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Prophecies of alliance and enmity: England, Scotland and France in the late Middle Ages

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In April 1400, there was a deadly riot in London. According to St Albans chronicler Thomas Walsingham, bands of apprentices came together in St Paul's churchyard and 'pueriliter eligentes sibi diuerse partes reges' [childishly chose their own kings].[1] Divided into such camps, the events turned violent: 'non pueriliter sed perniciosum iniere conflictum; nempe quidam uulnerati, quidam perempti, sunt ibidem' [yet this was no childish prank, for they engaged in a vicious conflict, so that some indeed were wounded, and some were killed there].[2] Of the two camps, one supported the King of England, the other the King of Scotland; those supporting the King of Scotland came off much worse. There is no suggestion in Walsingham or other chronicles that the groups reflected the apprentices' nationalities, but the episode nevertheless reflects how Anglo-Scottish relations were represented in terms of violent conflict.[3] During the time of the riot, an uneasy state of truce held between the two nations after a century of conflict. Walsingham continues, 'Quam pugnam secuta sunt prodigia in aere, a multis conspecta, armatorum, uidelicet sese collidencium' [Soon after this fight portents appearing in the sky of armed men clashing with each other were seen by many people].[4] War was returning.

Although not an Anglo-French conflict, the apprentices' riot takes place within the broader theatre of the Hundred Years War. Anti-Scottish enmity in England produced by sustained border wars was stoked by Scotland's interventions in Anglo-French conflict. Another episode from Walsingham's chronicle, detailing events that took place soon after the riot, illuminates these intersections.

The chronicler relates how Scottish ships were captured and 'arcana consilia Gallicorum et Scotorum fuere cognita et comperta, malignancium contra Anglos' [secret plans of the French and the Scots were discovered and learned about, which involved hostile operations against the English].[5] Espionage was a recurrent fear for the English, because a Franco-Scottish alliance would open a second front, making English forces fight both on the Continent and within Britain. In the 1380s, for instance, France and Scotland launched such attacks on England: French forces from the south-east, Scottish forces from the north. Richard II responded by undertaking the largest military campaign of his kingship, not against France (seeking instead a policy of appeasement), but against Scotland.

The discovery of Franco-Scottish perfidy in 1400 is, according to Walsingham, the instigating factor in Henry IV's decision to launch a campaign to subdue the Scots. The campaign was Henry's first military act as king and resulted in failure.[6] Another chronicler relates how the Scots ended up 'plus nobis quam nos eis dampni inferendo' [doing us more harm than we did to them], and the campaign was widely criticised.[7] Looking back from this episode to the apprentices' riot, we see how they presage the return of violence to the Anglo-Scottish relationship and form part of the broader landscape of war, connected to insular politics and the continental alliances of the Hundred Years War. The Hundred Years War refracted insular politics as the sustained Anglo-French conflict exacerbated existing tensions between the nations of Britain.[8]

In this chapter, I analyse Scotland's role in the Hundred Years War through the twinned themes that emerge in these episodes: antagonism and alliance. Scotland is not thought of as a major player in the Hundred Years War, but throughout the conflict Anglo-Scottish antagonism shadows the Anglo-French relationship and, moreover, the Franco-Scottish alliance directly brought Scotland into the theatre of war. Historians have mapped the broad narrative of Scotland's involvement in the Hundred Years War. Providing a full account of this political, social and military history lies beyond the scope of this chapter.[9] Instead, I examine how historical chronicles cultivate enmity and alliance through their accounts of the early Hundred Years War. These texts offer a multilateral perspective on the conflict that foreground Franco-Scottish alliance,

rather than Anglo-French enmity, as the instigating factor in Anglo-French conflict. Ardis Butterfield and Joanna Bellis, among other scholars, have analysed the discursive formations of Anglo-French enmity in the Hundred Years War.[10] Similarly, the literary forms of Anglo-Scottish conflict have also been well documented.[11] But the literary forms of late medieval conflict circulate beyond national and linguistic traditions. This chapter shows how English and Scottish writers imagine conflict as innately multilateral, revealing the broader web of transnational alliance that lies behind individual acts of violence. Thus, English aggression in Scotland enmeshes France, while campaigns in Wales anticipate tactics used in France and underscore the necessity of Cambro-Scottish solidarity.

Writing about political satire in English and Scottish sources, Andrew Galloway argues that scholars must approach this genre not with an eye to pinning individual texts to specific historical coordinates, but to produce 'an archaeology of texts' that recovers their discursive, military and literary contexts.[12] As Galloway shows, linking individual texts to particular historical moments can reify the oppositional logic of these insults and obscure the fact that such insults, whether English and Scottish (in Galloway's study) or French and English (as Butterfield has shown), derive from the same culture.[13] Galloway's insights provide an illuminating framework for understanding the oppositional logic of medieval political writing more broadly. Rather than evidence of nascent linguistic nationalism, such moments reveal the logic of enmity that operates across national traditions.

The contribution of the present chapter is to show how the political–literary formations of enmity and alliance intersect. Approaching the Hundred Years War from the perspective of Scotland enables us to see the arena of late medieval political discourse in a more transnational light, so that the styles of enmity reflect broader cultural conventions rather than nascent signs of nationalism. For instance, throughout the Hundred Years War English sources repeatedly worked to represent the French as duplicitous and 'fals', suggesting a specific discourse of anti-French animus.[14] But the same claims are levelled in Latin against the English by Walter Bower in the *Scotichronicon*.[15] Adopting a triangulated view of Anglo-Scottish-French relations reveals the

intersections of insular and continental conflict as they are represented across linguistic and national borders. My focus is on the literary strategies used by writers, mainly chroniclers and anonymous authors of occasional poetry, to further these two aims: the cultivation of enmity and the imagining of alliance. In so doing, the chapter traces a literary history through chronicle accounts and occasional poetry that adduce Scottish relations – both linguistic and political – as they shift throughout the Hundred Years War.

