Master Surgeons were not necessarily more skilled technically than the barber-surgeons, but distinguished themselves on the basis of prestige and wore similar long robes to physicians despite not being university educated.¹⁴ Irrespective of the apparently distinct nature of these two groups there were significant overlaps in their medical practice. These overlaps occurred between the practice of physicians and master surgeons, and between master surgeons and barber-surgeons. They even occurred more rarely between the practice of physicians and apothecaries.

An illustrative example of this is John Arderne. He was a master surgeon who happily acknowledged making use of remedies from 'non-learned' practitioners.

¹³ Gentilcore, 'Introduction to The World of the Italian Apothecary', p. 93.

¹⁴ V. L. Bullough, 'Training of the Nonuniversity-Educated Medical Practitioners in the Later Middle Ages', *Journal of the History of Medicine*, 14 (1959), p. 447.

Peter Jones suggests therefore, that he is a typical witness for the medieval period, especially since he extensively recorded his own practice, particularly related to treating *fistula in ano*.¹⁵ Arderne practiced surgery in Newark, Nottinghamshire, between 1349 and 1370, before moving to London. He described himself as a master surgeon, and in fact Jones suggests that he seems to claim equal status to university educated physicians in his understanding of the 'causes and courses of disease.'¹⁶ This is possibly because he is thought to have read Hippocrates and Galen amongst other classical and Arabic medical authors while he studied briefly at the University of Montpellier, though he did not receive a medical degree.¹⁷ All of Arderne's writings show that he used herbs alongside his physical interventions and adjusted his prescriptions based on the individual circumstances of the patient, both health wise and economically.¹⁸ The list of remedies that he suggests include some herbs which are not native to England and would have to have been bought at an apothecary, others include parts of chicken and hare, as well as the native herb walwort which Arderne praises highly.¹⁹

In England the number of Master Surgeons were consistently few, there were only seventeen members of the London Surgeon's Company in 1435.²⁰ Outside of the capital there are almost no references to surgeons, only barber-surgeons. This small number could likely not afford to specialise too much in their practice, which accounts for their use of herbs and their encroachment on the status and prestige of university educated physicians. This also perhaps explains why the Royal College, after its establishment, was so invested in controlling other types of medical practitioners.

¹⁵ P.M. Jones, 'Herbs and the Medieval Surgeon', in P. Dendle & A. Touwaide (eds.), *Health and Healing from the Medieval Garden* (Woodbridge, 2008), p. 163.

¹⁶ Jones, 'Herbs and the Medieval Surgeon', p. 164.

¹⁷ John Arderne, *Treatises of fistula in ano, haemorrhoids and clysters*, D. Power (ed.) (London, 1910), p. 110.

¹⁸ Jones, 'Herbs and the Medieval Surgeon', pp. 163 & 165.

¹⁹ Jones, 'Herbs and the Medieval Surgeon', p. 167.

²⁰ Bullough, 'Training of the Nonuniversity-Educated Medical Practitioners', p.447.

Barber-Surgeons and Apothecaries

For all but the wealthiest sections of medieval and early modern society, treatment took place in the home, or at the hands of a local wise or cunning person who had inherited knowledge of traditional herbs and cures.²¹ However, for those who could access more formal medical care they likely went to an apothecary or to a barber-surgeon. These apprentice-trained groups treated the widest variety of individuals even though under the guild system they were restricted in which kinds of medicine they could practice, if any.

In England there are records of Barbers' guilds from 1308 and within these guilds were two types of practitioner; those who practiced barbering, mainly phlebotomy and hair-cutting, and those who were barber-surgeons who also practiced more invasive surgical interventions such as lancing boils, excising small cysts and tumours, and treating minor wounds.²² Barber-surgeons increased their standards and the quality of their practice throughout the medieval period and in some ways moved ahead of the master surgeons, due to both being more numerous and more willing to treat a greater variety of patients for less money.²³

The first mention of apothecaries in England came in the Pipe Rolls of 1180 and apothecaries are recorded in urban centres including York, Hereford, and Nottingham as well as London.²⁴ The first reference specifically to an apothecary's shop in England, however, occurs in London in 1345, under the auspices of the Guild of Pepperers, which became part of the Company of Grocers in the same century.²⁵ In the 1447 patent rolls the Grocers were explicitly given inspection privileges over all shops which sold drugs, ointments and spices. In other words, all

²¹ M. J. Dobson, *Contours of death and disease in early modern England* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 266; R. Porter, *The Greatest Benefit to Mankind: A Medical History of Humanity from Antiquity to the Present* (London, 1997), pp. 281-284.

²² Bullough, 'Training of the Nonuniversity-Educated Medical Practitioners', p.453.

²³ Bullough, 'Training of the Nonuniversity-Educated Medical Practitioners', p. 456.

²⁴ Schmeidler, *Historical Survey of Pharmacy in Great Britain*, p. 33; J. G. L. Burnby 'Local Studies of the English Apothecary: Part 1 - The Changing Role of the English Apothecary', *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology* 24 (1989), p. 17.

²⁵ J. Grier, *A History of Pharmacy* (London, 1937), p. 38; P. G. Homan, 'The development of community pharmacy', in S. Anderson (ed.), *Making medicines: a brief history of pharmacy and pharmaceuticals* (London, 2005), p. 117.

of the products primarily sold by apothecaries.²⁶ In the medieval period there appears to have been few retailers who were specialised enough to be called apothecaries outside of the university towns and London. Most were likely called grocers or mercers depending on the century, and the guild structure to which they belonged.²⁷ Though they were limited from legally practicing medicine many people bought medicines from apothecaries based on self-diagnosis, and as there was no such thing as a 'prescription only' medicine almost anything could be bought 'over the counter'.²⁸

It would be expected that the barber-surgeons would have just as much need to stock and dispense herbal and other medical remedies as their more prestigious counterparts. Descriptions of later medieval and early post-medieval apothecaries' shops, such as that of William Bullein which was referenced earlier, further make it clear that apothecaries were expected to perform a similar range of basic surgical procedures as barbers in earlier centuries.²⁹ Despite the guild structure which marked the boundaries of these two trades, they were still permeable. This arrangement is echoed in the post-medieval period when the Barber-Surgeons guilds gained in their control over the practice of surgery, and the Apothecaries, in 1617, were given Royal Assent to form their own company in London, though this marked a stronger division in their practices than existed earlier.³⁰

Comparison to Europe

In Europe these professional boundaries were, in general, echoed. There were divisions between the practices of physicians, apothecaries, and surgeons, though in each case these boundaries are designated and enforced differently. The two most interesting comparisons are Italy and France, since in Iberia and Northern Europe medical faculties at universities and formal medical guilds did not develop until the

²⁶ H. Rolleston, 'The Historical Relations of Pharmacy and Physic', *The Pharmaceutical Journal* 139 (1937).

²⁷ Bullough, 'Training of the Nonuniversity-Educated Medical Practitioners', p. 457.

²⁸ L. M. Beier, *Sufferers & Healers: The Experience of Illness in Seventeenth Century England* (London, 1987), p. 167.

²⁹ Original Source Unknown. Quoted in Schmeidler, *Historical Survey of Pharmacy in Great Britain*, p. 32.

³⁰ Grier, *A History of Pharmacy*, pp. 110-111.

later or even post-medieval periods, and so the divisions of medical professions in earlier times are vague at best.³¹

Italy is an interesting counterpoint to the situation in England. In the Italian cities all types of medical practitioner in the region in the medieval period were admitted to university or were at the least directly and carefully overseen in all aspects of surgery and pharmacy by a university qualified individual.³² This is not unsurprising in the region that was home to the first medical school in Europe, at Salerno.³³ Florence, for example, did not consistently have a university in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but did have a 'large and powerful guild' which all physicians, surgeons, and even 'wise-women' had to be members of to practice medicine in the city.³⁴ This guild was integrated into the city's social and commercial governance and was able to supply many well-qualified candidates for public medical positions.

The situation in France is in many ways closest to that in England. All three of the groups discussed in this paper had direct analogues with similar kinds of guild and university organisation. The key distinction is much earlier legislative and even direct royal involvement in defining the boundaries of these professions which only increased overtime.³⁵ Surgeons, physicians, and barbers belonged to royally assented guilds or companies from before 1400 and apothecaries, who were not considered medical practitioners, were put under the control of the university medical faculty in France by 1353.³⁶ Perhaps due to their royal nature, or perhaps because the control was formalised for so long, in France and French controlled territories these professional boundaries tended to persist well into the early modern period, including in North America. Due to the position of apothecaries within this system it

³¹ Bullough, 'Training of the Nonuniversity-Educated Medical Practitioners', pp. 446-447.

³² Bullough, 'Training of the Nonuniversity-Educated Medical Practitioners', p. 446.

³³ P. O. Kristeller, 'The School of Salerno: Its Development and its Contribution to the History of Learning', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 17 (1945), p. 138.

³⁴ C. Rawcliffe, *Urban Bodies: Communal Health in Late Medieval English Towns and Cities* (Woodbridge, 2013), p. 294.

³⁵ Bullough, 'Training of the Nonuniversity-Educated Medical Practitioners', p. 447.

³⁶ Bullough, 'Training of the Nonuniversity-Educated Medical Practitioners', p. 448, 451-453 & 455-456; F. J. Anderson, 'Medicine at Fort Detroit in the Colony of New France, 1701-1760', *Journal of the History of Medicine*, 1 (1946).

was surgeons, not apothecaries, who began to move into what we might be called 'general practice', including the practice of some physic.³⁷

Conclusion

This paper has been a very general overview of the history of boundaries within and between the medical professions and how those in the medieval period influenced those in the early modern. There are clear continuities between the status of physicians across this time period in England and their status was confirmed in 1518 by the establishment of the Royal College. The status and boundaries between the practice of surgeons, barber-surgeons, and apothecaries did change however. Surgeons became subsumed by barber-surgeons who started to distinguish their practice from all other types of medicine into the post-medieval period, whilst apothecaries moved from overlapping their practice with surgeons to overlapping with physicians. These changes are distinct to England. In Italy and France this division of medicine took a different course; the Italian cities incorporated all kinds of medicine into single guilds which meant that the strict divisions of responsibility and eventual transgression of those boundaries did not occur as they did in England. In France the opposite situation occurred; with extremely strict divisions between types of medicine that persisted well into the colonial era.

³⁷ Anderson. 'Medicine at Fort Detroit', p. 214; M. Ramsay, *Professional and popular medicine in France, 1770-1830: The social world of medical practice*, (Cambridge, 1988), p. 29; J. Collin, 'French and British Influence in the Birth of a Profession: Pharmacy in Québec', *Pharmacy in History*. 52 (2010), p. 100.

