

Lesson 5 - Scotland, America, Freedom, The Stone of Destiny, and Jeremiah

The Declaration of Arbroath

Yeh, I know you're saying, "never heard of it and what does it have to do with Deuteronomy???" You'll find out, but i'm doing this because my mother was Scottish (clan MacGregor) and my father was Welsh.

The Declaration of Arbroath was summarized by one historian as 'one of the masterpieces of political rhetoric of all time'. In the year 1320AD, a letter to the Pope was written that defined and outlined the character of a people and their nation. It was written in the aftermath of the difficult Wars of Independence against England which came to a head in 1314 with the Scottish victory at the Battle of Bannockburn. It has become synonymous with the terms freedom and civil liberty. It had quite an impact in its day, and is also believed to have had an influence on Thomas Jefferson and the American Declaration of Independence some 450 years later.

This letter, also known as the Letter from the Barons of Scotland to Pope John XXII, was designed to influence the papacy in the favor of the Scottish king Robert the Bruce, who had been bravely fighting against the English king Edward I and his aggressive moves towards Scotland for some time. Bruce (Robert I) had been excommunicated by the church primarily due to his having murdered a competitor in the past with some accomplices, something that is admittedly abhorrent, but actually was not as rare in medieval times as we may think today. So, understandably, the church took action against Bruce through excommunication.

Arbroath Abbey, in the northeast of Scotland, was founded by William I in 1178 and dedicated to St Thomas Becket. It has always been assumed that the 1320 Declaration was written at Arbroath; but it is now also being questioned by experts whether or not the Declaration was actually signed at Arbroath on the 6 April 1320, as has always been assumed. Today, the USA and some Canadian provinces have officially adopted the 6 April as Tartan Day, in honor of Scotland and its beliefs in freedom and resistance to tyranny, concepts which largely have come down to us from the Declaration of Arbroath (and Deuteronomy).

The Scottish nation had a very distinguished history, originating in Greater Scythia, in the vicinity of the Black Sea, from where they wandered through the Mediterranean to the Straits of Gibraltar for a lengthy sojourn in Spain. Then, 1,200 years after the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, the Scots were identified as a chosen people, and arrived in Scotland to defeat the Britons and Picts while fighting off constant attacks from the Scandinavians and the English. The Declaration then says that the Scottish nation had held its possessions 'free of all servitude ever since,' under the custodianship of 113 kings, 'the line unbroken by a single foreigner'. Even though the Scots existed

'at the uttermost ends of the earth', they were singled out among the first for salvation through the medium of St Andrew, the first-called of all the disciples.

The part about King Robert the Bruce and the role of the king in relation to his people deserves to be quoted in full: ... [our] king. We are bound to him for the maintaining of our freedom both by his rights and merits... Yet if he should give up what he has begun, seeking to make us or our kingdom subject to the king of England or the English, we would strive at once to drive him out as our enemy and a subverter of his own right and ours, and we would make some other man who was able to defend us our king. For as long as a hundred of us remain alive we will never on any conditions be subjected to the lordship of the English. For we fight not for glory nor riches nor honors, but for freedom alone, which no good man gives up except with his life.

This is an extraordinary claim – where the Scots say that if their king, Robert the Bruce, would not defend them for any reason, that they would replace him. Here the Scots are declaring, to put it plainly: if King Robert (or his descendants) ever 'sells out' to the English, then he will simply be kicked off the Scottish throne and replaced. **The implication behind this is that the sovereign only remains a sovereign by the will of the people, and not merely by 'divine right' – a new and revolutionary idea at the time.**

