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Melissa Pollock, *The Lion, The Lily, and the Leopard: The Crown and Nobility of Scotland, France, and England and the Struggle for Power (1100-1204)*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2015. x + 536 pp. €120.00. U.S. (hb). ISBN- 978-2-503-54040-5.

Review by Craig M. Nakashian, Texas A&M University-Texarkana.

This book has a number of ambitious goals: to explain the twelfth-century roots of the “Auld Alliance” between France and Scotland, to demonstrate Scotland’s membership in the cross-Channel elite culture of the period, and to redress the relatively minor attention paid to Scotland in the discussions of northwestern Europe in the twelfth-century. In all of these aims, Pollock largely succeeds and delivers a valuable, well-written, and engaging text that will be of value to scholars of medieval Britain and France (and beyond).

The book is arranged chronologically, with chapters two through eight considering the period from the reign of David (r. 1124-1153) through the reacquisition of Normandy by Philip II in 1204. Chapter one serves as a foundational exploration of noble, regional, familial, and national identity. Pollock does a good job of contextualizing the relative lack of “national identity” during the period, arguing that the concept was “extremely complicated in the twelfth century, because the concept of identity was bound to land, lordship and kinship” (p. 33). Her core argument, that the noble families of England, France, and Scotland (and elsewhere) were intimately interlinked during this period, gives her the opportunity to reimagine arguments over noble identity, especially what factors created a sense of identity as well as the perceived multiplicity of possible identities. She argues, against current historiographical assumptions, that these noble families could hold multiple identities simultaneously. Thus, she claims that modern historians have oversold the alienation between “English” and “Norman” families. Furthermore, identity should be seen as being generated by a variety of factors, and we should broaden our traditional reliance upon places of birth, sizes of holdings in particular realms, and even language spoken with criteria such as political interests. With this broadened definition in mind, she is able to argue that “Not even the King of England, Henry II, had bothered learning English but this said little about his ‘Englishness’” (p. 36). Such a definition of identity is compelling for historians of the Anglo-Norman and Angevin worlds, as it helps to explain the cultural framework of families living on both sides of the Channel without recourse to tracing perceived “dominant” “French” or “English” influences.

Overall, her first chapter serves as a valuable introduction to the salient questions of the study, and as an effective literature review of current scholarship. She repeats the point (perhaps too frequently) that the Anglo-Norman/English/French/Anglo-French/Scottish noble world was closely integrated, at least through 1204, but that after 1204 these Anglo-Scottish-French lords had largely embraced a predominantly “Scottish” identity, thus necessitating the official 1295 treaty of friendship between Scotland and France.

The subsequent chapters examine Pollock’s core arguments over the period until 1204, beginning in chapter two with the reign of David I of Scotland and his use of strategic marriages among the Scottish-French-English nobility. Pollock sees David I as primarily responsible for the close interaction of the cross-border nobilities. He had a close affinity with Henry I of England, and he spent a great deal of

time at the Anglo-Norman court. His lordships in England were also held by Anglo-Norman families, which then connected those families to Scotland, through the granting of lordships north of the border and inter-marriage with “native” Scottish families. She uses the celebrated example of the Brus family (later kings of Scotland, but originally from the Cotentin) as a prime example of this phenomena. Pollock does a good job demonstrating that David had to balance this Anglo-Scottish-French interconnectedness in such a way as to not alienate either the Anglo-French nobility nor the native Scottish nobility, at least until both groups were sufficiently interrelated. Overall, this chapter serves as an effective foundation for the specific focus of the book, which is how Scotland figured into the identity and holdings of noble families in the twelfth century. With that goal in mind, one complaint is about the relative lack of genealogical charts (there are only two), which would have visually reinforced her argument.

With the question of how Scotland interacted with this broader group of Anglo-Norman-Angevin-French nobles firmly established, chapters three and four come as somewhat of a disappointment. While the purpose of the two chapters is to trace Scotland’s role in the events of England from the beginning of the War of Succession between Stephen and Matilda to the outbreak of the Great War of 1173 (the reigns of David I, Malcolm IV, William I, as well as his brother David, Earl of Huntingdon), too often the role of Scotland is lost. While each chapter is executed very well and does a fine job tracing the connections among nobles in England and France during the period, there is too much narrative of the events themselves—a narrative that is well worn and not necessary to repeat. The extensive political narrative also serves to move the focus off of Scotland, though Pollock does an excellent job bringing Scotland back into the forefront at the end of chapter three. Ironically, this shift in focus back to Scotland mostly serves to reinforce the lack of focus earlier in the chapter.