The second half of this chapter follows the itinerary of the 'Metrical Prophecy', a political prophecy foretelling English demise, across English, Welsh and Scottish historical texts, as it moves from an isolated prophecy to becoming integrated within chronicles' historical accounts. Political prophecy flourished in times of conflict and in border zones, particularly in England during the later fifteenth century.[16] For modern readers, prophecies can read as perplexing and frustrating mixtures of obtuse references, obscuring far more than they reveal and resistant to analysis and definition. Yet prophecies were also a political resource for medieval writers that created realms of possibility, either portending victory or warning of defeat. While they often circulated in discrete collections or manuscript miscellanies, prophecies are intimately connected to historical texts. Geoffrey of Monmouth, for instance, included Merlin's prophecy within the *Historia regum Britanniae*. My interest lies in considering the interpretative force sparked by the juxtaposition of prophecy and historical narrative. The hermeneutic indeterminacy of prophecies enabled chroniclers to adapt them to changing historical frameworks. Serving as a warning to English rulers against complacency, and to England's opponents as a sign of hope, prophecies like the 'Metrical Prophecy' tied contemporary conflict to deep history, reframing the contingencies of late medieval warfare as manifestations of cultural agon.

Foregrounding Scotland within narratives of late medieval conflict illustrates the limits of treating medieval identity as coterminous with the modern nation. For instance, the 1328 treaty that brought the first Scottish War of Independence to a close 'disinherited' a group of nobles who, while holding lands in Scotland, followed the allegiance of the English king. These nobles do not fit within modern schemas of national identity; and indeed, the

awkwardness of their international standpoint made them a difficult issue for Edward III. Furthermore, as scholars have argued, the culture of the Anglo-Scottish border is more readily a hybrid than part of either 'England' or 'Scotland'.[17] Even amidst sustained conflict lines of allegiance could still change. Jean Froissart reports how during a four-year truce between England and Scotland, a force of three hundred 'native Scotsmen' joined John of Gaunt on an ill-fated campaign in northern France in 1373.[18] Economic gain could, and frequently did, trump national prejudice. Pursuing the historical accounts that transformed these fluid communities into supposedly national identities enables us to see how alliance and antagonism go hand-in-hand: the creation of enmity unfolds alongside the manufacture of international amity.

Anglo-Scottish and Anglo-French antagonism

From the late thirteenth century onwards, successive English kings sought to seize control of Scotland and bring the realm under their authority. The wars with Scotland are now known as the Wars of Independence (1296–1328, 1332–57), but like 'the Hundred Years War', this is a post-medieval invention that provides narrative coherence at the cost of isolating the conflicts from their broader transnational context; insular dominance went together with the drive for continental territory. Between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, from the battles of Dunbar (1296) to Flodden (1513), England and Scotland were formally at peace just twice, from 1328 to 1332 and the so-called 'perpetual peace' of 1502–13.[19]

Moreover, even during the periods of truce between the realms, the fundamental enmity that drove late medieval war was never extinguished. This enmity challenges our tendency to think of war and peace in stark terms and reflects instead the messy reality of late medieval international conflict, where a low-level thrum of aggression persists regardless of wartime or peacetime. For instance, in 1406 English pirates captured James I, the young king of Scotland, who was then held in England for eighteen years. James's capture defined Anglo-Scottish relations and would later directly impact English military campaigns in France when Henry V brought James

with him on campaign. But truce held between England and Scotland in 1406, so it was not technically an act of war.[20] Indeed, the young king was sent away from Scotland because of the increasingly unstable domestic political situation, not because of international tensions. James I's capture was opportunistic, to be sure, but treating it separately from the broader contexts of late medieval war makes little sense; it forms part of the matrix of power struggles that define international relations. Similarly, although Anglo-Scottish conflicts were not instigated by the same *causus belli* as Anglo-French conflict, and although English claims against the Scots were unrelated to the claims against France, these contests originate in the fundamentally bellicose disposition of late medieval society. More often than not, periods of truce derived from economic astringency rather than a commitment to peace.[21] As the Middle English encyclopaedic text *Sidrak and Bokkus* puts it, war 'shal neuere to ende come / Til it be þe day of dome'.[22] Peace is only imaginable at the end of the world.

To understand how Anglo-French and Anglo-Scottish conflict became enmeshed, it is necessary to look beyond the traditional dating of the Hundred Years War to the final decades of the thirteenth century. The Anglo-Scottish border was officially settled in 1237 in a treaty between Henry III and Malcolm III, which brought stability to the region and to Anglo-Scottish relations for a generation. Peace was disturbed, however, by a contested succession in Scotland that gave the English crown an opportunity to extend its sphere of influence beyond the border. Just as would happen with Anglo-French relations in 1328, Anglo-Scottish relations after 1286 were thrown into turmoil by a series of misfortunes that left the Crown in a precarious position.

The Scottish king Alexander III died in 1286 following a swift series of family tragedies that left the realm with no clear heir. In three brutal years from 1281 to 1284 all the king's children died, leaving his three-year-old granddaughter, Margaret of Norway, as his last living heir. But Margaret died on her way to Scotland and never assumed the throne. To resolve the ensuing contested succession, the Scottish nobility invited Edward I to adjudicate the different claims put forward as to who was the rightful heir to the throne. Edward played the situation to his advantage by insisting that he be recognised as Lord Paramount of Scotland.[23] Writing in

the late fourteenth century, the Scottish historian John of Fordun comments that Edward I entered Scottish affairs 'annisu ipsum regnum Scocie suo regno conjungere et combinare' [striving to join and unite that kingdom of Scotland to his kingdom].[24] But Fordun writes with the benefit of hindsight. At the time, Edward's involvement seemed like the only way the regents of Scotland could stop the realm devolving into civil war. What began as a sign of the robust relationship between the realms of Scotland and England soon became the wedge that Edward I used to assert dominance over his northern neighbour. Conflict then defined Anglo-Scottish relations for the next two hundred years.