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‘Their treason undid them’: Crossing the Boundary between Scottish and English in Barbour’s *Bruce*

CALLUM WATSON

The maintenance of public morality was a central aspect of aristocratic life throughout the medieval period. Literature provided a means of discussing issues of public morality and particularly for citing examples of the obligations it imposed on the audience. Literary presentations of social obligations are a useful resource for historians to analyse this issue as the often fictive nature of these sources allowed the writers to present an idealised form of such interactions. Discussions of loyalty and treason in literature thus posed an opportunity for writers to address existing tensions and offer ways of resolving on-going conflicts, preventing future eruptions of violence. The issue of loyalty is a central theme of Barbour’s *Bruce*, a long narrative poem purporting to recount the life and career of King Robert I of Scotland (r. 1306-29), written in the mid-1370s when tensions were rising between Scotland and England, and the prospect of open war between the two kingdoms was growing increasingly likely.¹ For Barbour, loyalty is the cardinal virtue without which an individual can be of no worth, regardless of what other virtues they might embody. Yet Barbour openly acknowledges the shifting allegiances of some of the men whose achievements he is seeking to commemorate, and he does not always condemn individuals for switching sides in the conflict. This paper explains these apparent contradictions in Barbour’s attitude, and in doing so it explores the potential justifications for changing one’s allegiance in late fourteenth-century Scotland. Given that Barbour’s contemporary audience likely included a significant proportion of Scotland’s aristocracy, this paper will therefore offer a valuable insight into wider attitudes among the Scottish political community at the time he was writing.²

¹ Barbour dates the ‘compiling’ as 1375 (Bk. 13, ll. 709-714). The poem – almost fourteen thousand lines in length – survives in one complete manuscript – National Library of Scotland, Advocates’ MS 19.2.2 (I) – and in one incomplete manuscript that is missing an early portion of the poem – Cambridge, St John’s College, MS G.23. The incomplete manuscript (MS C) is slightly older, dating from around 1487, while the Edinburgh manuscript (MS E) was produced around 1489, and for the remainder of this paper all references will be to J. Barbour, *The Bruce*, (A.A.M. Duncan ed. & trans.), (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1997).

² Barbour’s work was known to Andrew of Wyntoun in the 1400s, Walter Bower in the 1440s, and to Blind Hary writing sometime in the 1470s-1480s, cf. Andrew of Wyntoun, *The Original Chronicle of Andrew of Wyntoun*, (F. J. Amours ed.), (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 1903-1914), Bk. 8, ll. 177-220, 970-982; W. Bower, *Scotichronicon*, (D.E.R. Watt ed.), (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1993-98), Vol. 6, p. 353, 381; Blind Harry, *The Wallace*, (A. McKim ed.), (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2003),

Loyalty as a virtue is a subject that Barbour is keenly interested in: he famously presents it as the greatest virtue of all. Loyalty was necessarily a key feature of the relationship between a lord and his vassals, which was ideally envisioned as a reciprocal one.³ A vassal was expected to show loyalty and in return would expect to be rewarded for his service by his lord.⁴ Barbour's understanding of the reciprocal nature of lordship has long been recognised by scholars.⁵ His description of the relationship between King Robert, popularly known as the Bruce, and his chief lieutenant Sir James Douglas when they first meet typifies the ideal reciprocal relationship between lord and vassal, noting that Douglas 'servyt ay lelely' and that in return the king 'Rewardyt him weile' for his service.⁶ Loyalty was so highly prized that it was common for the virtue of loyal characters to be juxtaposed with the wickedness of treason, a crime so vile that the most gruesome punishments were reserved for those convicted of it.⁷ *The Bruce* is replete with instances of Barbour identifying the opponents of his heroes as traitors.⁸

The term 'tresoun' – or minor variations thereon – is used twenty-five times throughout *The Bruce*, and the word 'tratour' appears in one form or another a further sixteen times. The meaning of the term is unambiguously associated with the betrayal of trust and Barbour is at pains to emphasise the fact that it can affect individuals across a wide social spectrum:

Bk. 7, ll. 902, 1293; Bk. 12, ll. 1147, 1212-1214; for further examination of the impact of Barbour's work on his contemporary audience, cf. S. Boardman, "Thar nobill eldrys gret bounte": *The Bruce* and Early Stewart Scotland', in S. Boardman and S. Foran (eds.), *Barbour's Bruce and its Cultural Contexts*, (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2015), pp. 191-212

³ S. Reynolds, 'Trust in Medieval Society and Politics', in S. Reynolds (ed.), *The Middle Ages without Feudalism: Essays in Criticism and Comparison on the Medieval West*, (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2012), p. 3

⁴ S. Reynolds, 'Some Afterthoughts on Fiefs and Vassals', pp. 7-8; F. Oakley, *The Mortgage of the Past: Reshaping the Ancient Political Inheritance, 1050-1300*, (New Haven, Conn. & London: Yale University Press, 2012), p. 157

⁵ L. A. Ebin, 'John Barbour's *Bruce*: Poetry, History, and Propaganda', *Studies in Scottish Literature*: Vol. 9: Iss. 4 (1972), pp. 219-20; L. O. Pardon and J. N. Wasserman, 'Chivalry and Feudal Obligation in Barbour's *Bruce*', in L. O. Pardon and C. L. Vitto (eds.), *The Rusted Hauberk: Feudal Ideals of Order and Their Decline*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1994), p. 83; D. B. Tyson, 'The Vocabulary of Chivalric Description in Late Fourteenth-Century Biography', in S. Boardman (ed.), *Barbour's Bruce and its Cultural Contexts*, (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2015), pp. 133

⁶ *The Bruce*, Bk. 2, ll. 170-74

⁷ E. Powell, 'The Strange Death of Sir John Mortimer: Politics and the Law of Treason in Lancastrian England', in R. E. Archer and S. Walker (eds.), *Rulers and Ruled in Late Medieval England: Essays presented to Gerald Harris*, (London and Rio Grande: Hambleton Press, 1995), pp. 83-97; J. G. Bellamy, *The Law of Treason in England in the Later Middle Ages*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 23-58; J. Benham, *Peacemaking in the Middle Ages: Principles and Practice*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), p. 150

⁸ For examples of villains being identified as traitors, cf. *The Bruce*, Bk. 3, ll. 599-603, Bk. 7, ll. 196, Bk. 7, ll. 224, Bk. 15, ll. 125

Bot of all thing wa worth tresoun,
For thar is nother duk ne baroun
Na erle na prynce na king off mycht
Thocht he be never sa wys na wycht
For wyt worschip price na renoun,
That ever may wauch hym with tresoune.⁹

In a lengthy digression on the dangers of treason following Bruce's killing of John Comyn (who in *The Bruce* is presented as having brought about his own fate by betraying Bruce to Edward I), Barbour provides a list of notable examples of great men from history who were brought low by treachery, including Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar and King Arthur.¹⁰ By including this list of comparable cases Barbour is able to demonstrate the applicability of his observations on the nature of treason as well as to draw positive comparisons between these great heroes and his own – King Robert.

While providing service to the king's enemies could be a treasonous matter, there remained the possibility of reconciliation in certain circumstances. For Barbour, switching sides in the middle of a conflict did not always qualify as treason, and there is no more prominent an example of this than the case of the king's 'dearest nephew' Thomas Randolph, Earl of Moray. He is on the Scottish side when Bruce is crowned but is taken captive at Methven and becomes 'English' until taken captive again by Douglas at the Water of Lyne.¹¹ Barbour is quick to assert that the choice Randolph faces after Methven is to switch sides or be killed:

Thomas Randell wes ane off tha
That for his lyff become thar man.¹²

The implication is that since Randolph's oath was made under duress it was not as binding as an oath that had been made willingly. Barbour even extends this to the common people when he observes that the English 'Led thaim with daunger and

⁹ *The Bruce*, Bk. 1, ll. 515-520

¹⁰ *The Bruce*, Bk. 1, ll. 521-560

¹¹ *The Bruce*, Bk. 2, ll. 237; Bk. 2, ll. 408; Bk. 9, ll. 722

¹² *The Bruce*, Bk. 2, ll. 466-7

with aw/That thai na freyndschip durst him schaw'.¹³

However, the case of Randolph's change of allegiance is complicated by the fact that Randolph takes to his new role as an agent of the English king with apparent enthusiasm. He receives praise for capturing the king's banner, and later accompanies John of Lorn – a kinsman of the supposedly treacherous John Comyn and a bitter opponent of King Robert – in pursuing the fugitive king with a tracker dog.¹⁴ Yet when Randolph is eventually reconciled, Barbour provides a description of the earl's character that specifically emphasises his reverence for loyalty and his distaste for treason:

He [Bruce] knew his [Randolph's] worthi vasselage
And his gret wyt and his avys
His traist hart and his lele service...
... Lawté he lovyt atour all thing,
Falset tresoun and felony
He stude agayne ay encrely¹⁵

The significance of Barbour's decision to include the fact that Randolph briefly fought on the English side is underlined by his choice to omit Bruce's own time in English allegiance. That Barbour does not even acknowledge that Bruce had previously served the English king demonstrates that the writer was not necessarily beholden to record anything that he found embarrassing or awkward, suggesting he included Randolph's support for the English to make a point.

A clearer indication of what made Randolph's actions justifiable – at least in Barbour's eyes - can be seen when Randolph is eventually captured and brought before the king. According to Barbour, Randolph rebukes the king and expresses dissatisfaction with Bruce's use of guerrilla tactics when he should instead be facing the English in open battle. Walter Ullman has identified the term *diffidatio* – a term used in later legal documentation – as referring to the legitimate withdrawal of loyalty,

¹³ *The Bruce*, Bk. 5, ll. 131-132; at the time Barbour was writing some areas of southern Scotland remained under English control, and it may be that this passage reflects his understanding of the situation in these areas.

¹⁴ *The Bruce*, Bk. 7, ll. 87-90

¹⁵ *The Bruce*, Bk. 10, ll. 270-272, 290-292

usually on the basis that a lord had not fulfilled his responsibility to a particular vassal.¹⁶ This would fit with Randolph's initial rebuke of Bruce, as the earl apparently feels Bruce is neglecting his responsibilities as king by failing to meet the English in open battle. Of course, once he has been convinced that Bruce's strategy is the most appropriate he is welcomed back into the king's inner circle, where he remains for the remainder of the poem. This seems to give Barbour the opportunity to record the fact that Randolph did indeed switch sides during the course of the conflict but avoids tarnishing either the king's or the earl's reputation because of this fact.

