

THE

BLUE LION



Special Edition

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THE DECLARATION OF ARBROATH – 1320 AD

SPECIAL EDITION

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The Declaration was probably drawn up by Bernard, Abbot of Arbroath. It was authenticated by seals, as documents at that time were not signed. Only 19 seals now remain of what might have been 50 originally, and many are in poor condition.

The document in National Records of Scotland is the "file copy" of the Declaration: the only version to survive in its original form. It was kept with the rest of the national records in Edinburgh Castle until the seventeenth century. When work was being done on the castle, the Declaration was taken for safekeeping to Tynninghame, the home of the official in charge of the records. While there it suffered damage through damp and it returned to the custody of the Deputy Clerk Register (the predecessor of the [Keeper of the Records of Scotland](#)) in 1829. [Conservation](#) staff at the NRS monitor the Declaration to ensure it survives for many centuries to come.



<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/research/learning/features/the-declaration-of-arbroath>

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DEAR FAMILY —

A most heartfelt greeting to all of our members and friends on the occasion of the publication of this special edition of the BLUE LION. We are not only making this issue available to our membership, but are also providing e-copies on request to all other members of our Scottish communities around the world, and to all others who will find it of interest. Digital e-copies in full color are available from our Blue Lion editor. Our commissioners and tent hosts may have copies to view. The seven hundredth anniversary of the document will come in the year 2020, and we want our members well informed as to the details of this historic document and its importance, past, present & future,

I am extraordinarily pleased that FAMILY OF BRUCE INTERNATIONAL, INCORPORATED, USA is bringing this special edition of the BLUE LION to both our membership and also to the other members of our Scottish Communities. It is particularly significant that we are the ones to bring these materials to your attention, as we are the most direct inheritors of the legacy of King Robert 1. We are particularly pleased to offer herein, the work of one of our own scholar members, Dr. Mark Bruce, PhD, professor of English, Latin & Medieval Studies at Bethel University in Saint Paul, Minnesota. The translation of the Declaration of Arbroath from the original Latin found herein is his work, along with the textual commentary. It is always a difficult task to translate a historic document and make it understandable to a contemporary audience and still keep it true to the context and meaning of the original. I believe Dr. Bruce has accomplished that task. Unfortunately, there have been many who have made assumptions about the meaning of the Declaration that are unwarranted, and many of those inaccuracies have become points of belief about the Declaration that are dearly held by those who wish to make the document a justification for their own views. These inaccuracies are remedied through the application of the very best of scholarship. In

addition to Dr. Bruce's work, we have included in this edition a facsimile of the original document, well captioned photos of Arbroath Abbey as it exists today, and further information concerning the historical events which necessitated the writing of the Declaration.

Dr. Mark Bruce was born and raised in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He received the Bachelor of Arts degree from Bethel University, the Master of Arts degree from Colorado State University, and the Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Iowa. Currently he holds the tenured position of Associate Professor of English at Bethel University in St. Paul, Minnesota, where the subjects of English, Latin and Medieval Studies are shared with his students. He has also served as department chair, and has led students to the UK for a specialized "England Term". He is also co-author of the book - Bruce, Mark P. and Katherine H. Terrell, ed. *The Anglo-Scottish Borders and the Shaping of Identity: 1300-1600* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012). He is married and has a twelve year old daughter. He is a life member of Family of Bruce International, Inc., and a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. I am also proud to say he is my eldest son!

YOURS AYE,

William



Dr. Mark Bruce



The Right Honorable the 11th Earl of Elgin and 14th Earl of Kincardine,
KT, LLD, DLitt, DL, JP, Chief of the Family and Name of Bruce.....

"as regards to the story by Dr. Mark Bruce - this is quite magnificent - every single point which I felt was ignored or misunderstood by previous historians has been most carefully reappraised and superbly presented."

Prepared by Mark Bruce, Ph.D., FSA Scot

What is the Declaration of Arbroath? The Declaration of Arbroath is a letter, written in Latin, sent to Pope John XXII in 1320 by a number of Scots noblemen who identify themselves as supporters of King Robert I (the Bruce). The main purpose of the letter was to ask the pope to pressure the English to cease hostilities against Scotland. The term "Declaration"—a term first applied to the document in the 18th century—is actually a little misleading. The letter's medieval audience (which was just Pope John and his curia, or court) would have considered it a letter of petition or request and not a statement or "declaration."

Where does it come from? We know of the document because of an existing copy, a large parchment page preserved in the Scottish Record Office. This is probably the home-department "file copy" of the original document, which was sent to the Pope's court in Avignon, France. So far, no one has found the original. We know the pope got it, though, because he wrote a letter in response to it, which quotes parts of the Declaration directly.