Chapters five and six consider the Great War of 1173 (a war for power led by Henry II’s eldest son, and co-king, Henry the Younger) and the later parts of Henry II’s reign. Pollock makes an important point regarding the role that the 1173 war played in both intensifying Scottish involvement in the Anglo-French nobility (including a discussion of the Scottish/Breton role’s importance through William I’s sister, the duchess of Brittany) and in solidifying Scottish relations with France relative to England. The war also served to create additional opportunities for marital alliances and non-marital alignments among the Anglo-Franco-Scottish nobility. In surveying each of the major noble families on the Scottish/Huntingdon side of the war, Pollock demonstrates one of the great strengths of the book—the careful attention paid to a detailed reconstruction of the inter-familial relationships of these noble families. While the highly-detailed narration of these family trees (aided by visuals) does detract somewhat from the analytical thrust of the arguments, it more than makes up for it by giving historians an easy-to-access study of noble genealogy, and the discussion serves to reinforce her broader point regarding the interactions among these elites.

Chapter seven examines how King William navigated the political currents of the later parts of Henry II’s reign and the reign of King Richard. Pollock shows how William, despite backing the losing side, was able to come out of the Great War in a position of comparable strength. While the Treaty of Falaise in 1174 gave the appearance (if not the legal reality) of subordinating Scotland officially to England, its terms were never truly executed. Furthermore, Henry II could not afford to alienate William too deeply, since he needed the Scottish king as a check against the rebellious nature of his own sons—to this end he arranged for William to marry his cousin Ermengarde de Beaumont with an eye towards keeping him (at least) neutral in future conflicts. During the reign of Richard I, it would seem that this royal policy paid dividends, as neither William nor Earl David supported the claims of Richard’s nephew Arthur of Brittany. By favoring and rewarding them, Richard was able to keep the Scottish crown and nobles from joining with Philip II of France in his attempts to undermine and dismember the Angevin realm.

Pollock also uses this chapter to discuss the emerging political awareness and agency of the Scottish nobility relative to the Scottish crown. She argues that the war of 1173/74 created “a lasting detrimental impact on King William’s power” and that the nobles, much as they had done throughout the twelfth century, “had a political voice that checked and balanced crown power” (p. 374). While her point is well-taken, she does not provide enough discussion to demonstrate that this balance of power between royal prerogative and noble agency truly encompassed the broader and emerging political realm of Scotland. That being the case, she does show how the abortive attempt by William to name Richard’s nephew Otto of Saxony (a claimant for the imperial crown of the Holy Roman Empire) as his heir led to his estrangement from his brother David of Huntingdon. Subsequent to that attempt, Earl David spent most of his time at Richard’s court or on the continent, and on the death of Richard in 1199, he supported John, while William moved politically closer to Philip II.

The final chapter of the book again covers well-trod narrative about John’s reign, his conflict with his nephew Arthur of Brittany, and the eventual loss of Normandy in 1204 to Philip II. Pollock concludes the discussion with the loss of Normandy, but would have been better served to extend it through the reigns of kings John (d. 1216) and William (d. 1214). The narrative here is well done, but should have focused more on Scotland’s unique position and role in these events. The conclusion of the book actually offers some of the analysis that could have fit into a broader chapter eight, especially with her important assertion that Scotland was not destabilized by the reversion of Normandy to France. She also reiterates that kinship ties between the Scottish and French nobilities declined during the thirteenth century, thus necessitating an actual royal alliance between the two realms in 1295 (since it no longer could flow organically from noble affinities).

Pollock shows easy familiarity with the primary evidence and a good grasp of relevant secondary literature. However, the book does suffer from some shortcomings. One that emerges is the relative lack of interest in the commonality of noble culture. In considering how nobles from all over western Europe interacted and inter-related, it is surprised to see relatively little discussion of knightly culture or chivalry—despite its foundational role in the knightly *mentalité* of the period. Such a discussion would have seemingly reinforced her arguments about how we do ourselves an anachronistic disservice by harshly delineating the “identities” of noble families across modern political boundaries. While there is some treatment of this topic, developing it further would have strengthened the overall thrust of the text.

More problematic is the issue of scope: Pollock seems to want to write about how Scotland and “Scottish” nobles fit into the Anglo-Norman-French world, which is a good and valuable discussion to have, but at times loses focus on this core purpose by considering narratives that do not contribute to our understanding of that Scottish role. While all background information is useful, in this case it detracts from the analytical point she is making, and swells the book to over 500 pages. There are times throughout the text where she could have eliminated traditional narrative accounts of well-known events in the histories of England and France, while still maintaining enough narrative structure to contextualize her analysis. Still, even at that length, the book is well written, easy to read, and engaging. Overall, this is a fine book that meaningfully adds to our understanding of how lands and titles within the realms of Scotland, England, and France (and elsewhere) moved freely among noble families, tying them together into complex webs of political and marital relationships, which then influenced how those realms developed.

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