Randolph provides the most notable but far from the only example of an individual withdrawing their loyalty over a dispute with the king. Barbour also presents Sir Ingram Umfraville – who despite having been in English allegiance for much of the poem receives mostly positive treatment in *The Bruce* – as politely withdrawing his allegiance to Bruce over the execution of Sir David Brechin in the aftermath of the Soules conspiracy, an attempt to overthrow the king in 1320:

He [Umfraville] said agane, 'Schyr, graunt mercy
And I sall tell you planely,
Myne hart giffis me na mar to be
With you dwelland in this countre,
Tharfor bot that it nocht you greve
I pray you hartly of your leve.
For quhar sua rycht worthi a knyght
An sa chevalrous and sa wicht
And sa renownyt off worschip syne
As gud Schyr David off Brechyn
And sa fullfyllyt off all manheid
Was put to sa velanys a ded,
Myn hart forsuth may nocht gif me
To dwell for na thing that may be.'¹⁷

Bruce graciously allows Umfraville to leave and Barbour reserves no criticism

¹⁶ W. Ullmann, *The Individual and Society in the Middle Ages*, (London: Johns Hopkins Press, 1967), p. 64

¹⁷ *The Bruce*, Bk. 19, ll. 95-108

for the manner of his departure.¹⁸ Barbour even acknowledges the possibility that switching sides could lead to conflicting obligations when Umfraville is constrained to offer advice damaging to his former lord – King Robert – on the basis of his obligation to his subsequent lord – Edward II.¹⁹

The Scots also benefit from a person switching sides during the conflict on one particularly notable occasion, namely the capture of Berwick in 1318. The opportunity to finally capture the town – which was in English hands since 1286 – is presented to King Robert when a burgher, Syme of Spalding, offers to betray the town to the Scots. Syme is provoked into the course of action by the captain of the town, whose suspicion and mistreatment of the Scots in the town has become unbearable.²⁰ It might be argued that since Syme of Spalding is a mere burgher he is not held to as high a standard of behaviour as the more noble characters in *The Bruce*, and thus his change of heart is not taken as seriously as it might otherwise. However, if indeed all three estates could be culpable of treason, as the judicial records showing that men from all social strata could be condemned for this crime would suggest, then it seems reasonable to infer that it is also possible for them to negotiate a change of allegiance in certain circumstances, just as the nobility could.²¹ Barbour's account of the Syme's role in the capture of Berwick would seem to support this. The episode may reinforce the notion that, like Randolph's brief period of service to the English, switching sides was acceptable so long as an individual could demonstrate that their rights were being denied by his previous lord. In the case of Syme of Spalding, it is surely the case that his usefulness to the achievement of one of Bruce's goals – namely the recovery of Berwick – facilitated his ability to negotiate his return to Scottish allegiance. The same sense of usefulness can be detected in Umfraville's return to English allegiance, particularly by the fact that Barbour claims that Edward II immediately sought Umfraville's advice on how best to prosecute the war against Scotland.²² This in turn suggests that the ability to promote one's own usefulness to a cause was a significant factor in enabling such changes of allegiance in reality as well.

¹⁸ *The Bruce*, Bk. 19, ll. 109-118

¹⁹ *The Bruce*, Bk. 19, ll. 152-157

²⁰ *The Bruce*, Bk. 17, ll. 22-30

²¹ For examples of Scottish treason legislation, albeit from the fifteenth-century, cf. RPS, 1430/42. Date accessed: 17th May 2018; RPS, 1430/43. Date accessed: 17th May 2018; RPS, 1430/46. Date accessed: 17th May 2018; RPS, 1436/10/6. Date accessed: 17th May 2018; RPS, 1450/1/31. Date accessed: 17th May 2018; RPS, 1455/10/5. Date accessed: 17th May 2018; RPS, 1455/10/8. Date accessed: 17th May 2018; RPS, 1455/10/9. Date accessed: 17th May 2018

²² *The Bruce*, Bk. 19, ll. 146-151

The frequency and ease with which Scots, and Englishmen, switched sides during the fourteenth-century conflicts between the two kingdoms may help to explain this interest in loyalty and treason in Barbour's *Bruce*. Dissatisfaction and dissent among Scotland's nobility was a frequent cause of concern for writers in late medieval Scotland. For a member of the Scottish nobility, service to the English crown often offered more lucrative rewards in terms of patronage than showing loyalty to the Scottish king, since the English crown was undoubtedly wealthier.²³ Political expediency was a major factor in determining whether a Scottish landholder switched sides. For instance, Bruce himself was 'English' from 1302 (when the possibility of the restoration of his rival John Balliol as King of Scots had never looked more likely) until 1306 (when he made public his ambition to seize power).²⁴ William Douglas, so-called Knight of Liddesdale, did homage to Edward III in 1352 after his kinsman had taken advantage of William's time in captivity following the Battle of Neville's Cross to usurp his authority in the Marches.²⁵ George Dunbar, Earl of March and a descendant of Thomas Randolph, submitted to Henry IV in 1400 following a personal dispute with David, Duke of Rothesay, and Archibald 'the Grim', natural son of the James Douglas who receives so much praise from Barbour.²⁶ Scottish nobles might also find it expedient to change sides when the English were in the ascendancy in Lowland Scotland. A.J. Tuck described the Anglo-Scottish cross border conflict as 'something of a civil war'.²⁷ Alistair Macdonald too has noted a considerable amount of evidence suggesting cross-border cooperation among noblemen with a great deal to be gained by limiting the effects of warfare in the Marches on their own lands.²⁸ The fact of shifting loyalties could not be denied, but it had to be explained. Barbour sought to justify the changes in the allegiances of men who – in his view at least – had not always fought for the 'right' side.

²³ A. King, 'Best of Enemies: Were the Fourteenth-Century Anglo-Scottish Marches a 'Frontier Society'?', A. King and M. A. Penman (eds.), *England and Scotland in the Fourteenth Century: New Perspectives*, (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007), p. 125

²⁴ G. W. S. Barrow, *Robert Bruce and the Community of the Realm of Scotland*, (Edinburgh: 1976), pp. 121-124, pp. 146-148

²⁵ *Rotuli Scotiae in Turri Londinensi et in Domo Capitulari Westmonasteriensi*, (D. Macpherson ed.), (London, 1814-1819), i, 752-753

²⁶ *Foedera, Conventiones, Litterae, et cujuscumque generis Acta Publica*, (T. Rymer ed.), (London, 1704-35), pp. viii, 149

²⁷ A. J. Tuck, 'The Emergence of a Northern Nobility, 1250-1400', *Northern History* Volume 22 (1986), p. 7

²⁸ A. J. Macdonald, *Border Bloodshed: Scotland and England at War, 1369-1403*, (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2000), p. 223

Key to any discussion of how these works deal with the issue of shifting loyalties is the question of whether the authors are offering an opportunity for their audience to modify their behaviour. Barbour repeatedly makes it clear that Bruce and Douglas' knightly virtues inspire the same virtues in the men who witness their great deeds.²⁹ Barbour recounts two similar tales of three traitors both of which end with an interesting statement attributed to Bruce that makes treason the corrupting force that defined them as evil men.³⁰ This warning against treachery is tinged with the possibility of redemption for those reading the poem, at least if they renounce their treacherous ways. Barbour states categorically that even men innately given to evil can change their nature with the application of intelligence ('Throu thar gret wit') and indeed that they are obliged to do so.³¹ In reality, noblemen could be calculating in all of their social interactions. Barbour sought to adapt attitudes to make calculations more open and honest, but did not seek to deter his audience from carefully considering the social interactions they might undertake. In much this way, Barbour was adapting his narrative to suit the challenges Scotland was experiencing at the time he was writing and the new demands this put on the martial class, using chivalric conventions such as loyalty and good lordship as a basis for this discussion.

²⁹ *The Bruce*, Bk. 5, ll. 359-66; Bk. 7, ll. 601; Bk. 9, ll. 411-415; Bk. 16, ll. 193

³⁰ *The Bruce*, Bk. 5, ll. 655-8; Bk. 7, ll. 493

³¹ *The Bruce*, Bk. 4, ll. 735-9

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Frontiers of Faith: The Impact of the Insular Frontier upon the Identity and Development of Furness Abbey

CHRISTOPHER TINMOUTH

Furness Abbey, located on the Furness peninsula in the north-western extremity of England, has often been viewed as remote and removed, ideal for pursuing the contemplative monastic life.¹ These feelings of separateness are encapsulated in a parliamentary petition contained within the *Furness Coucher Book*, the fifteenth-century cartulary of the Abbey, protesting at the inability of the Abbot to attend wapentake courts in the West Riding of Yorkshire. Here, Furness is referred to as 'une isle en la counte de Lancastre' (an island in the County of Lancaster), surrounded by 'deux perilous braces du mere' (two perilous stretches of sea), now known as Morecambe Bay.² However, the Abbey's isolation should not be overstated. Rather, following its establishment in 1127, the Abbey spent much of the twelfth century searching for an institutional identity built on relationships with others. Whilst originally focused on its connection with King Stephen I, as his interest started to wane the Abbey came to define itself through engagement with a wider Insular frontier. At the same time it introduced Continental, political and ecclesiastical developments onto this frontier.³ Furness Abbey should be seen as eventually coming to represent, as well as to shape, the Insular frontier, carving out its own domain which it would eventually seek to associate with the monastery itself.

This article will explore whether Furness Abbey can be described as a frontier monastic institution. The term, 'frontier monastic institution', will be defined here as a monastic institution situated between different and distinguished political and cultural zones, as well as actively influenced by and defining itself in accordance with the

¹ C. Dade-Robertson, *Furness Abbey: Romance, Scholarship and Culture* (Lancaster, 2000), pp.13-17; on how the isolated ruin of Furness Abbey inspired the Romantic and Picturesque movements to depict the Abbey, see pp.30-32; on the 'mystical sense of solitude' imagined by Wordsworth in the context of natural decay of the ruins, see p. 31.

² J. Stell, *The Furness Abbey Coucher Book*, J. Brownbill (ed. & trans.), 3 vols. (Manchester, 1915-1919), vol.2, p.472.

³ F. Edmonds, 'The Furness Peninsula and the Irish Sea Region: Cultural Interaction from the Seventh Century to the Twelfth', in C. Downham (ed.), *Jocelin of Furness: Essays from the 2011 Conference* (Donington, 2013), pp.18-19.

prevailing historical trends of these zones.⁴ This is based upon Emilia Jamroziak's claim that frontier monasticism was, in essence, part of the process which brought the frontiers of Latin Christendom into the 'mainstream' of Western Europe.⁵ I shall confine this investigation to the period between the foundation of the Abbey in 1127 and c.1150, often seen as representing the period of monastic expansion in the High Middle Ages.⁶ The Insular frontier will be defined for the purposes of this article as the series of geographical, political and cultural boundaries across the Irish Sea zone between England, Scotland, Ireland and the Isle of Man up to c.1150. This article will contribute towards newly emerging scholarship on Furness which portrays the area as part of a wider frontier zone, as was advanced in the 2011 Jocelin of Furness conference.⁷ Central to this scholarship, and this article, is how developments upon that frontier tangibly affected the identity and evolution of Furness Abbey.