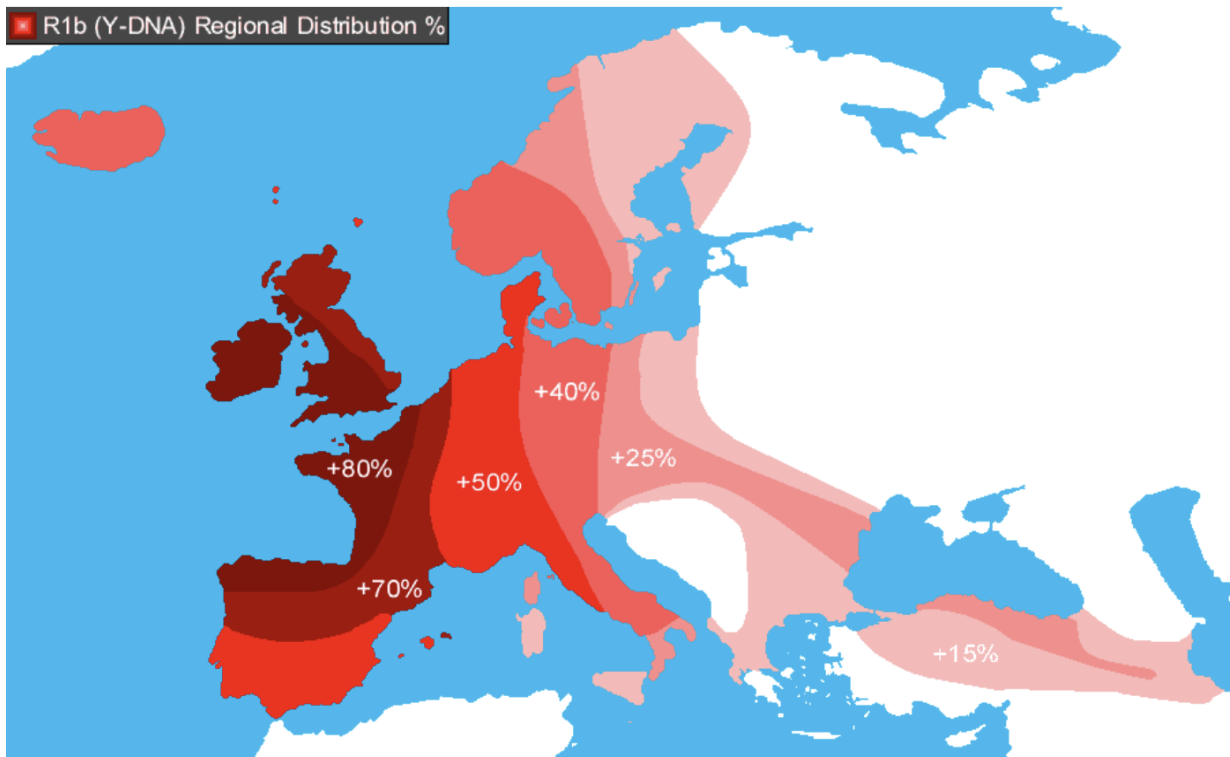
Almost alone among the nations of feudal Europe where the accepted concept was that authority flowed downward from the crown, Scotland stated clearly and firmly **that here the rights flow upward from the people**. In the presence of the King, they made it plain that he had their support as long as he did not betray them and that, should he do so, they would choose another King.

Later, in the American Declaration of Independence, we also find the concept of governance by 'the consent of the governed'. In 1776, Thomas Jefferson wrote: ... **that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it...**

Robert the Bruce was certainly a courageous leader and in the Declaration of Arbroath, the Scots compare him to the great hero of the Maccabees of Israel. From a rare 1850 book by William Livingston entitled Vindication of the Celtic Character, we read that: ... **our Prince and King, Robert, who, in delivering his people out of the hands of their enemies, as another Maccabee or Joshua... whom also, by Divine Providence, and the right of succession, according to our laws and customs, which we will maintain to the utmost, and with the due consent of all of us, have we made him our Prince and King...**

How Old Are The Scotts

This map showing distribution of haplogroup Rb1 in Europe suggests the peoples of northern and western Europe are closely related, but are quite distant (genetically speaking) from the people of central Europe.