Why was it written in Latin and not English, Gaelic, or Scots? Latin, in the Middle Ages, was the universal language of the Roman Catholic Church. Since the letter was written to the Pope, and composed by members of the clergy, it was naturally written in Latin, since Latin was the language that all clergy could understand no matter where they came from. In fact, those who drafted it would have considered it a vulgar insult to the Pope to write it in any other language.

Who wrote it? Scholars aren't one hundred percent sure who wrote the Declaration of Arbroath. The most likely candidate, however, is Abbot Bernard of Arbroath. Arbroath abbey, at the time the document was written, was the home of the king's chancery. The chancery of a medieval king was like his main 'information

office,' which had a staff that drew up and archived royal documents. These were often associated with religious houses, because the clergy were the people who knew how to read and write well. At the time, Abbot Bernard was the king's chancellor. So, either he drafted the document, or it was drafted by one of his top chancery clerks. What we know for sure is that whoever wrote it was a master of Medieval Latin prose and rhetoric—exactly the kind that could impress the Pope and his court.

If it's a letter to the Pope, who's it from, exactly? One of the conventions of medieval letter-writing was that every letter had to start by saying who the letter was to, followed by a list of who it was from. The Declaration of Arbroath lists 38 names that include many of the most important and powerful barons in Scotland. King Robert himself was not one of the signers, since the document was designed to be a show of support for him from the magnates of the realm. Robert sent his own letter to the pope, as well.

Why was it written in the first place? The Declaration of Arbroath is a document that's very much tied up with the circumstances under which it was originally written. Those circumstances are related to two problems King Robert I and his supporters faced in 1319-20. Both problems threatened the stability of Bruce's kingship despite his influential victory at Bannockburn in 1314. One was increased pressure from Pope John XXII to enforce both an excommunication of Bruce himself for Bruce's murder of a rival claimant to the Scottish throne, John Comyn, and an interdict of Scotland for Bruce's recent recapture of Berwick-on-Tweed (which had been part of Scotland until it was captured by the English at the beginning of the Wars of Independence) in violation of a papal truce. (John XXII was vitally interested in maintaining that truce, since he



viewed the conflict as delaying English participation in his projected crusade). Beginning in November, 1319, Pope John had begun to send what historian Grant Simpson calls a "hailstorm of threatening papal letters," geared toward enforcing Bruce's excommunication and Scotland's interdict. Bruce had ignored these demands for some time, refusing, for instance, to accept letters addressed to "Robert Bruce, governing in Scotland," rather than to him as Rex Scottorum, "King of Scots." But neither Bruce nor his nobles could go on playing games of deferral forever, and Pope John was increasing diplomatic pressure. The other problem was that, even though Robert had come a long way since his 1306 coronation in gathering support for himself in both northern and southern Scotland, that support in 1319-20 was still far from unified. Not only was there support for Edward II of England (among the Scots nobles that had been, as Bruce himself once was, received into Edward's peace), but there was also support for Robert's predecessor, John Balliol, whose throne Bruce, at least from one political point of view, had usurped. Several signers of the Declaration were tried for conspiring to kill Robert I not long after the Declaration was sent to Avignon. Fiona Watson argues, too, that many Scots nobles in the early 1300's were likely to be more interested in the restoration of good government and a legitimate kingship than in the idea of a specifically Scottish kingship. Chris Brown, in discussing the origins of the second Scottish War of Independence, argues that in this period there were "real divisions of loyalty. Some Scots maintained their allegiance to the Balliols, some stood by the fealty that they had given to Edward I after John's deposition, while some no doubt refused allegiance to Robert because he was an excommunicate or because they were simply horrified by the murder of John Comyn." That the 1332 campaign backed by Edward III to put Edward Balliol, King John's son, on the throne found significant support among Scots suggests that these internal divisions would have been current in 1320. Such divisions at home would certainly not have spoken well for Bruce's cause. Consequently, Bruce and his supporters needed a solution that would mollify Pope John and do so in a manner which occluded the

divisions back home and created the illusion of a unified Scottish nobility with, of course, Bruce at its head. Part of that solution was the letter now known as the Declaration.

Is the Declaration of Arbroath evidence that the Scots invented modern democracy?