The Foundation of Furness Abbey in Context

Furness Abbey was founded in 1127 as the first daughter-house of the Congregation of Savigny in England by Stephen, Count of Boulogne & Mortain, later Stephen I of England (1135-1154). Savigny was founded by Vital of Mortain (c.1060-1122) as a reformed monastery within the County of Mortain, near the Forest of Craon on the border between Normandy and Brittany, which at that time was a centre for experiments in monastic reform.⁸ The mother-house of Furness Abbey already had credentials as a frontier monastic institution within the political and ecclesiastical

⁴ D. Abulafia, 'Introduction: Seven Types of Ambiguity, c.1100-c.1500', in D. Abulafia & N. Berend (eds.), *Medieval Frontiers: Concepts and Practices* (Aldershot, 2002), p.17; J. Burton, 'Dioceses, Saints' Cults and Monasteries', in K.J. Stringer & A.J.L. Winchester (eds.), *Northern England and Southern Scotland in the Central Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 2017), pp. 194-195.

⁵ E. Jamroziak, *Survival and Success on Medieval Borders: Cistercian Houses in Medieval Scotland and Pomerania from the Twelfth to the Late Fourteenth Century* (Turnhout, 2011), pp. 198-199.

⁶ R.I. Burns, 'The Significance of the Frontier in the Middle Ages', in R. Bartlett & A. Mackay (eds.), *Medieval Frontier Societies* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 313-314; A. Lewis, 'The Closing of the Medieval Frontier, 1250-1350' in *Speculum*, 33 (1958), p. 475; R. Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change, 950-1350* (London, 1993), pp. 256-260.

⁷ See especially Edmonds, 'The Furness Peninsula', pp.17-44; J. Burton, 'Furness, Savigny and the Cistercian World', in C. Downham (ed.), *Jocelin of Furness: Essays from the 2011 Conference* (Donington, 2013), pp. 7-16; M.-T. Flanagan, 'Jocelin of Furness and the Cult of St. Patrick in Twelfth-Century Ulster', in C. Downham (ed.), *Jocelin of Furness: Essays from the 2011 Conference* (Donington, 2013), pp. 45-46.

⁸ Burton, 'Furness, Savigny and the Cistercian World', p.8; B. Poullé, 'Savigny and England', in D. Bates & A. Curry (eds.), *England and Normandy in the Middle Ages* (London, 1994), pp. 159-168.

context of Normandy, and required consistent patronage from the Count of Mortain in order to maintain its foothold on the Norman-Breton border.



Figure 1. Map of Lancashire by John Blaeu (1645) showing the Furness Peninsula situated due west of Lancaster, due south of what is referred to here as the 'Fournes Fells', and due east of the 'Mare Hibernicum' (The Irish Sea). Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#).

The prevailing trend in twelfth-century monastic reform, exemplified by the Cistercian Order, was characterised by numerous experiments in attempting to renew the original spirit of Benedictine monasticism and the organisation of monastic administration through centralised frameworks that eventually became the hallmark of a reformed monastic Order.⁹ Savigny could be seen as part of this trend: a reforming monastery expanding the borders of Latin Christendom in the manner of

⁹ J. Burton & J. Kerr, *The Cistercians in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 2011), pp.4-7: D. Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England*, (Cambridge, 2nd Ed., 1963), pp. 200-202.

the Cistercian Order, with whom the Congregation eventually became affiliated with by 1147.¹⁰ During this period, Archbishop Thurstan of York (1114-1140) was particularly keen on promoting monastic reform within the North of England, and was likely an active component in this process of monastic expansion upon the Insular frontier.¹¹ His political motivations for backing the Savigniac presence in Furness seemed linked to his designs for implementing ecclesiastical reform in partnership with King Olaf I of Man (d.1153), as well as a desire to head off competition from the Bishopric of Glasgow for claims to episcopal authority within the North West of England.¹² For Count Stephen, who had been granted the County of Mortain for his service to Henry I of England (1100-1135), it was arguably a combination of pressure to maintain the spiritual and secular connection between the County of Mortain and a political imperative to remain within the good graces of Henry I which spurred him towards expanding the Congregation of Savigny into his English territories.¹³

In addition to becoming Count of Mortain, Stephen had been granted the Honour of Lancaster in 1120, a political entity stretching from the River Mersey to the Furness peninsula. This had been confiscated from its previous lord, Count Roger of Poitou, in 1102 following his involvement in the 1101 rebellion against Henry I.¹⁴ The Honour had been created in 1092 to consolidate Norman political control over the North West of England, which began in earnest after the fall of Carlisle to William II Rufus (1086-1100) in that year.¹⁵ It has been argued that the Honour of Lancaster was a 'military salient', representing the extension of English royal authority to the North West of England.¹⁶ The Honour of Lancaster could itself be conceived as a "frontier" political entity, intended to define a previously ill-defined area within the Kingdom of England and to respond to developments from competing entities with designs upon the Insular frontier. Chief among them in the late-eleventh century was Malcolm III of Scotland (1058-1093), who had previously exercised authority over the

¹⁰ Poullé, 'Savigny and England', , p.166

¹¹ Burton, 'Furness, Savigny and the Cistercian World', pp. 7-9.

¹² Burton, 'Furness, Savigny and the Cistercian World', pp. 8-10.

¹³ Poullé, 'Savigny and England'pp.159-166; W. E. Kapelle, *The Norman Conquest of the North: The Region and its Transformation, 1000-1135* (London, 1979), p. 200.

¹⁴ R.H.C. Davis, *King Stephen, 1135-1154* (London, 1967), p. 8.

¹⁵ W. Farrer & J. Brownbill (eds.), 'Houses of Cistercian monks', <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=38348>>, accessed 27/03/2018.

¹⁶ Kapelle, *The Norman Conquest of the North*, p. 145.

area encompassing the modern county of Cumbria, claiming it as part of the Kingdom of Cumbria-Strathclyde.¹⁷

The Furness Peninsula before the Abbey

The area of Furness initially assigned to Furness Abbey by Count Stephen closely reflected his inheritance of the Manor of Hougun within the Furness domains that became incorporated into the Honour of Lancaster. Hougun, owned by Earl Tostig Godwinsson before 1066, has traditionally been identified with Millom, but other scholars prefer to locate it on the Furness peninsula itself, at High Haume.¹⁸ This pre-Conquest settlement initially represented Anglo-Saxon governmental interaction with the cultural dynamics of the Insular frontier, but it had now evolved into an instrument for imposing Anglo-Norman authority upon Furness by Count Stephen.¹⁹ The lands of Michael le Fleming, Lord of Aldingham, were specifically excluded from the Foundation Charter of Furness Abbey, with the boundaries of the Abbey's domain according with those of the Manor of Hougun attested to in the pre-Conquest geld list.²⁰ The foundation of Furness Abbey in 1127, therefore, played an important part in incorporating the peninsula further within the administrative infrastructure of the Honour of Lancaster, while acknowledging existing patterns of land tenure that reflected the ethnic diversity of the Insular frontier.

Evidence of the pre-existing cultural diversity of the Insular frontier is illustrated by current place-names within Furness. Roose and Walton appear to incorporate elements of Brittonic etymology, and it is at least conceivable that they may have originated long before the coming of the Abbey to the peninsula.²¹ As well as Brittonic, Gaelic-Scandinavian influences can similarly be detected in other place name and personal name evidence within Furness, especially in the pre-Conquest

¹⁷ F. Edmonds, 'The Emergence and Transformation of Medieval Cumbria', in *The Scottish Historical Review*, 93 (2014), pp. 210-211; J.G. Scott, 'The Partition of a Kingdom: Strathclyde, 1092-1153', in *Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society*, 72 (1997), pp. 15-18.

¹⁸ W. Farrer & J. Brownbill (eds.), *The Victoria History of the County of Lancaster*, Vol. I (London, 1906), p. 289, cited in Edmonds, 'The Furness Peninsula and the Irish Sea Region', p. 32; F. Barnes, *Barrow and District* (Barrow-in-Furness: Barrow-in-Furness Corporation, 1968), pp. 19-21.

¹⁹ Edmonds, 'The Furness Peninsula and the Irish Sea Region', p. 32.

²⁰ J. Stell, *The Furness Abbey Coucher Book*, J. C. Atkinson & J. Brownbill (eds. & trans.), 3 vols. (Manchester, 1886-1887), vol.1, p. 123; Lewis, 'An Introduction to the Lancashire Domesday', cited in Edmonds, 'The Furness Peninsula and the Irish Sea Region', p. 32; Barnes, *Barrow and District*, pp. 18-19, 22-23; Edmonds, 'The Furness Peninsula and the Irish Sea Region', p.36.

²¹ Barnes, *Barrow and District*, p.13.

geld list which informed the Domesday Survey of 1086.²² For example, Gaelic names such as Duvan and Gille Michel, and Scandinavian names such as Thorulf and Ulf, are recorded as landowners.²³ The Gaelic-Scandinavian place name of Kirksanton also reflects long-standing links between Furness (in this case around the Millom area) and the Isle of Man, complemented by the similarity of eleventh-century material culture found both at Millom and on the Isle.²⁴ From the outset therefore, Count Stephen inherited a political environment for the Furness peninsula which acknowledged prevailing patterns of distribution of authority upon an ethnically heterogeneous frontier.

From its beginnings as a “reformed” monastic institution, and the conscious definition of Furness Abbey against the context of the Insular frontier in which it was based, the Abbey scrupulously attached its sense of institutional identity to the patronage of Count Stephen. This is shown by the association of the Abbey with the royal munificence inherent throughout the Foundation Charter, as the *pro anima* bequest recalls not just his own soul and that of his wife, Countess Matilda of Boulogne (1125-1152), being the subject of intercession for salvation, but that of his uncle Henry I.²⁵

The Reception of Furness Abbey within Furness

It has been suggested that Furness Abbey was established with the intention of being at the forefront of monastic trends in twelfth-century English monasticism and to maintain a continuing connection to the Anglo-Norman world within the context of the Insular frontier.²⁶ This would help bring Continental monastic reform to the Insular frontier, while maintaining its direct connection with the County of Mortain as a daughter-house of Savigny, which Count Stephen especially desired for the new

²² C.P. Lewis, ‘An Introduction to the Lancashire Domesday’, in A. Williams & G.H. Martin (eds.), *The Lancashire Domesday* (London, 1991), pp. 8-10, cited in Edmonds, ‘The Furness Peninsula and the Irish Sea Region’, p.32

²³ Edmonds, ‘The Furness Peninsula and the Irish Sea Region’, , p.32

²⁴ Edmonds, ‘The Furness Peninsula and the Irish Sea Region’, p. 34.

²⁵ J.Stell, *The Furness Abbey Coucher Book*, vol.1, pp. 122-123.