Subduing Scotland was an imperative for English kings with continental ambitions. But conquering Scotland also held a symbolic significance. Unlike Wales, which had been conquered in 1282, Scotland was a continual reminder of the limits of English sovereignty.[25] In addition to Henry IV and Richard II, Edward II and Edward III also began their reigns with military expeditions to Scotland. For the usurping Lancastrian regime of Henry IV, a military campaign against Scotland was one way to convey a sense of continuity with the past. But although Edward I and Edward III effectively seized control of Scotland, and Scottish kings were twice captured by the English (in 1346 and 1406), there was never a decisive blow that definitively brought Scotland into English control.

In this way, the Anglo-Scottish relationship resembles that between England and France. The feudal dynamic between the King of England and the King of France (in which the English king was both an equal and a subordinate) that contributed to Anglo-French conflict was mirrored by the Scottish interpretation of the relationship between the King of Scotland and the King of England (although, for the King of England, the King of Scotland was solely a vassal and not an equal). Similarly, while England was in commanding positions against France in 1360 after the capture of the French king Jean II, and again in 1420 when the Treaty of Troyes declared the King of England inheritor of the French throne, events interceded, and the final twist of the knife needed to secure this dominance never came. Much of the history of late medieval England, Scotland and France is defined by these waves of conflict that ebb and flow with no resolution.

Alliance is the twin of antagonism. Coalitions were an important part of international conflict in the late Middle Ages, as rarely could a single ruler leverage enough of their own forces to undertake campaigns that matched their ambitions. For instance, much of the early Hundred Years War was defined by attempts by the English crown to win the support of French-supporting rulers in the Low Countries; the Anglo-Burgundian alliance of the fifteenth century was crucial for securing English dominance. The alliance between Scotland and France, romanticised as the 'Auld Alliance', is one of the most durable military alliances throughout the late Middle Ages.[26] From around 1295, France and Scotland were united in an agreement of shared support, built on pre-existing informal cultural and familial ties, to guarantee that England's late medieval wars would be multilateral.[27] Scottish soldiers fought for their French allies against the English, and the French lent occasional support to their allies' campaigns in Britain. Throughout the Hundred Years War, England was simultaneously embroiled in wars with Scotland and France; Scotland resisted English aggression with French support in its Wars of Independence; and France used Scotland to split England's attention. These alliances were often fraught, the ties of mutual convenience often frayed.[28] While the Hundred Years War gave rise to new regimes of international diplomacy, political prophecies were an important arena for imagining the deep history and devastating power of alliance.

For observers living through the early years of the Hundred Years War, Anglo-Scottish and Anglo-French conflicts bled into one another. Chroniclers portray the Hundred Years War emerging not only from English aggression in France, but in Scotland as well. According to the English chronicler Henry Knighton, the first conflict between Edward III and Philip VI was sparked by Edward III's aggression in Scotland. Around 1337, Knighton recounts, Philip swore that he would 'regem Anglie penitus destrueret … pro causa quod rex Edwardus tantum insudauerat ad humiliacionem Scotorum' [utterly destroy the king of England … because King Edward had been at such pains to humiliate the Scots].[29] Knighton gestures to the bonds of amity between France and Scotland, bonds so strong that the French king is willing to fight on behalf of his Scottish ally. Examining the justification behind Philip's

intervention in Scotland, an intervention that frustrates the imperial designs of Edward III, helps to explain the paranoia over Anglo-Scottish cooperation described by Walsingham during the early years of Henry IV's reign.

The chronicle of Geoffrey le Baker provides further details about why Philip threw his support behind the Scots and, furthermore, why this was met with such outrage by the English. Geoffrey records how John Stratford, archbishop of Canterbury, was sent to negotiate with Philip in 1334. The bishop is charged with achieving three goals: re-establishing the friendship between England and France; securing the return of castles seized by Charles IV in Aquitaine; and 'Tercio' [Thirdly], Geoffrey relays, 'quod predictus tirannus dimitteret suam manum auxiliatricem a Scotis sibi impertinentibus, et contra illos iuvaret auxilio vel concilio sue favore suum cognatum, regem Anglie' [he asked that the tyrant [Philip VI] should recall his forces from helping the Scots who had no connections with him, and that instead he should help his relative, the King of England, against the Scots, either by troops or advice or just by being on his side].[30] Geoffrey consistently refers to Philip VI as either a tyrant or the 'so-called King of France' to underscore the illegitimacy of his position on the French throne. Even so, what is striking about this third claim is how it gestures towards a central tension of the Hundred Years War. As Geoffrey suggests, France and Scotland have 'no connections', whereas France and England are intimately tied together. It is this intimacy that ironically brings the two realms to war: Edward III's argument is that he has a stronger claim to the French crown than the French king.[31]

The reward offered by the archbishop in return is the ever-elusive prospect of crusade. Edward III promises that he will unite with Philip VI in a crusade 'libenter paratum propriis sumptibus ad Terram Sanctam proficisci contra inimicos crucis Christi cum illo vocato rege Francorum' [to march at his own expense to the Holy Land with the so-called king of France against the enemies of the cross of Christ].[32] Philip responds definitively:

> Ad hec tirannus adiudicavit regem Anglie indignum sua amicicia, quamdiu contra suos amicos Scotos, viros iustos et omni racioni, ut asseruit, obedire paratos, guerram iniustam exerceret, nec animum

> ad aliquem posse benevolum se habere, qui illos, scilicet Scotos, tam inhumaniter gerrando vexaret.
>
> [The tyrant's reply was that he judged the king of England to be unworthy of his friendship, so long as he kept up an unjust war against his friends the Scots, who were just men and ready, so he asserted, to comply with all just demands: he could not feel kindly disposed towards anyone who so savagely harassed those Scots by his invasions.][33]