Linguists – and now geneticists – have known for some time that the Indo-Europeans, of whom the Celts are a part, are thought to have originated in Turkey, then migrated from the Caucasian mountains area near the Black Sea in the southern steppes of Russia, into Europe. The Celts came from the western part of the Kurgan area, originally from Turkey, very early on, experts now believe.

The strange case of the 'Tartan Mummies' of Takla Makan - In the 1990s, the discovery of almost perfectly preserved 3,500 year-old mummies of an unknown, extinct people in China's Takla Makan desert. These extraordinary mummies were scientifically proven to have had undeniably European roots.

But it is the tartan (or twill) woven clothing that was found on the mummies that is of special interest here. Not only does this woolen plaid twill look like Scottish tartans, but it also has the same weight, feel and initial thickness as kilt cloth, and as the Hallstatt materials... If the Bronze and Iron Age ancestors of the historic Celts wove woolen plaid twills so similar to modern ones, clearly the pre-nationalist Scots in the intervening centuries wove this sort of thing to.



Clan MacGregor Tartan Plaid

The oldest tartan in Scotland dates from about 325AD, the early part of the 4th century. It was found near Falkirk and is now housed in the National Museum of Scotland. Not many tartans have survived in Scotland, mainly because cloth on the whole doesn't preserve too well in its climate and soil conditions. But as the Takla Makan desert is still one of the driest places on earth, tartan cloth from much earlier times has survived there that is very similar, if not nearly identical, to the Scottish type of tartan, which has greatly intrigued archaeologists and other scientific experts today.

The Stone of Destiny

We also find that the Prophet Jeremiah and the Scots are linked by another powerful tradition – the legend of the Lia-Fail, also known as 'the Stone of Destiny'. This stone, said to be the Coronation Stone of the early Irish and Scottish kings, is also called Jacob's Pillow, or Pillar. Scottish tradition says it originally came from Israel with 'a wandering people', eventually reaching Ireland and then Scotland. In old accounts of this legend, the prophet Jeremiah brings this most holy relic of the people of Israel, Jacob's Pillow, to Ireland. The stone is very ancient and arguably the most powerful symbol of Scottish nationhood today.

The story of this stone, so famous in Scottish legend and history, begins in the Old Testament, when the patriarch Jacob rests his head on a stone on his way to Harran. The account is in Genesis 28, 10-22:

Jacob set out from Beersheba and went on his way towards Harran. He came to a certain place and stopped there for the night, because the sun had set; and taking one of the stones there, he made a pillow for his head and lay down to sleep. He dreamt that he saw a ladder, which rested on the ground with its top reaching to heaven, and angels of God were going up and down upon it...

The Lord was standing beside him and said, 'I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. This land on which you are lying I will give to you and your descendants. They shall be countless as the dust upon the earth, and you shall spread far and wide, to north and south, to east and west. All the families of the earth shall pray to be blessed as you and your descendants are blessed... Jacob rose early in the morning, took the stone on which he had laid his head, set it up as a sacred pillar and poured oil on the top of it. He named the place Beth-El...

This symbol of a 'Chosen People', a special stone of some type, forms much of the basis of the Irish and Scottish origin and kingship legends.

Abraham's grandson Jacob has a dream while resting on the stone, in which God repeats the promise that his heirs will be the chosen of God;

- In 722BC the Assyrians scattered all of the tribes of Israel, except for Judah and Benjamin, and the so-called 'lost tribes' then disappear from biblical history;
- In 586BC, Zedekiah, the last King of Judah was overthrown by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon;
- The fall of Judah is said to have been a punishment by God for the disobedience of the people in not keeping his laws;
- The prophet Jeremiah and his scribe Baruch warned the king about the exile of the people, challenged the false prophets and spoke of the promise of the restoration;
- Zedekiah did not heed the words of the prophet Jeremiah and was overthrown;
- Nebuchadnezzar killed all of Zedekiah's sons, leaving no male heirs of the royal line;
- Jerusalem and its Temple were destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, and he carried off the holy treasures along with captives into Babylon;
- The captives included Jeremiah, his scribe Baruch, and according to Scottish and Irish legends, also Zedekiah's daughter, who was Princess Tea or Tamar Tephi.