²⁶ C. Downham, ‘Introduction’, in Downham (ed.), *Jocelin of Furness*, 1; Edmonds, ‘The Furness Peninsula and the Irish Sea Region’, pp. 42-44.

monastery.²⁷ The initial reluctance of aristocratic benefactors in Furness to donate land to the Abbey, however, suggests that it was viewed by contemporaries as an unwelcome imposition at odds with the established political and cultural connections of Furness to the Insular frontier. Furthermore, there are few indicators that even the founding Furness benefactors were consulted by Count Stephen regarding its foundation.²⁸ Furness aristocrats such as the Penningtons and Kirkbys were aware of wider European ecclesiastical developments in the twelfth century, yet they invested more of their spiritual and material resources in rebuilding and reforming their own parish churches than acting as benefactors to the new monastery.²⁹

However, aristocratic benefaction did eventually come to Furness Abbey. One example of this can be seen in the earliest grant from the Penningtons to Furness Abbey in c.1154, of Skeldhou Moor, which was not made directly to Furness Abbey but to its daughter-house on the Isle of Man, Rushen Abbey.³⁰ The indirect benefaction to Furness via Rushen Abbey could have been made because the Penningtons, in a similar way to other contemporary benefactors, came to view Furness Abbey as one political actor among many within the Insular frontier. Within Furness itself, compromise with local benefactors can also be observed by the mid-twelfth century, as demonstrated by the final resolution between Furness Abbey and Michael le Fleming concerning a shared boundary between their lands. The deal was sealed with a mutual exchange of Roose and Crivelton, delineating the boundary between the two manors from Roose to Rampside, for Bardsea and Urswick in c.1153, which was perhaps intended to respect the original manorial boundaries concerning the Manor of Hougun and Muchland as outlined in the Domesday Survey.³¹

²⁷ Burton, 'Furness, Savigny and the Cistercian World' p. 9.

²⁸ P. Latimer, 'Assimilation in North-Western England from the Norman Conquest to the Early Thirteenth Century: The Kirkby, Pennington and Copeland Families', in *Northern History*, 47 (2010), pp. 63-64.

²⁹ Latimer, 'Assimilation in North-Western England', p.63; In the case of the Penningtons, the earliest known ancestor of the family, Gamel of Pennington, rebuilt the church at Pennington in Romanesque style, dedicating their investment in a Norse runic inscription in the tympanum of the church. The tympanum is possibly unique within this Insular context, and could illustrate awareness by Gamel de Pennington of his Anglo-Norse heritage as well as embracing new trends in church architecture. The tympanum and its significance are discussed in Barnes, *Barrow and District*, pp. 16-17; A. Fell, *A Furness Manor: Pennington and its Church* (Ulverston, 1929), pp. 71-72; Latimer, 'Assimilation in North-Western England', p. 63.

³⁰J. Stell, *The Furness Abbey Coucher Book*, vol.2, p. 510.

³¹John Stell, *The Furness Abbey Coucher Book*, vol. 2, p.454; Barnes, *Barrow and District*, p.25

Despite his centrality during the foundation process, and consequently his place in the institutional memory of Furness Abbey, Count Stephen soon divulged himself from active intervention in the Abbey's affairs, especially after becoming King Stephen of England in 1135. He also left unresolved the ambiguity over the precise territorial delineations within Furness which the monks encountered upon arriving in the peninsula.³² Furness Abbey therefore needed to act as if it were a frontier monastic institution, recognising and integrating itself into the local power networks within its part of the Insular frontier in order to assert its political position.

Ownership of the church of Urswick provided another point of contact reflecting the frontier character of the Furness peninsula. Urswick had originally been settled by a diverse population from across the Insular frontier, incorporating Anglo-Scandinavian and Gaelic artistic styles into its material culture. This is represented on the ninth-century cross fragment in Great Urswick church, with a ring-head inspired by sculpture from the Gaelic-speaking world and an Anglian runic inscription in Old English verse by Tunwini in memory of his son Torhtred.³³ According to the c.1153 settlement between Furness Abbey and Michael le Fleming that was confirmed by his son William le Fleming, the vill of Urswick was to remain within Muchland, but the church of Urswick would be possessed by the Abbey.³⁴ This proved of great significance to Furness Abbey, not only in resolving the issue of its territorial boundaries within Furness, but also in articulating a claim to be the spiritual guardian of the legacy of missionary endeavours from across the Insular frontier, and as a patron of the multi-ethnic inhabitants of that frontier.

³² Barnes, *Barrow and District*, p.25

³³ Urswick 01, Lancashire, in 'The Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture Vol.II: Cumberland, Westmorland and Lancashire-North-of-the-Sands', <http://www.ascorpus.ac.uk/catvol2.php?pageNum_urls=163>, accessed 30/04/2018: Edmonds, 'The Furness Peninsula and the Irish Sea Region', in Downham (ed.), *Jocelin of Furness*, p.24, p.27; Barnes, *Barrow and District*, p.14

³⁴ John Stell, *The Furness Abbey Coucher Book*, vol. 2, p.457

and for Olaf I to strengthen his political legitimacy and reforming credentials by integrating himself further into the court of Henry I.³⁶ As part of this arrangement, the Abbot of Furness gained the right to appoint the Bishop of Man via its daughter-house at Rushen.³⁷ Thus, Furness Abbey was now acting as a conduit through which critical actors could be channelled to bring continental influences to bear upon the Insular frontier.

As its influence grew, Furness Abbey assumed a major role in establishing daughter-houses in Ireland, especially Inch Abbey, and its associations with the colonial ambitions of John de Courcy (1150-1219).³⁸ Establishment of daughter-houses such as Inch demonstrated the readiness of Furness Abbey to appropriate the Gaelic influences of the Insular frontier for the purpose of monastic reform. Sensitivity to Gaelic culture, however, defined how Furness Abbey related to its daughter-houses.³⁹ This is shown by the chronicler Jocelin of Furness, based at Furness Abbey, who wrote his *Life of St. Patrick*, illustrating his familiarity with the Gaelic language and many aspects of Gaelic culture. While praising John de Courcy as bringing civilisation to the Irish, his *Life of St Patrick* remained sensitive to the pre-existing Irish hagiography produced on St. Patrick and adapted it within the context of twelfth-century European church reform.⁴⁰

An indication of the growing confidence of Furness Abbey within the Insular frontier was the significant monastic investment in the foundation of Calder Abbey in 1134. However, after a Scottish raid destroyed Calder in 1141, Furness Abbey refused to provide for the monks of Calder, prompting them to leave for Yorkshire where they eventually founded Byland Abbey.⁴¹ There followed a prolonged period of

³⁶ Burton, 'Furness, Savigny and the Cistercian World', pp. 9-10.

³⁷ H. Birkett, *The Saints' Lives of Jocelin of Furness: Hagiography, Patronage and Ecclesiastical Politics* (Woodbridge, 2010), p. 167: Charter of assent to the election by Furness Abbey of Nicholas, Abbot of Rushen, to be Bishop of Man (1203-1213), DL 25/545, Duchy of Lancaster Deeds, National Archives (NA).

³⁸ Flanagan, 'Jocelin of Furness and the Cult of St. Patrick in Twelfth-Century Ulster', in Downham (ed.), *Jocelin of Furness*, pp. 46-48; S. Duffy, 'The First Ulster Plantation: John de Courcy and the Men of Cumbria', in T.B. Barry, R. Frame & K. Simms (eds.), *Colony and Frontier in Medieval Ireland: Essays Presented to J.F. Lydon* (London, 1995), pp. 8-9.

³⁹ F. Edmonds, 'Furness Abbey and Daughter Houses: Irish Sea Relations in the Twelfth Century', (forthcoming, Lancaster, 2018), pp. 9-11.

⁴⁰ Birkett, *The Saints' Lives of Jocelin of Furness*, pp. 141-143, 148-149, 162-170; Flanagan, 'Jocelin of Furness and the Cult of St. Patrick', pp. 45-47, 65-66.

⁴¹ W. Farrer & J. Brownbill (eds.), 'The Abbey of Furness', <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=38348>>, accessed 27/03/2018.

litigation between Byland and Furness concerning whether Byland was founded by Furness or Savigny, with Savigny eventually being declared the mother-house in 1147.⁴² The Byland Abbey dispute took place against the background of the Savigniac merger with the Cistercian Order in 1147, and arguably holds wider significance for when and how Cistercians and Savigniacs articulated their relative conceptions of monastic identity.⁴³ For Furness Abbey in particular, the moment had implications for the Abbey's place and identity within the context of the Insular frontier, as it effectively forced the monastery to associate itself more with its geographical situation than with its mother-house in Normandy. A confederation of Savigniac houses actively opposed to intervention by Savigny, both before and after the 1147 merger with the Cistercian Order, has been referred to as 'the Furness group', because of the instrumental role that Furness played in organising these predominantly Insular monasteries, some of whom were affiliated to Furness.⁴⁴ The attempt to recover Byland may have been a direct response to the threat posed to the power and independence of Furness which it had become accustomed to under the Savigniac filiation system. These responses to the 1147 merger show how far Furness Abbey had become an integral part of the Insular frontier, while remaining an active shaper of that frontier as part of a wider monastic community.⁴⁵

As Furness Abbey was forced to come to terms with membership of the Cistercian Order after 1147, it appears to be that, if the Abbey was to sustain its presence upon the Insular frontier, it had to define part of that frontier as coterminous with the monastic institution, creating an institutional "memory" of Furness as an "island" that endured into the fifteenth-century written record. Furness Abbey seemed to have the intention of making its new Cistercian identity work for its own ends in advancing its position on this Insular horizon of Latin Christendom throughout the twelfth century, as well as shaping its own place on that frontier for centuries to come.

In conclusion, it would appear that, at least according to Emilia Jamroziak's definition, Furness Abbey can be defined as a frontier monastic institution by c.1150,

⁴² Farrer & Brownbill, 'The Abbey of Furness'

⁴³ According to Constance Berman the Savigniac merger occurred in 1158, see C. Berman, *The Cistercian Evolution: The Invention of a Religious Order in Twelfth-Century Europe* (Philadelphia, 2000), pp. 142-148: For Holdsworth the date is 1147, see C. Holdsworth, 'The Affiliation of Savigny', in M. Dutton, D. M. LaCarte & P. Lockey (eds.), *Truth as Gift: Studies in Honor of John R. Sommerfeldt* (Kalamazoo, 2004), pp. 45-48.

⁴⁴ Burton, 'Furness, Savigny and the Cistercian World', p. 13

⁴⁵ Burton, 'Furness, Savigny and the Cistercian World', p. 13.

introducing Continental political and ecclesiastical developments upon the Insular frontier whilst compromising with the existing cultural influences of that frontier. From its beginnings as a reformed continental institution dependent upon the patronage of the scions of English royalty, Furness Abbey during the early-twelfth century evolved to reconcile its position upon the Insular frontier with being an institution that could represent and shape that frontier through active engagement in its twelfth-century developments. Furness was never integrated into one particular sphere, but instead found its place upon its own part of the Insular frontier, from which it could engage with multiple groups and contacts.

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Bullion, Barter and Borders in the Rus' Coinless Period (11-14th C.)