Philip's language rests on the legal basis for England's actions in Scotland. In the French king's judgment, the 'just' Scots are suffering Edward's 'unjust' war, rightfully resisting incursions against their sovereignty. The question of whether Anglo-Scottish conflict was a war at all was a point of considerable contention: the English perspective was that the Scots were not fighting a just war because they were not fighting a war, instead, they were rebellious subjects who needed to be brought to heel.[34] Nevertheless, Philip agrees to the second of Stratford's demands: he will return the castles in Aquitaine if Edward meets the costs and expenses incurred by Charles IV in the wars in Gascony. But he cannot renounce his alliance with the Scots:

> respondit se fuisse iuris amicum et iusticie communis, ne unquam per affinitatem aut amiciciam carnalem a iusticia, quam dilexit, declinaturum, set se velle viis et modis quibus sciret aut posset super omnes perturbatores pacis regis Scotorum sue persecucionis iugum aggravare.
>
> [[Philip] replied that he was a friend of the law and the common justice, and that he would never swerve from the justice which he loved because of kinship or a friendship based on the family. Instead his aim was, by all the ways and means in his power that he could devise, to increase the weight of the yoke of his persecution of all disturbers of the kingdom of the Scots.][35]

Decisively, Philip chooses justice over blood. It would be putting too much pressure on a single passage to claim that this signals a paradigm shift in theories of international relations, from alliance as a predominantly interpersonal relationship to one negotiated impersonally according to higher principles. But the recurrent

usage of 'justice' and Philip's explicit dismissal of the influence that kinship or familial ties may have on his judgement do reflect the changing circumstances of late medieval international relations. The fact that this is reported in an English chronicle further demonstrates how Franco-Scottish alliance was received in England: Philip may be a 'tyrant' and he may be betraying his relationships, but Geoffrey still conveys the French king's logical reasoning.

Geoffrey ends his account with a sweeping statement by Philip about the position of France between England and Scotland: 'pax erit perfecta Christianis, antequam rex Francie, in medio Anglie consistens pro tribunal, super regna Francie, Anglie et Scocie sit iudex et imperator' [for peace … will never be established among Christians until the king of France sits on the judgement seat in the middle of England and is judge and emperor over the kingdoms of France, England and Scotland].[36] The passage gives voice to English paranoia by imagining a France that is powerful enough to serve as a proto-European Union, a supranational power that mediates between the peoples of Britain. Not only would such a reality underscore France's superiority over England but it would also make a mockery of English sovereignty.

The broader point, in other words, is that crusade will never succeed until Christendom is united; and for Christendom to unite, England must abandon its claims in Scotland. Geoffrey le Baker's account is undoubtedly inaccurate and full of fancy. Yet it productively illustrates the bind that a united France and Scotland presented for England. Indeed, whether or not it is anchored in fact, the detail and drama of this episode signal how important it was for Geoffrey's audience to understand why Philip's relationship with Scotland led to war with England.

Furthermore, Geoffrey's account reflects the historical circumstances that brought about Philip's declaration of support. In the wake of defeat by English forces at the Battle of Halidon Hill (1333), a number of Scottish nobles left Scotland for the French court and attempted to persuade Philip to intervene in support of their cause. Philip hesitated, but he did grant asylum to David II, the 10-year-old king of Scotland. In May 1334 the Scottish king arrived in Normandy, just before the negotiations with Stratford and the other English ambassadors began.[37] The unexpected presence of

the Scottish king in France thus forced Philip to double down on his investment in the Scottish cause. Before France's involvement in Scotland, England had been pursuing their imperial claims to create an expanded realm, but because of Franco-Scottish alliance they found themselves cornered and their main opponent expressly saying that he wants to gain authority over England.

The vituperative verse attributed to Laurence Minot illustrates how one English perspective resentfully imagines Franco-Scottish alliance interfering with Edward III's military desires. Minot's verse consists of eleven linked poems that narrate England's major military victories, from the Battle of Halidon Hill in 1333 to the taking of Guînes in 1352. Minot's account of Halidon Hill similarly links the conflict to Franco-Scottish alliance, as the poet describes French forces coming to England 'With hert and hand es noght at hide [there is nothing to hide] / forto help Scotland gan thai hye' (I.21–2).[38] But it is in poem 9, on the English victory over the Scottish at Neville's Cross in 1346, that Minot gives voice most ardently to outrage at Franco-Scottish alliance. Seeking to take advantage of Edward's absence on campaign in 1346, Scottish forces led an ambitious series of raids in northern England. The English routed the Scottish and captured many valuable prisoners, most notably the Scottish king David II. Minot frames the Scottish strategy as the direct result of French interference. 'Sir Philip the Valais', Minot writes, 'sent unto sir David and faire gan him pray / at ride thurgh Ingland' (IX.16–18). The poem revisits this formulation in the next stanza, underscoring how the Scottish king is acting as a puppet of the French: 'Fro Philip the Valais, was sir David sent / all Ingland to win' (IX.22–3).

In British Library, Cotton MS Galba E IX, the sole extant copy of Minot's poetry, the Battle of Neville's Cross is sequenced between accounts of the Siege of Calais (1346–47) and a 1350 sea battle between English and Spanish pirates. Framed in this way, the Battle of Neville's Cross becomes another adventure in which an embattled England is forced to defend itself against rampant enemies. The poem ends with King David imprisoned and blaming his French ally: 'Philip the Valais, thou made me be here; / this es noght the forward [agreement]. we made are to yere [beforehand]. / Fals es thi forward, and evyll mot thou fare, / for thou and sir John thi son. haves kast me in care [sorrow]' (IX.58–61). The poem indulges in

imagining David cursing Philip as 'fals' and promising the 'evyll' that he and his son will face, a potential reference to the fact that John II would himself be taken prisoner by the English at the Battle of Poitiers a decade later.