Nebuchadnezzar freed Jeremiah, who promptly rescued several items from the Temple – the Tabernacle and the Altar of Incense are mentioned – and hid them in a cave near Pisgah. He also rescued Zedekiah's daughters, one of whom was the Princess Tea, and with them fled to Egypt. Jeremiah then completely disappears from Biblical history with no mention at all of where he went after being in Egypt. Tradition states that Irish kings were crowned at Tara on the Lia Fail (Jacob's

Pillow) for the next 1,000 years, until its departure to Scotland with King Fergus. This great dynasty was said to have been descended from Israel in these early accounts.

The Stone of Destiny has been shrouded in many myths and legends. It is mainly thought to be the coronation stone of the ancient kings of Israel, and later, of the Irish and the Scottish kings, having been 'Jacob's Pillow'. The stone that was returned to Scotland in 1996 from Westminster is a large piece of very old red sandstone, more than 400 million years old, and it is known to be similar to other rocks that have been found in the Scone area. The stone is roughly rectangular in shape, and has iron rings at each end, as if it were once carried. The most unusual aspect of this stone, experts admit, is the obvious smoothness of its upper surface. Stone conservator Peter Hill has stated that this may be because people had once walked or kneeled on it, implying that it may have been an object of veneration by pilgrims for centuries.



From its arrival in Scotland from Ireland, said to be around the year 500AD in some legendary accounts, the stone has since been regarded as a most holy and mystical relic. All the kings of Scotland from King Fergus until its removal to England in 1296 were crowned upon it. When Edward I removed it, it was then later placed under the Coronation chair in Westminster Abbey.

Ever since, all the subsequent Kings and Queens of England, and Great Britain, have been crowned on it.

The stone takes us back to Scone and the Celtic kings of Iona and to the first of our forefathers who landed on Ard Gael, now called Argyll, and to the very roots of our race itself. It may be nonsense. It may be as legendary as the story of king Arthur, the Briton who, if he ever lived, fell fighting not for the English but against them. What matters is what people believe, and Scots believe in the Stone. However, to be sure, the stone that sits beside the Scottish regalia today is a most powerful symbol, an important emblem of Scottish nationhood and history. It is what it ultimately symbolizes that is really important, and the sheer number of traditions, myths and legends about this stone also says something in and of itself.

Battle of Bannockburn

The **Battle of Bannockburn** fought on June 23-24, 1314, was a victory of the army of King of Scots Robert the Bruce over the army of King Edward II of England in the First War of Scottish Independence. Although it did not bring an end to the war, as victory would be secured 14 years later, Bannockburn is still a major landmark in Scottish history.

King Edward II invaded Scotland after Bruce demanded in 1313 that all supporters still loyal to ousted Scottish king John Balliol acknowledge Bruce as their king or lose their lands. Stirling Castle, a Scots royal fortress occupied by the English, was under siege by the Scottish army. King Edward assembled a formidable force of soldiers to relieve it – the largest army ever to invade Scotland. The English summoned 25,000 infantry soldiers and 2,000 horses from England, Ireland and Wales against 6,000 Scottish soldiers, that Bruce had divided into three different contingents.

After Robert Bruce killed Sir Henry de Bohun on the first day of the battle, the English withdrew for the day. That night, Sir Alexander Seton, a Scottish noble serving in Edward's army, defected to the Scottish side and informed King Robert of the English camp's low morale, telling him they could win. Robert Bruce decided to launch a full-scale attack on the English forces the next day. The English army was defeated in a pitched battle which resulted in the deaths of several prominent commanders.

The day of the battle, 24 June, is St John the Baptist's Day. It was also known to be an important date to the medieval Knights Templar, leading to further speculation and various legendary accounts about a possible surviving Templar remnant at Bannockburn to assist Robert the Bruce, who is said to have been sympathetic to the plight of the Templars.



Templar Calvary and the Beauseant Battle Flag