ALEX M. FELDMAN

When historians and numismatists consider the approximately 350-year period in which no normative Russian coins were minted, the outline of the discussion is often framed in the context of Russian sovereignty and nationality. In a few words, the coins minted between the late-tenth and early-eleventh centuries by the earliest Christian Kievan princes (of the Rjurikid dynasty), Vladimir (the Great) and his sons, Svjatopolk (the Accursed) and Jaroslav (the Wise), are thought of as the beginning of “Russian national” coinage. Such coins are typically imagined as evocative of some sort of Russian statehood or nationality. There is ready precedence for this interpretation, given similar understandings of the coins of the dynasties of the Piasts, Árpáds and Asenids of the same era as belonging to the respective beginnings of the nations of Poland, Hungary and Bulgaria. However, this research seeks to offer a somewhat different interpretation of the so-called “Rus’ coinless period.”

In this paper, I will argue not that “Russian national” coinage disappeared, but that the definition of such coinage on a national basis may constitute a rather anachronistic assumption given our knowledge of the porousness of borders and the ambiguity of a given coin’s audience. In order to situate these claims, I will draw on evidence from recent single finds and coin hoard finds in Western Eurasia and the well-known presence of “Western European” silver coins (*deniers*) and ingots (*grivny*) circulating in Rus’ towns (ruled by Rjurikid princes) from the late-eleventh to fourteenth century. In other words, I will argue that what defines a given coin as “foreign” or “domestic” in a given place and time without clearly defined borders or populations is ultimately a modern convention projected backward. Instead, it may be more appropriate to think of the Russian coinless period not as Russian per se, but as two overlapping phenomena: the absence of so-called “Russian” coinage, defined as minted on behalf of a Rjurikid prince (ca. 1050s – 1380s) and the absence of all coinage whatsoever, including so-called “foreign” coins within the imagined borders of Rus’ (ca. 1140s – 1340s). Therefore, I have structured the paper in three broad sections: the first section addresses the first (Byzantine, Islamic

and Rjurikid) coin finds in Rjurikid-ruled towns and their hinterlands, the second section addresses the concepts of bullion, barter and coin debasement in Rjurikid-ruled towns, and the third section addresses the anachronistic application of borders to the so-called “Rus’ coinless period.”

Elena Pavlova’s 1994 article, ‘The Coinless Period in the History of Northeastern Rus’: Historiography Study’, summarizes a variety of Russian numismatic arguments on the reasons for Rus’ coinlessness,¹ from Valentin Janin’s claim that there was no native minting tradition, to German Fjodorov-Davydov’s “metal theory,” which holds that imported coins were simply melted into silver ingots and used as currency in Russia in their own right.² Much of this scholarship recognizes the admixture of Islamic and Byzantine coins in coin hoards before and shortly after the baptism of Vladimir (debatable dating: 987 – 989 CE). Likewise, many numismatists have readily acknowledged the influx of coins from elsewhere in Christendom later in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, but rarely are notions of “foreignness” and “domesticity” regarding coinage seriously challenged.

We may consider the mixed Byzantine and Islamic coin hoards found in what is normally considered southern “Rus’ territory”, which are usually dated to the tenth and eleventh centuries. Thomas Noonan and Elena Stoljarik have shown that despite the low numbers of Byzantine silver coins (*miliarēsia*) circulating in Pontic-Caspian Eurasia compared to Islamic silver coins (*dirhams*), used primarily for trade,³ Basil II’s *miliarēsia* numbers actually peaked in mixed hoards throughout this area dating to shortly after Vladimir’s baptism and into the early-eleventh century.⁴

¹ E. Pavlova, ‘The Coinless Period in the History of Northeastern Rus’: Historiography Study’, *Histoire Russe*, 21 (1994), pp. 375-92.

² G. A. Fjodorov-Davydov, *Монеты – свидетели прошлого* (Moscow, 1985), p. 124; V. Janin, ‘Деньги и денежные системы’ (Moscow, 1969), pp. 319-20.

³ T. S. Noonan, ‘The Circulation of Byzantine Coins in Kievan Rus’’, *Études Byzantines*, 7 (1980) pp. 172-73:

‘Byzantine miliaresia found in Kievan Rus’, unlike the Islamic dirhams and West European deniers, were not related to or the result of commerce. Thousands of dirhams and deniers were sent to Rus’ to pay for such Rus’ exports as slaves and furs. Byzantium evidently paid for such Rus’ exports with silks and other non-monetary goods. The question we must ask is why Byzantium did not use its miliaresia more extensively in the trade with Rus. [...] In short, we should like to know why so few Byzantine coins reached Rus’ at a time of very active Rus’-Byzantine trade. [...] Finally, we should like to discover what happened in the period from ca. 1025-ca. 1050 that put an abrupt end to the flow of miliaresia into Rus’. [...] In brief, what conditions brought an end to the export of Byzantine coins to Kievan Rus’ after 1025?’

⁴ Noonan, ‘Byzantine Coins in Kievan Rus’’, p. 144:

In fact, a grand total of 703 Byzantine coins have been found in modern Sweden (up to 1989), mostly on the island of Gotland, 9.67% of which are imitations and 32.57% of which belong exclusively to the reign of Basil II (during the period 977 – 989 CE). By 1988, 24 Byzantine coins had been found in modern Latvia,⁵ 15.79% of which are *miliarēsia* dating to the reign of Constantine IX Monomachos (1042 – 1055 CE). These examples clearly attest to the importance of the period of the late-tenth and eleventh centuries, as one of peak flow of Byzantine coins northward shortly after Vladimir's conversion.⁶ Most hoards contain silver coins, intermixed with a few gold ones, and were found in the forest-steppe zone between the Prut' and the Dniepr. That uncovered hoards including Islamic and Byzantine coins, (numbering 172⁷ even during the Soviet period⁸), have been distinctively mixed, attests to the coins' indistinct usage, in contrast to assumptions made about foreignness and domesticity.⁹ This also contrasts with significant evidence of such coins' Christian symbolic usage both within and outside Rjurikid-ruled towns, including finds in modern Sweden as well.¹⁰ Sweden is not typically thought of as part of Kievan Rus'

'The existence of these mixed coin hoards is our best numismatic evidence that some Byzantine coins did circulate within Kievan Rus'. These Byzantine coins did not proceed directly to their find-spot. At some point in Rus' they were mixed with other coins which had also been imported'.

E. S. Stoljarik, *Essays on Monetary Circulation in the North-Western Black Sea Region in the Late Roman and Byzantine Periods* (Odessa, 1992), pp. 93-96, makes the same claim.

⁵ V. N. Sedykh, 'On the Function of Coins in Graves in Early Medieval Rus' ', *Russian History*, 32 (2005), p. 473. As for the *miliarēsia* imitations, due to their debasement, it would not be unreasonable to imagine them as struck in Tmutarakan', which as J. Shepard, 'Closer Encounters with the Byzantine World: The Rus at the Straits of Kerch', in Reyerson, et al. (eds.), *Pre-Modern Russia and its World: Essay in Honor of Thomas S. Noonan* (Wiesbaden, 2006), p. 33 has pointed out, "would scarcely have had imperial blessing."

⁶ B. Malmer, 'Some Observations on the Importation of Byzantine Coins to Scandinavia in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries and the Scandinavian Response', *Russian History*, 28 (2001), pp. 295-96. The poorly engraved inscriptions on the imitative coinage suggests that the legends were not meant to be read closely, (p. 298). Additionally, it should be noted that as of 1989, the number of notionally Byzantine coins is split, where 68 are imitations.

⁷ M. Thompson, 'Byzantine Coins in Russia', *Medieval Archaeology*, 10 (1966), p. 145. This is in contrast with the far more abundant finds of imperial coinage throughout the lower Danube during this period. See for example P. de Frankopan, 'The Numismatic Evidence from the Danube Region 971-1092', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 21 (1997), pp. 30-39.

⁸ For the most comprehensive collection of Soviet studies on hoards containing Byzantine coins, see V. V. Kropotkin, 'Клады византийских монет на территории СССР', *Археология СССР. Свод археологических источников*, (1962), pp. 1-89; and idem, 'Новые находки византийских монет на территории СССР', *Византийский временник*, № 51 (1965), pp. 166-89.

⁹ See for example such assumptions made by R. Zguta, 'Kievan Coinage', *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 53 (1975), p. 488, who refers to tenth-eleventh century. Kievan "national coinage."

¹⁰ See for example Sedykh, 'Function of Coins in Graves in Rus', p. 475; and Malmer, 'Importation of Byzantine Coins to Scandinavia', pp. 295-302.

but, numismatically, its territory fits within the same context. This goes to show that such assumptions of borders are anachronistic to apply to so-called “national coinage” which were, if anything, redolent of ecumenical, rather than “national” authority.

Nevertheless, the frequency of imperial coins found in Rjurikid-ruled towns, either in mixed hoards or as single finds, drops off in the mid-eleventh, although single finds turn up occasionally in outlying areas until the 1130s.¹¹ Given the Rjurikids’ gradual entrance into Christendom (the Byzantine *oikouménē*), it is unsurprising to find other Christian coins circulating alongside imperial coins,¹² and gradually replacing Islamic coins. Still, the bullion value of the Islamic *dirhams* obviated their transit further north as their circulation dried up, necessitating alternative sources of silver, such as the Western Christian silver coins (*deniers*).¹³ For example, Valentin Janin has observed that between 980 – 1100 CE, Western coins slowly displaced Islamic *dirhams*, especially in Novgorod, as the flow of the latter dried up during the tenth century.¹⁴ The decrease of *dirhams* and increase of *deniers* has led to some creative explanations.¹⁵

It is well-known (although debateable¹⁶) that the first three Christian princes of Kiev began a tradition of minting exclusively in gold and silver and, had it not been

¹¹ S. Franklin and J. Shepard, *The Emergence of Rus: 750-1200* (London, 1996), pp. 284-85.

¹² I. Spassky, *The Russian Monetary System*, (Moscow, 1967), pp. 50-51.

¹³ J. Martin, ‘Coins, Commerce, and the Conceptualization of Kievan Rus’’, in Reyerson, K. L., Th. G. Stavrou and J. G. Tracy (eds.), *Pre-Modern Russia and its World: Essay in Honor of Thomas S. Noonan*, (Wiesbaden, 2006), p. 169.

¹⁴ V. Janin, *Денежно-весовые системы домонгольской Руси и очерки истории денежной системы средневекового Новгорода*, (Moscow, 1956), p. 153.

¹⁵ Georges Duby, *The Early Growth of the European Economy* (Ithaca, 1978), pp. 126-27, has even advanced the notion that the increase of Western European *deniers* found in Rjurikid-ruled towns is a marker in increasing Western European influence. For Christian Raffensperger *Reimagining Europe: Kievan Rus’ in the Medieval World* (Cambridge, 2012), p. 135, such interpretations of numismatic evidence supplement his overall argument that the Rjurikids were as much a part of the Orthodox *oikouménē* as they were part and parcel of “the larger European world.” It is also worth pointing out that in Raffensperger’s reference to work of Brita Malmer, ‘Importation of Byzantine Coins to Scandinavia’, regarding Byzantine coin finds in modern Sweden (pp. 245-46 n35), he mentions 635 known Byzantine coins found in Sweden, but neglects the 68 finds of Byzantine coins in Sweden which have been determined as imitations.