The chronicle accounts of Henry Knighton and Geoffrey le Baker and the poetry of Laurence Minot show how different sources in England register the overlap between Edward III's campaigns against Scotland and France in the fourteenth century. Taken together, they demonstrate the multilateral character of the early Hundred Years War. It is only by expanding our gaze beyond an Anglo-French lens that we can see how France and Scotland were both figured as England's enemies in the fourteenth century and how the alliance they were forced into defined the early parts of the Hundred Years War. Seen from this angle, the Hundred Years War looks less like the result of an inevitable Anglo-French clash born from the unique intimacy the two nations share than an imperial project pursued by the English crown. More than this, each source is haunted by the spectre of alliance, the idea that England is not only engaging its traditional enemies, but something worse: enemies working in consort to bring about English defeat.

Visions of alliance

'The Metrical Prophecy', as it was named by its nineteenth-century editor William F. Skene, foretells a Cambro-Scottish alliance that will return the ancient nations of Britain to their rightful place as rulers of the isle and subjugate the English.[39] Clothed in the robes of medieval British mythography, including references to the mythical founders Brutus and Albania, the poem draws on the deep past of the island's history. The prophecy gives voice to a persistent dream of Scottish historians: a reversal of Anglocentric dominance in Britain achieved through an archipelagic alliance. As Helen Fulton's chapter in this volume shows, Welsh rebellions in the fifteenth century opened a new front in England's conflicts in ways that resemble the Scottish Wars of Independence. For the fifteenth-century Scottish historian Walter Bower, these rebellions represented a hope for defeating England and putting an end to English

imperial ambition. They are also linked to the Hundred Years War: according to Bower, Henry V's attempts to conquer Wales by creating divisions between the people and their leadership presages his use of such tactics in France.[40] Overcoming English imperialism requires exactly the kind of alliance 'the Metrical Prophecy' foretells: as Bower reports, 'Dicunt tamen Wallici se numquam posse jura sua ad plenum recuperare sine adjutorio sue ab antiquo confederate gentis Albanice' [the Welsh say that they can never recover their rights in full without the help of their ally from long ago, the people of Scotland].[41] Tracking how Scottish Latin chronicles integrate 'The Metrical Prophecy' into their histories illustrates how vital prophecy was for reimagining the role of England in Britain.

The prophecy travels through the Scottish Latin historiographical tradition inaugurated by John of Fordun's fourteenth-century *Chronica gentis Scotorum*, the first chronicle to provide a chronological account of the Scottish people. In the fifteenth century Fordun's account was expanded and updated by Walter Bower, a powerful abbot and intellectual, and renamed the *Scotichronicon*. Bower's monumental history exerted a powerful influence on Scottish history writing, akin to Ranulph Higden's foundational *Polychronicon* in England, and later writers built their history on Bower's chronicle in the same way he had done to Fordun.[42] 'The Metrical Prophecy' migrates from being an aspirational piece of propaganda cited in John of Fordun to occupying a more prominent role in Cambro-Scots relations in the *Scotichronicon*, before becoming reported speech in the *Liber Pluscardensis,* a later redaction of the *Scotichronicon*.

John of Fordun includes the prophecy in a chapter paying tribute to Gildas, a fifth- or sixth-century historian of Britain whom Fordun holds in high regard: 'cui sicut variis testatur historiis Britanni debent ascribere si quid inter ceteras gentes haben noticie' [to him, as is testified in various histories, the Britons must ascribe any distinction they may enjoy among other nations].[43] Gildas was the author of *De excidio Brittonum*, one of the earliest histories of Britain, which foretold in apocalyptic terms the world of Britain after the Roman Empire.[44] According to Fordun, Gildas was granted the ability to work miracles and 'spiritu sepius prophecie' [often the spirit of prophecy] because he was a chaplain of Arthur (although Fordun hedges his bets by acknowledging that others deny this).[45]

Many of Gildas's prophecies have come true, Fordun states, although some have not been fulfilled as contemporary interpreters expected. Fordun then includes two that have not been fulfilled. The first is an extract from 'the Metrical Prophecy' that, he explains, concerns 'de continuacione confecti federis inter Scotos et Britones incepti prius a Carausio deinde fideliter a Conano servati sed et ab Aurelio Ambrosio reparati necnon a multis huc usque principibus quamvis non omnibus continuati' [the continuation of the treaty concluded between Scots and Britons that was first begun by Carausius, then faithfully observed by Conan, but renewed by Aurelius Ambrosius, also by many princes right up to the present day, although not by all].[46] Through the inclusion of this prophecy John of Fordun portrays Cambro-Scottish alliance as having an ancient pedigree and represents the history of Britain as a conflict between an aggressive England and an archipelagic alliance. Although the prophecy has not been fulfilled, its power lies in an encoded potentiality. Scotland and Wales have been united since the earliest times, Fordun suggests, and while they have not yet brought the English to destruction, this threat will become actualised in the fullness of time.

Where John of Fordun had included the prophecy as an example of Gildas's writing, Walter Bower integrates it into the Anglo-Scottish negotiations that accompanied Edward I's attempt to seize overlordship of Scotland at the end of the thirteenth century. Bower reports how at a meeting called at Upsetlington, Edward I, 'primo tenue et non quasi seriose' [tentatively at first and not as if he were serious], claimed suzerainty over Scotland, a claim he could prove by the 'solempnes evidencias' he has assembled from across the realm.[47] He is swiftly answered by Robert Wishart the Bishop of Glasgow, who states,

> 'O rex de libris Anglorum excerpsi [vaticinium der Gildas inter cetera sic habetur]:
> Regnum Scotorum fuit inter cetera regna
> terrarum quondam nobile forte potens.
> Post Britones Noricos Pictos Dacosques repulsos,
> nobiliter Scoti jus tenuere suum.'
>
> [Your majesty, I have made extracts from the books of the English, namely [a prophecy] of Gildas, as follows:

> The kingdom of the Scots was once noble, strong and powerful
> among the other kingdoms of the earth.
> After the Britons, Norwegians, Picts and Danes had been repulsed,
> the Scots noble upheld their rights].[48]

By drawing on the deep history of Scottish resistance against invasion, Wishart lets the King of England know that any concession to English sovereignty will only be temporary. In the *Liber Pluscardensis,* a later recension of the chronicle written in 1460, the prophecy is repurposed *again*, this time as Wishart's direct speech with no reference to Gildas.[49] Recycling the prophecy in this way demonstrates how historians viewed its political utility. In the face of renewed waves of English imperialism, succeeding generations of historians returned to the prophecy as proof that the Scots defended their independence in the past and because of this precedent, they would do so again in the future.