While scholars debate about the degree to which certain ideas in the Declaration can be considered politically innovative, none would say that the Scots actually invented modern democracy. In fact, the ideas of representative government and personal liberty, in the way we think about them as modern Americans, would have been alien to the Scottish aristocrats who sent the Declaration to Pope John. But that doesn't mean that the Declaration isn't important to the history of democracy. The idea of representative government actually has its roots in a debate that initially took place within the medieval church. The debate was essentially about what to do with a heretical pope. This was a big issue in the church, since the pope was supposed to be God's right-hand-man on earth. In the case of a pope who was speaking against the traditional doctrines of the church, the problem was, basically, "how does an employee fire the boss?" The ideas that grew around this question came to be known as the "Conciliar Theory," and several prominent medieval philosophers and theologians began to develop the idea that while the pope was the head of the church, he could be overruled or deposed by his council. Why was the council more powerful than the pope? Because the council represented the whole community of the faithful. *Voilà!* Here's the idea of a body of representatives speaking for the people. These ideas were becoming most fully developed at the end of the thirteenth century and the beginning of the fourteenth. The line in the Declaration that talks about the right of the barons of the realm to depose a weak king is one of the earliest examples of an idea from the Conciliar Theory being adopted into secular politics. The Conciliar Theory, and such early uses of it in the political world, were some of the sources drawn upon by later thinkers such as George Buchanan and John Locke, who really were the ones who, in the seventeenth century, began to articulate the



ideas that we think of as foundational to modern, populist, representative democracy.

Is there a relationship between the Declaration of Arbroath and the American Declaration of Independence? It'd be cool if there was, wouldn't it? There is some suggestive, circumstantial evidence for a relationship. We know that the Declaration was available in print, in both Latin and in English translations, in Jefferson's time (although there's not a copy listed in the catalog of his personal library, which we still have). We also know that certain of his close associates probably would have been aware of the document, and possibly that a couple of them may actually have viewed the manuscript of the Declaration in Scotland. For the best explanation of this circumstantial evidence, see the book by Edward Cowan in the "further reading" section. What we don't have, unfortunately, is any direct evidence that they told Jefferson about it, or that he actually read it or drew upon it when he was drafting the American declaration. We also know that there were more local precedents that Jefferson most certainly drew upon, such as the 1689 British Declaration of Rights and the Mason draft of the Virginia Declaration of Rights of June, 1776. There are some words and phrases in the two declarations that look similar—but it's important to be careful about making a comparison between the American Declaration, which was originally written in English, and an English translation of the Declaration of Arbroath, which was originally written in Latin, because that kind of comparison looks at the translator's words and not the writer's. Even similarities in the Latin and English words can be deceiving. For instance, the Declaration of Arbroath talks a great deal about *libertas*, which, in the English versions, is usually translated by the modern English word derived from it, liberty. However, the Latin word *libertas* had a different set of meanings in the fourteenth century than the English word liberty does in the twenty-first. When we read the word liberty as present-day Americans, we tend to automatically think about it in the terms we've always been taught, as in "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Liberty, for us, refers to the right to freedom of every individual, regardless of race, class, or gender. In the fourteenth century, though, the

Latin word *libertas* was most often used to refer to the special privileges of the nobility. So, when the barons say they'll fight to the death for their *libertas*, it's possible that they're talking about maintaining their aristocratic privileges rather than about individual human rights. It's also important to remember that fourteenth-century Scotland was still a feudal society. To have freedom in that society, you needed a title of nobility, land, or (preferably) both. Historian Ranald Nicholson reminds us, however, that those who "lived and worked upon the land but enjoyed neither secure tenure nor complete personal freedom" greatly outnumbered those who "held their land by homage and fealty, quit of labour service or any other dishonorable 'burden'" So, it's important to remember that even though the American Declaration and the Declaration of Arbroath both appeal to something they call "liberty," the writers of those documents may well have had very different ideas in mind.

What's the difference between this translation and others? Most translations try to make an original document read as smoothly as possible in the target language. Other translators, such as Sir James Fergusson, have already done an amazing job of creating smooth translations of the Declaration that convey the linguistic beauty of the original. However, creating a really smooth, fluent English translation of a Latin text means making a lot of substantial changes, because the grammar of Latin is so different from the grammar of English. These changes can alter some of the meanings of the original. In this translation, I've tried to supplement the others by staying as close to the original Latin grammar as possible, even where that meant making phrases and sentences that sound awkward in English. This should help English language readers to see a number of things about the original Latin text that are hard or impossible to see in the smoother translations. As such, it's intended to be a supplement to, not a replacement for, those translations. This edition and translation are entirely my own. I created the Latin edition below using a combination of a high-quality facsimile of the Tynhame copy of the Declaration (currently housed at the National Library of Scotland) alongside several early engravings and transcripts thereof using a



combination of a high-quality facsimile of the **Tyn** copy along with several early engravings and transcripts

thereof, with reference to other period sources of the text, such as the copy in Walter Bower's *Scotichronicon*.

Where can I learn more (further reading)?