¹⁶ Omeljan Pritsak, *The Origins of the Old Rus’ Weights and Monetary Systems* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 71-117, contended that Rus’ princely coins bearing the names of Vladimir and Svjatopolk could be extended into the twelfth century due to later princes bearing those names based on contemporaneous iconographic trends on imperial coins. While his arguments are convincing at first glance, they may not be ultimately provable one way or another. It is not my intention to dispute Pritsak’s argument, although notably Thomas Noonan, ‘Review: The Origins of the Old Rus’ Weights and Monetary Systems by O. Pritsak’, *The Russian Review*, 58 (1999), pp. 319-20, was highly critical of it.

for these coins, there would have been no “Russian coinless period” at all. Maria Sotnikova and Ivan Spasski have interpreted these coins as more for ornamentation than exchange.¹⁷ Vladimir’s coins are the rarest: only a handful of his *zlotniki* (gold coins) and *srebrebniki* (silver coins) survive.¹⁸ Svjatopolk’s coins are the most problematic from a “Russian national” perspective, since his coins were minted in alliance with his father-in-law, the normatively “Polish” king Bolesław, (comparable to the metrology and iconography of Bolesław’s coinage) when he occupied Kiev briefly in 1018. Bolesław Szczesniak, in a rather polemic article, argues that all of Rus’ was in fact, via Svjatopolk, subsumed by king Bolesław, posthumously imagined as Polish by nationality, who was seeking to build a so-called great “Slavic Empire” as a precursor to Kievan Rus’ being incorporated into the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.¹⁹ I will refrain from delving into the modern nationalist interpretations of these events. But we ought to recognize that some scholars have sought to minimize such coins. Rather, the coins of Svjatopolk’s brother, Jaroslav the Wise, are often seen as the archetype of “Russian national” coinage even though they too are quite rare.²⁰ According to Pritsak, the total number of surviving Rus’

¹⁷ M. Sotnikova and I. Spasski, *Russian Coins of the X-XI Centuries A.D.: Recent Research and a Corpus in Commemoration of the Millenary of the Earliest Russian Coinage* (Oxford, 1982), p. 141.

¹⁸ A. M. Feldman, ‘The Historiographical and Archaeological Evidence of Autonomy and Rebellion in Chersōn: a Defense of the Revisionist Analysis of Vladimir’s Baptism (987-989)’, (unpublished master’s thesis, University of Birmingham, 2013), p. 75 n263-n64; and V. A. Smolij, G. V. Borjak and O. Šeremet’jev, et al. (eds.), *1000 Years of Ukrainian Seal* (Kiev, 2013) pp. 90-93.

¹⁹ B. B. Szczesniak, ‘The Dependency of Kievan Rus on King Bolesław the Great: Numismatic Evidence’, *The Polish Review*, 18 (1973), pp. 31-43, does provide, however, a useful critique of essentialist Kievan “statehood,” when he writes (p. 37):

‘The Kievan state of the X-XI century, the time of Vladimir I and his successors, did not constitute a representation of all Russia as for example D. S. Likhachev and other Russian historians assert in various writings. It was the Kievan state only, not even Novgorod. [...] Different centers of the growth of territorial authority in different ethnic conditions kept the ‘all’ Rus separated. A true territorial or sovereign unity in Kievan Rus principalities was never established. The growth of the Rurik family princes necessitated the territorial foundations of new principalities, new states in reality; these states were united only by the common ecclesiastical organization of the Byzantine Church, which, like the Roman Church, was universal in its ecumenical character. The Kievan State was in reality the Kievan Principality which could be termed Kievan Ruthenia. Kievan Rus is only a name which the Russian historians extend to all Russian principalities, but which is not based on reality’.

See also M. Hleboniek, ‘Herb Ziemi Kijowskiej na pieczęciach władów Rzeczypospolitej’, *Сфрагістичний Щорічник*, 2 (2012), pp. 82-98. This citation is based on my reading of the author’s abstract in English.

²⁰ See for example P. G. Gajdukov and V. A. Kalinin, ‘Древнейшие русские монеты’, in *Русь в IX-X веках. Археологическая панорама* (Moscow, 2012), pp. 402-35; and Pavlova, ‘The Coinless Period in the History of Northeastern Rus’’, p. 376.

coins from before the Mongol invasion amounts to about 308 specimens.²¹ It would also be important to note that of all the nominally Rjurikid *srebreniki* minted during this period, most of them were barely even silver at all, reflecting a severe silver shortage on the part of the princes' moneyers.²² For precisely this reason, numismatists have typically pointed to sheer silver bullion as the main conveyor of value, regardless of mintage.

Bullion, Deniers and Debasement

In 1949, the Russian economic historian Peter Lyashchenko, in his authoritative monograph on the Russian "national" economy, posited that foreign, presumably "non-Russian" minted coins entered the borders of Russia during the reign of Vladimir albeit without value, while gold and silver coins only acquired "domestic" monetary worth during the Mongol era.²³ Although I do not dispute the qualitative analysis of "value" he ascribes to the coins for their metallic worth specifically, my aim is to reconceive our notion of the "foreignness" and the "domesticity" of precious metals in the coinless period.

By acknowledging that eleventh to fourteenth century Rus' "state territory" can be an anachronistic abstraction, and by recognizing that Rus' townships of the same period are better characterized as those ruled by a Rjurikid prince, the present discussion seeks to comment on the usage of any precious metals within contemporaneous Rus' townships, whatever their provenance. In other words, whatever forms of commodity were used to pay tribute or in monetary exchange after nominally "Russian" coins ceased being minted in the mid-eleventh century, their attribution is what is under consideration. As we have previously discussed, silver *deniers* attributed to Western Europe have been found in Rus' townships in significant quantities, about 40,000 total *deniers* by Noonan's estimation, particularly in regions adjacent to the Baltic such as Novgorod.²⁴

After the death of Jaroslav in 1054, these coins became the primary means of monetary exchange in towns ruled by Rjurikid princes, most especially Novgorod, whose financial status improved due to the influx of Western *deniers*.²⁵ But their use as replacements

²¹ Pritsak, *The Origins of the Old Rus' Weights and Monetary Systems*, p. 69.

²² M. P. Sotnikova and I. Spasski, *Russian Coins of the X-XI Centuries A.D.*, p. 139.

²³ P. Lyashchenko, 1949, *History of the National Economy of Russia to the 1917 Revolution*, Herman, L. M. (trans.) (New York, 1949), p. 165.

²⁴ T. S. Noonan, 1987, 'The Monetary History of Kiev in the Pre-Mongol Period,' *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 11/3-4 (1987), p. 399.

²⁵ Martin, 'Coins, Commerce, and the Conceptualization of Kievan Rus' ', p. 168.

for Islamic dirhams declined by the mid-twelfth century. Instead, by the late-twelfth century, simple silver ingots replaced the *deniers*,²⁶ mostly in Kiev, suggesting that the coins were valued for their silver content, rather than the provenance of their mintage. This point is supported by Fjodorov-Davydov who, as previously mentioned, argued that Western *deniers* circulated between the mid-eleventh and mid-twelfth centuries Rus' primarily for the value of their metal content. He also adds that the silver content was meant to be melted into bullion and recast as ingots, hence the "metal theory."²⁷ The crucial information is that while most Western European *deniers* were hoarded in Novgorod well after the supply of Islamic *dirhams* dried up, they too quickly disappeared: only about 1000 *grivny* are known today.²⁸ Noonan also suggests that by the time the deposition of *deniers* dries up in the late-twelfth century, many had been recast into silver ingots, or what are commonly referred to as *grivny*, which constituted blank silver flans of tangible wealth valued primarily for their varying silver content.²⁹

Vsevolod Potin agrees that the *deniers*' silver metal content, not their national attribution, was where their value lay. But he disagrees with both Fjodorov-Davydov and Noonan, arguing that there is no unquestionable evidence for Western coins being melted and recast into Russian currency at this time.³⁰ This point remains persuasive. However, neither Fjodorov-Davydov nor Potin seriously questions the notion of eleventh and twelfth century Russian statehood and mintage in the first place. In other words, would the silver ingots (*grivny*) have constituted Russian "national" currency?

Knowing that *grivny* were simply silver ingots which carried tangible wealth regardless of where they were circulated, the question insinuates that silver was valued differently within imagined Russian borders. But if silver was an inelastic commodity regardless of nationality, then the question is rendered purely rhetorical: by inverting the question, we may arrive at a helpful insight. If silver was a universal commodity between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries, what constituted "national" currencies at all?

²⁶ It should be noted that according to Vjacheslav Kuleshov, the earliest of such ingots (*grivny*) circulated well before Vladimir's baptism in the late-10th century (personal communication, 26 January, 2018).

²⁷ Fjodorov-Davydov, *Монеты – свидетели прошлого*, 124: Janin, 'Деньги и денежные системы', 319-20.

²⁸ S. Franklin, *Writing, Society and Culture in Early Rus, c.950–1300*, (Cambridge, 2002), p. 77.

²⁹ Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, pp. 284-85. See also N. F. Kotljars, 'Севернорусские («черниговские») монетные гривны,' *Древнейшие государства Восточной Европы. 1994 г. Новое в нумизматике* (Moscow, 1996), p. 87.

³⁰ V. Potin, *Древняя Русь и европейские государства Европы в X-XIII веках*, (Leningrad, 1968), p. 91.

As Janin has made clear, since there was a scarce supply of silver mines in the hinterlands of towns ruled by Rjurikid princes,³¹ silver bullion was primarily obtained by either trading or raiding. If non-Rjurikid minted coins were circulated for their silver content, this would then explain the use of *grivny* in Rjurikid-ruled townships such as Novgorod or Kiev: it did not necessarily matter where the coins were from as long as the silver content was pure. As Sotnikova and Spasski have noted, ‘the higher the silver content and the better execution of the coins, the farther they would wander from the place where they were struck’.³² Thus, Mstislav Vladimirovich (r. 1125–1132) attempted to forestall the export of bullion in any form beyond the purview of his dominions.³³ Whether or not coins or ingots were nominally Russian “national currency,” that they were referred to as *grivny* attests to their semi-standardization.³⁴ However, by the mid-fourteenth century in Novgorod and elsewhere, these *grivny* became notoriously alloyed, or debased, according to the work of Sotnikova.³⁵ In fact, as early as the 1220s, the Smolensk Treaty stipulated that a newer, purer silver *grivna* equalled four of the old *grivny*.³⁶

Therefore, we arrive not only at the Novgorodian debasement of silver *grivny* in the fourteenth century, but debasement generally. Because silver bullion was always an inelastic commodity, and since the silver content of a given coin indicated the true value of it, regardless of its provenance, rulers who had access to silver bullion were constantly tempted to debase such coins or *grivny* in order to stretch their short-term buying power. Hence, rulers, such as the Rjurikids or from any other dynasty, were constantly competing for limited precious metal resources, and newly conquered towns and territories were sure sources for such wealth. Emperors themselves had frequent recourse to debase their coinage, as Byzantine numismatists have pointed out, for the same reasons of the inelastic supply of precious metals.³⁷ This was why the era has been termed coinless: because the inelasticity (and resultant hoarding) of silver bullion precluded its use for minor business interactions and restricted it to the few who hoarded it in their increasingly elite transactions.³⁸ All other

³¹ Janin, ‘Деньги и денежные системы’.