Political prophecies foretelling Cambro-Scottish alliance circulated beyond the codex. During the Wars of Independence in 1307, for instance, it was reported that certain Scottish preachers had claimed to discover a prophecy of Merlin that foretold an alliance between Scotland and the Britons, the ancient name for the Welsh.[50] Similarly, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France MS lat. 4126, a fourteenth-century collection of historical texts owned (or made for) the Carmelite friar John Poppleton, places 'the Metrical Prophecy' alongside other historical texts. Poppleton was a friar at a monastery in York before he became prior of a convent at Hulne near the town of Alnwick on the east coast of England. In addition to devotional texts and some of the most popular historical texts of the Middle Ages, including extracts from Orosius, Gerald of Wales's *Topographia hibernia* and Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon*, the manuscript contains several items that pertain to Scotland and Scottish history. The presence of 'the Metrical Prophecy' in Poppleton's manuscript reveals how records of Scottish resistance formed part of a historical record cultivated in Scotland but south of the border too.

The Scottish resistance prophesied in texts like 'the Metrical Prophecy' is answered in Higden's *Polychronicon* by a fear of destruction. In a passage where the Chester historian provides a

contemporary twist to his account of the Wars of Independence, Higden warns that after spectacular victories won by Edward I, the Scots will simply grow stronger. In John Trevisa's 1387 translation: 'þe Scottes wex strenger and strenger þritty ȝere to gidres anon to kynge Edwardes tyme þe þridde after þe conquest, and bete doun Englische men oost and Englische men [oft and Englysshe] places þat were nygh to her marches'.[51] The worrisome strength of the Scots is given a more sinister interpretation by Higden as it is seen to be the fulfilment of a prophecy: 'Som men seide þat þat myshap fel for mescheves of Englisch men, and some seide þat it was Goddes owne wreche, and þe prophecie seide þat Englische men schulde be destroyed by Danes, by Frensche men, and by Scottes, as it is i-touched [discussed] in þe ende of þe first book.'[52] Higden draws on three levels of historical explanation here, each one foretelling a greater sense of concern: while 'some men' explain the coming English defeats as being caused by mistakes they made, others state that it was divinely ordained. More terrifying still is the prophecy stating that the English will ultimately be destroyed by such defeats.

The cross-reference ultimately leads back to Henry of Huntingdon, who had cast his twelfth-century history of England as a history of five invasions.[53] In Book 6 of the *Historia Anglorum*, Henry frames the Norman Conquest (the fifth invasion) as a providential act, sent by God to punish the English. This is announced in a prophecy made by 'A certain man of God', who also predicts another invasion by the Scots: 'Predixit etiam quod non ea gens solum uerum et Scotorum, quos uilissimos habebant, eis ad emeritam confusionem dominaretur' [He also predicted that not only that people, but also the Scots, whom they considered to be most vile, would lord it over them to their well-merited confusion].[54] Fear of invasion and alliance provided an effective tool for England's enemies.[55] Higden's invocation of this prophecy within the context of fourteenth-century conflict illustrates how the English historiographic imagination remains concerned by the threat of French and Scottish collaboration.

More than a curious history of a promiscuous line of verse, this account of how 'the Metrical Prophecy' is absorbed into Scottish history writing speaks to the importance of visions of prophecy and alliance for Scottish historians. By imagining a Cambro-Scottish

alliance that will return Britain to its rightful rulers and overthrow the English, Scottish historians assert ownership over the legends of Britain, legends more often used against them. Throughout the late Middle Ages, history writing is bent to the demands of war, used to contest the claims of war and leveraged as another weapon to strike the enemy. Medieval historians were attuned to the resonances of the deep past. Henry of Huntingdon's five plagues encode the haunting possibility of future invasion, while mythographic visions of ancient alliance assert a sense of precedent that bridges the gap from deep past to the present day.

Fears of Franco-Scottish alliance could also be exploited for political gain. For example, in 1334, the same year as the negotiations between John Stratford and Philip VI of France recounted by Geoffrey le Baker, an influential Irish nobleman, Maurice fitz Thomas, first earl of Desmond, was charged with claims that he planned to ally with the kings of France and Scotland to overthrow Edward III's rule in Ireland. Michael Brown argues that this claim was fabricated 'as a means of blackening him in the eyes of the crown', and it illustrates how Anglo-French and Anglo-Scottish conflict – to say nothing of English imperialism in Ireland – were fundamentally connected.[56]

Although my focus here is on Scotland, French literature also used the affordances of the prophetic register. Eustache Deschamps, for example, weaves together prophetic traditions and contemporary events in several of his ballades to predict the downfall of England.[57] In one, Balade MCC ('de la mort du Roy Richart d'Angleterre), written about the death of Richard II, Deschamps imagines a coalition of forces uniting against England. The poem ends:

> Plourez, Anglois, les tribulacions
> Qui vous viennent, et voz destrucions;
> Pour voz pechiez dit voz regnes: 'je fin.'
> Franc escot par les bretons [*sic*],[58]
> Pour roy Richart dictes: "destruiz serons,"
> Qui faussement a esté mis à fin.[59]
>
> [Mourn, English, the tribulations
> That come to you, and your destruction.