³² Sotnikova and Spasski, *Russian Coins of the X-XI Centuries A.D.*, p. 65.

³³ A. I. Pashkov, *A History of Russian Economic Thought: Ninth through Eighteenth Centuries*, (Berkeley, 1964), p. 35.

³⁴ Sotnikova and Spasski, *Russian Coins of the X-XI Centuries A.D.*, p. 328; and Franklin and Shepard, *The Emergence of Rus*, pp. 284-85.

³⁵ M. P. Sotnikova, ‘Снова о новгородском серебряном рубле-слитке XIII-XV веков’, *Труды государственного Эрмитажа*, 21 (1981), pp. 90-96.

³⁶ S. Jushkova (ed.), *Памятники русского права*, vol. II, (Moscow, 1953), 58.1. Cited in D. H. Kaiser, ‘Reconsidering Crime and Punishment in Kievan Rus’’, *Russian History*, 7 (1980b), p. 292 n56.

³⁷ C. Kaplanis, ‘The Debasement of the Dollar of the Middle Ages’, *The Journal of Economic History*, 63 (2003), pp. 768-801; C. Morrisson, ‘Byzantine Money: Its Production and Circulation’, in Laiou, A. (ed.), *The Economic History of Byzantium vol. III*, (Washington: D. C., 2002), pp. 944-46.

³⁸ Noonan, ‘The Monetary History of Kiev in the Pre-Mongol Period’, p. 404.

exchange or tribute payment would therefore have been conducted in kind, or in other words, via barter, regardless of imagined “borders.”³⁹

Imagined Borders

Many texts attest to the ambiguity of borders and the universal use of scarce commodities such as silver. In the fifteenth century Novgorod First Chronicle, of many famines detailing the steep price of grain in *grivny*, one famine is recorded for the year 1188 in which the price of a barrel of rye at six *grivny* reflected the scarcity of food. According to the source, during or immediately following the famine, Varangians from Gotland and other Germans (*nemcy*) raided the town and presumably carried off whatever commodities they could, such as *grivny*, fur, grain and anything else.⁴⁰ While the source unfortunately does not make clear if the raid was a direct cause of the famine, or if the plundering included *grivny* specifically, I believe it is fair to assume that silver, in whatever form, was a commodity as much as furs, grain or any other scarce resource. Additionally, Novgorod’s position not far from the Baltic coastal frontier rendered it in a more precarious, albeit economically accessible, location than other Rjurikid-ruled towns. By the late-twelfth and thirteenth centuries, individual, nominally Rjurikid-ruled towns such as Novgorod and Smolensk signed commercial treaties with non-Rjurikid-ruled towns like Riga or those on the island of Gotland.⁴¹

Similarly, the thirteenth century Galician-Volynian Chronicle mentions southwestern towns such as Berezovichi, which was exchanged in 1287 with *grivny* supplemented with scarlet cloth, plate armor and furs by prince Vladimir Vasil’kovich. The prince stipulated that the townspeople would continue paying tribute to the Mongols, to whom the prince was still subjected.⁴² Additionally, by the mid-thirteenth century, other regions of Galicia-Volynia were incorporated under the jurisdiction of the *ius theutonicum Magdeburgense*, regulating taxes and rents in coin or kind.⁴³

Perhaps the most overt textual example of the ambiguity of borders and the universal value of *grivny* is demonstrated in the case of David Igorevich as early as the late-eleventh century. In 1097, prince David Igorevich purchased the Piasts’ aid in his wars against another

³⁹ Franklin and Shepard, *The Emergence of Rus*, pp. 284-85.

⁴⁰ *The Chronicle of Novgorod, 1016-1471*, R. Michell and N. Forbes (trans.) (London, 1914), pp. 33-34.

⁴¹ Jushkova, *Памятники русского права*, vol. II, pp. 57-75, 124-31.

⁴² G. A. Perfeky (trans.), *The Galician-Volynian Chronicle*, (Munich, 1973), p. 102.

⁴³ O. Kozubska-Andrusiv, ‘German Law in Medieval Galician Rus’, *Rechtgeschichte*, 13 (2008), pp. 32-33.

Rjurikid prince Vasil'ko for fifty gold *grivny*.⁴⁴ Later, at the “Liubech Congress,”⁴⁵ the ownership of towns such as Peremyshl, Buzh'sk, Duben, Chertoryysk, Dorogobuzh and Vladimir-in-Volynia, were traded between the brothers supplemented by *grivny*,⁴⁶ resembling how coins supplemented other commodities in Byzantine transactions.⁴⁷

Since precious metals were obtained primarily by war or mining, such boundaries can hardly be geographically fixed. A given ruler therefore had a limited supply of bullion with which to mint coins, reflecting an inelastic amount of bullion available.⁴⁸ Ultimately, I am arguing that this explains the lack of “Russian national” coins in circulation in Rus' during much of the eleventh-fourteenth centuries. The circulation of coinage specifically, as opposed to bullion ingots (*grivny*), at least at the peripheries of Christendom, at this time was therefore not meant as its sole function,⁴⁹ but just as conspicuously, if not more so, coins were minted for propaganda purposes: to exhibit a ruler's wealth, power and legitimacy to those he ruled. When the bullion supply ran out altogether, including of so-called “foreign” *deniers*, the relative absence of coinage between ca. the 1140s-1340s, this suggests that tax or tribute was still collected in kind⁵⁰ (the *pojjud'e*⁵¹).

I would suggest that while some scholars have taken Rus' “statehood” for granted based on the Vladimir's and Jaroslav's coinage,⁵² the very notion may be

⁴⁴ S. H. Cross and O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor (ed. and trans.), *PVL (Russian Primary Chronicle)*, (Cambridge, 1953), p. 195.

⁴⁵ P. B. Golden, ‘Aspects of the Nomadic Factor in the Economic Development of Kievan Rus’’, in Koropeckyj, I. S. (ed.), *Ukrainian Economic History: Interpretive Essays*, (Cambridge, 1991), p. 67.

⁴⁶ Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor, *PVL*, pp. 198-99.

⁴⁷ H. Saradi, 1995, ‘Evidence of Barter Economy in the Documents of Private Transactions’, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 88 (1995), p. 412-18; J. Day, ‘Monetary Mechanisms, East and West’, in Laiou, A. (ed.), *The Economic History of Byzantium vol. III*, (Washington D. C., 2002), p. 968; and Morrisson, ‘Byzantine Money’, p. 909.

⁴⁸ S. B. Soročan, ‘Случайность или система? Раннесредневековый византийский меркантилизм’, *Древности-1995. Харьковский историко-археологический ежегодник* (1995), pp. 122-32; M. V. Ledeneva and T. A. Plaksunova, ‘Богатство в древней руси: суть, структура, формы реализации и защиты’, *Вестник Волгоградского Государственного Университета*, 37 (2016), pp. 18-29.

⁴⁹ Additionally, Sedykh, ‘Function of Coins in Graves in Rus’’, pp. 471-78, has argued, and rather convincingly, that such Christian coinage was frequently used symbolically in a burial context in late-10–early-11th-c. Rus’, as opposed to traditional assumptions of monolithic usage in circulation.

⁵⁰ See Pavlova, ‘The Coinless Period in the History of Northeastern Rus’’, pp. 375-92; and Zguta, ‘Kievan Coinage’, p. 484. However, Thompson, ‘Byzantine Coins in Russia’, p. 146, insinuates that the ‘coinless period’ begins ‘from the 13th c. onward’.

⁵¹ Concerning taxation, which began as a tribute ‘circuit’, S. Franklin, ‘On Meanings, Functions and Paradigms of Law in Early Rus’’, *Russian History*, 34 (2007), pp. 79-80, collected by a prince from his tax-collection district (*pogost*), we may note that this “circuit” has been described by Ju. M. Kobiščankov, *Полюдь: Явление отечественной и всемирной истории цивилизации* (Moscow, 1999), pp. 220-23, as the ‘round-making’ of the early Rus’ tribute-collecting “*pojjud'e*” – a prince's

druzhiniks who rode around his domain collecting resources from the inhabitants of his domain (see for example V. Ja. Petrukhin, ‘Феодализм перед судом русской историографии’, *Одиссей: Человек в истории*, № 1 (2006), p. 164).

⁵² Pashkov, *History of Russian Economic Thought*, p. 34.

challenged quite simply by the disappearance of so-called “national” coinage during the eleventh-fourteenth centuries.⁵³ Scholars such as Aleksander Gieysztor, who have contended that Russia did not possess her own mints during the period in question and was instead saturated with “foreign” money, dramatically oversimplify anachronistic notions of Rus’ statehood.⁵⁴ Silver was never valued exclusively in Russia, but was rather a universal container of tangible and inelastic wealth: there was no “foreignness” or “domesticity” with regard to silver.

In a few words, traditional assumptions of “Rus’ state territory” evoke the “national” coinage attributed to Vladimir and Jaroslav while ignoring the admittedly complicated nature of Jaropolk’s coinage as well as the deliberately ambiguous and universal use of *grivny*. But most anachronistically, the coinless period is rarely understood as subverting these traditional notions. If we view the Rjurikid princes not as a “national” dynasty, which is already frequently conceded as an anachronistic concept, but as an ecumenical dynasty ruling at the peripheries of the *oikouménē* alongside the Piasts and Árpáds, then the foreignness and domesticity of coinage is cast into doubt. Since historical borders can hardly be thoroughly fixed, and as we know, frontiers were constantly in flux, the Rus’ coinless period needs not to be thought of in terms of foreign versus domestic, but rather in terms of bullion and barter.

⁵³ Nevertheless, as Pavlova has made clear, the appearance of Western European coinage in 12-14th-c. “Russia” has been noted in Russian historiography as “foreign coinage.” See for example V. S. Kulešov, ‘Средиземноморье, балканы и восточная европа: памятники монетного обращения еврейских общин (VIII–XIII века)’, *Белградский сборник: К XXIII Международному конгрессу византистов. Белград, Сербия, 22–27 августа 2016 года*, (2016), p. 94 n49-50.

⁵⁴ A. Gieysztor, ‘Trade and Industry in Eastern Europe before 1200’, in Postan, M. M., E. Miller and C. Postan (eds.), *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe II*, 2nd ed., (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 506-08. See also E. Hurwitz, 1978, ‘Kievan Rus’ and Medieval Myopia’, *Russian History*, 5 (1978), pp. 176-87.

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