> For your sins, known as your reigns: 'I [come to an] end.'
> Among the Franks, the Scots, and the Britons,
> For King Richard's sake, who was unjustly killed,
> Say: 'we will be destroyed.']

Deschamps draws on the ancient names of the Franks, Scots and Britons to weave together connections between the recent past and deep history. Similarly, Merlin and Bede are invoked earlier in the poem as prophets who foretold the destruction that will come to the English after the treasonous killing of Richard II. Deschamps concludes, directly addressing the English, that 'pour vo mort et haire / Qui faussement a esté mis à fin' [for you death and hated / because of who was unjustly killed] (ll. 19–20). Such a melding of temporalities is what gives political prophecies their political efficacy and illustrates how they expand beyond the confines of interpretative frameworks. Within the late Middle Ages, when conflict was endemic and new wars were fought for old reasons, prophecy enabled writers to imagine the coalitions that could herald victory, or foretell destruction.

Walter Bower's *Scotichronicon* never passes up an opportunity to mention a prophecy declaring the foretold destruction of the English. An important part of Bower's historiographic project is to integrate ancient precedent into Scotland's history. For example, for Bower, the Auld Alliance runs much deeper than the 1295 Treaty of Paris, the treaty historians agree inaugurated the pact of cooperation. In a passage concerning Fergus, the first king of the Scots, Bower adds the following note about the king's arms: 'Deinde propter indissolubilem ligam perpetuis futuris temporibus inter regna Francie et Scocie observandum et ad futuram eius memoriam, in circumferencia scuti armorum regis duplicem tressuram liliferam domus Scocie assumendam elegit' [Then because of the indissoluble ties that were to be observed for all future times between the kingdoms of France and Scotland, and as a foreshadowing of those ties, the [royal] house of Scotland chose to adopt on the outer rim of the shield that formed part of the king's armour a double border of fleur-de-lis].[60] The fleur-de-lis was actually first integrated into the arms of Alexander III in the mid-thirteenth century. But for Bower, the Auld Alliance is an 'indissoluble' tie between Scotland and

France that stretches from the very origins of the Scottish people into 'all future times'.

While Franco-Scottish military alliance often meant the French king lending support to the Scottish cause, in the fifteenth century Scotland also provided crucial support to Charles VII. The most dramatic victory of the Auld Alliance comes in 1421, when a combined Franco-Scottish force defeated the English at the Battle of Baugé. Historians debate the efficacy of an alliance that seemed far more important to the Scots than the French, but the Franco-Scottish alliance was seen to be enough of a problem that English diplomats negotiating peace treaties with France would insert clauses that neutered the threat of the alliance.[61] Writing with rhetorical bravado in an oration for James I, the fifteenth-century diplomat and poet Alain Chartier states that Franco-Scottish alliance 'Neque enim liga hec jam in carta pellis ovine designata, sed hominum carni et cuti' [is not marked on parchment in ink, but on the living flesh and skin of men].[62]

The dramatic victory at Baugé created new opportunities for the Scottish soldiers in France. John Stewart of Darnley provides perhaps the clearest example.[63] Darnley was part of the 1419 force and after Baugé was made Seigneur of Concressault. When the Dauphin assumed the French throne, Stewart was rewarded with the lordship of Aubginy-sur-Nère, situated between Orléans and Bourges. John's grandson Bernard Stewart (Béraut Stuart in French) became a commander of the Gardes Écossaises, the French king's bodyguard. Indeed, today there is a museum in Aubigny-sur-Nère dedicated to the Auld Alliance and the town proudly displays its ties to Scottish culture. Despite the Realpolitik and self-interest behind Franco-Scottish alliance, it also furnished cultural connections between the two realms. Scant evidence remains of 'the French of Scotland' that speaks to this Francophone amity, but scholars are revising this history by locating Scottish literature within its transnational milieu, while new archival research has found evidence of spoken French in Scotland.[64]

The twin poles of alliance and antagonism define Scotland's path through the late Middle Ages, ties created in the court and on the battlefield but embellished by historical chroniclers and

poets passing between and among England, Scotland and France. Conflicts that are today siloed into separate interpretative frameworks, including the Scottish Wars of Independence, the Hundred Years War and rebellions of Owain Glyn Dŵr, were represented by medieval writers as fundamentally connected. Even as the imagination of historians outstripped the actual historical record of military alliance, chronicles provide valuable insights into the way that different communities conceptualised conflict. For Scottish historians, any conflict involving England is another instantiation of the long history of English imperialism and requires an expansive anti-English coalition. Political prophecy furnishes visions of these coalitions as opaque references that were conscripted as evidence for the ancient pedigree of international amity. For the English, such prophecies served as warnings against complacency and instilled a paranoia about the destructive potential of multilateral warfare. Prophecy's temporality becomes the time of perpetual war. As one conflict ends, another begins, bonds of amity and enmity tested anew.

Notes

1 Walsingham, *St Albans Chronicle*, vol. 2, ed. and trans. Taylor et al., 300–1.
2 Walsingham, *St Albans Chronicle*, vol. 2, 300–1.
3 See Usk, *Chronicle*, ed. and trans. Given-Wilson, 95–7.
4 Walsingham, *St Albans Chronicle*, vol. 2, 300–1.
5 Walsingham, *St Albans Chronicle*, vol. 2, 302–3.
6 As Chris Given-Wilson notes, the Scots responded in kind by leading cross-border raids on the Coronation days of Edward III and Henry IV. Given-Wilson, *Henry IV*, 167. See also Ormrod, *Edward III*, 64–5.
7 Usk, *Chronicle*, 100–1.
8 On this topic, see also Fulton's chapter in this volume.
9 For Scotland's role in the Hundred Years War, see Curry, *Hundred Years War*, 117–29; Brown, 'French Alliance or English Peace?'; Campbell, 'England, Scotland and the Hundred Years War'; DeVries, 'Hundred Years War'.
10 Butterfield, *Familiar Enemy*; Bellis, *Hundred Years War in Literature*.

11 Goldstein, *Matter of Scotland*; Gilbert et al. *Medieval French*, 84–121; Matthews, *Writing to the King*.
12 Galloway, 'Borderlands of Satire', 16.
13 See Butterfield, *Familiar Enemy*, 113, on the discursive grounds of Anglo-French 'exchange'.
14 Bellis, *Hundred Years War in Literature*, 73.
15 Bower, *Scotichronicon*, ed. Watt, vol. 7, 87. Citations of the *Scotichronicon* are given by volume and page number. Translation modified.
16 For histories of medieval political prophecy, see Weiskott, *Meter and Modernity*, 25–99; Coote, *Prophecy and Public Affairs*; Flood, *Prophecy, Place, and Politics*.
17 See Terrell and Bruce (eds), *Anglo-Scottish Border*.
18 Froissart, *Chronicles*, trans. Brereton, 186–7.
19 Beyond these episodes of peace, there were also shorter periods of truce, for example from 1319–21 and 1385–88. King and Simpkin, 'Introduction'.
20 See McKelvie, 'Royal Prisoner'.
21 Fowler, 'Truces'.
22 *Sidrak and Bokkus*, ed. Burton, vol. 1, 441.
23 See Terrell, *Scripting the Nation*, 13–36; and Goldstein, *Matter of Scotland*.
24 Bower, *Scotichronicon*, vol. 6, 3–5.
25 Ireland, where colonial efforts were ongoing throughout the Middle Ages, is similarly a space that marks the limits of English sovereignty but remained further out of grasp for English kings than Scotland. See Crooks, 'Before Humpty Dumpty' and McGettigan, *Richard II and the Irish Kings*.
26 MacDougall, *Antidote*; Bonner, '"Auld Alliance"'.
27 See Pollock, *Scotland, England and France* and MacDougall, *An Antidote*.
28 See the introduction to this volume and *True Chronicles of Jean le Bel*, trans. Bryant, 36–8.
29 Knighton, *Knighton's Chronicle*, ed. and trans. Martin, 2–3.
30 *Chronicon Galfridi*, ed. Thompson, 56; *Chronicle of Geoffrey*, ed. Barber, trans. Preest, 49. Translation modified.
31 Bellis, *Hundred Years War*, 51–99, provides a compelling analysis of this irony.
32 *Chronicon Galfridi*, 56; *Chronicle of Geoffrey*, 49. On the issue of crusades, see the chapters by Vander Elst and Hicks-Bartlett in this volume.
33 *Chronicon Galfridi*, 56; *Chronicle of Geoffrey*, 49.
34 Prestwich, *Plantagenet England*, 258.

35 *Chronicon Galfridi*, 56; *Chronicle of Geoffrey*, 49 (translation modified).
36 *Chronicon Galfridi*, 56; *Chronicle of Geoffrey*, 49 (translation modified).
37 For an account of the negotiations, see Sumption, *Hundred Years War I*, 135–7. According to Sumption, the promise of crusade remained the 'keystone of English policy for three years from 1333–1336' (135).
38 Minot, *Poems of Laurence Minot*, ed. Osberg. Citations are given in-text and all punctuation is reproduced from the edition.
39 For Robert Bruce's invocations of Cambro-Scottish alliance, see Brown, 'Plantagenet Empire', 395.
40 Bower, *Scotichronicon*, vol. 8, 98.
41 Bower, *Scotichronicon*, vol. 8, 108–10.
42 For the life and afterlife of the *Scotichronicon*, see Terrell, *Scripting the Nation*, 13–88 and Davies, 'Medieval Scottish historians'.
43 Bower, *Scotichronicon*, vol. 2, 59.
44 On the importance of Gildas to the long history of imagining English national identity, see Staley, *Island Garden*.
45 Bower, *Scotichronicon*, vol. 2, 59.
46 Bower, *Scotichronicon*, vol. 2, 59.
47 Bower, *Scotichronicon*, vol. 6, 27.
48 Bower, *Scotichronicon*, vol. 6, 27. Bracketed text found only in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 171 and Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Adv. MS 35.1.7. Translation modified.
49 *Liber Pluscardensis*, ed. and trans. Skene, vol. 1, 133 (Latin), vol. 2, 99.
50 *Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland*, vol. 2, 513.
51 Higden et al., *Polychronicon*, vol. 8, 286.
52 Higden et al., *Polychronicon*, vol. 8, 286.
53 See Galloway, 'Latin England'.
54 Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, ed. and trans. Greenway, 6:1.
55 Henry's prophecy was also used by Bower to establish what Terrell describes as the 'moral superiority' of the Scots. *Scripting the Nation*, 75.
56 Brown, 'Plantagenet Empire', 394.
57 See, for example, *balades* CLXXXX, CLXXXII, CXLII and CLXI in Deschamps, *Oeuvres*.
58 Deschamps could be referring to the Bretons here, but 'Britons' makes more sense within the literary tradition of prophecy and considering the context of the rest of the poem.
59 *Oeuvres*, vol. 6, 185. Edition modified in consultation with Paris, BnF MS fr. 840, fol. 324v. I am grateful to Elizaveta Strakhov and Lucas Wood for their help with this translation.

60 Bower, *Scotichronicon*, vol. 1, 196.
61 For example, the treaties of Brétigny (1360) and Luelinghem (1389) both contain such provisions.
62 Chartier, *Les Œuvres latines*, ed. Bourgain-Hemeryck, 213. Translation mine. For more on Chartier, see Wood's chapter in this volume.
63 Macdonald, '[Stuart], Sir John, of Darnley'.
64 Calin, *Lily and the Thistle*; Luisgnan, 'Use of Anglo-Norman'.