Here are some of the best sources for information concerning the Declaration of Arbroath. Most of them are out of print, but should be available at a university library or large public library—or through smaller libraries via interlibrary loan. If you're unfamiliar with how to find scholarly books and articles, just ask your local librarian—it's not hard when someone shows you how.

Bibliography:

G.W.S. Barrow, *Robert Bruce and the Community of the Realm of Scotland*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1988) The definitive political biography of Robert Bruce.

Barrow, G.W.S., ed. *The Declaration of Arbroath: History, Significance, Setting* (Edinburgh: Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 2003). Seven essays by some of the most prominent historians of the Declaration, originally delivered as lectures at a conference thereon in 2001. Represents a wide range of views on its contemporary and historical significance.

Grant G. Simpson, "The Declaration of Arbroath Revitalised," *The Scottish Historical Review*, 56 (1977). A seminal scholarly article on the context of the Declaration.

James Goldstein, *The Matter of Scotland: Historical Narrative in Medieval Scotland*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993). Goldstein talks about the ways literary rhetoric was used to promote pro-Bruce nationalism in medieval Scotland. There's a great section on the Declaration.

Fiona Watson, "The Enigmatic Lion: Scotland, Kingship, and National Identity in the Wars of Independence." in Dauvit Broun, R.J. Finlay, and Michael Lynch, ed., *Image and Identity: The Making and Re-Making of Scotland Through the Ages*. (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd., 1998).

A.A.M Duncan, "The Making of the Declaration of Arbroath," in *The Study of Medieval Records: Essays in Honor of Kathleen Major*, ed. D.A. Bullough and R.L. Storey, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971). Duncan does an amazing, close study of the physical details of the manuscript of the Declaration.

Rt. Hon. Lord Cooper, "The Declaration of Arbroath Revisited," in *Supra Crepidam: Presidential Address Delivered to the Scottish Historical Society* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1951)

Sir James Fergusson, *The Declaration of Arbroath (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1970)*. The best sounding of all the translations of the Declaration, which makes some sacrifices in literal accuracy. Fergusson also includes a Latin text of the Declaration and much useful background information.

E.L.G. Stones, ed., *Anglo-Scottish Relations 1174-1328: Some Selected Documents*. (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1965). This is a collection of other medieval documents relevant to the relationship between England and Scotland in the Middle Ages. It has the original Latin and French texts with facing-page English translations.

Edward J. Cowan, *For Freedom Alone: The Declaration of Arbroath, 1320*, East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2003). A recent study of the Declaration, including one of the best (to date) studies of the evidence regarding the potential relationship between the Declaration of Arbroath and the American Declaration of Independence. Cowan is somewhat more optimistic than I am about the relationship.

A.A.M. Duncan, *The Nation of the Scots and the Declaration of Arbroath (1320)*. (London: The Historical Association, 1970). Another important translation, not as pretty as Fergusson's, but closer to the original latin.

Bruce, Mark P. "Creating Scottish Nationalism: English Translations of the Fourteenth-Century Declaration of Arbroath," in *Studies in Medievalism* XV, 2006. Traces the ways in which the translation of the Declaration from both Latin to English, and also from manuscript to print forms, have altered the document and led to its sometimes-anachronistic reception in the present.



Translated by Mark Bruce, Ph.D, FSA Scot

Sanctissimo Patri in Christo ac Domino, domino Johanni, diuina prouidencia Sacrosancte Romane et Vniuersalis Ecclesie Summo Pontifici, Filii Sui Humiles et deuoti [...] Ceterique Barones et Liberetenenetes ac tota Communitas Regni Scoe, omnimodam Reuerenciam filialem cum deuotis Pedum osculis beatorum.

Scimus, Sanctissime Pater et Domine, et ex antiquorum gestis et libris Colligimus quod inter Ceteras naciones egregias nostra scilicet Scottorum nacio multis preconijis fuerit insignita, que de Maiori Schithia per Mare tirenium et Columpnas Herculis transiens et in Hispania inter ferocissimas gentes per multa temporum curricula Residens a nullis quantumcumque barbaricis poterat allicubi gentibus subiugari. Indeque veniens post mille et ducentos annos a transitu populi israelitici per mare rubrum sibi sedes in Occidente quas nunc optinet, expulsis primo Britonibus et Pictis omnino deletis, licet per Norwagienses, Dacos et Anglicos sepius inpugnata fuerit, multis cum victorijs et Laboribus quamplurimis adquisuit, ipsaque ab omni seruitute liberata, vt Priscorum testantur Historie, semper tenuit. In quorum Regno Centum et Tredescim Reges de ipsorum Regali prosapia, nullo alienigena interueniente, Regnauerunt.

Nobilitates et Merita, licet ex alijs non clarent, satis patenter effulgent ex eo quod Rex Regum et dominancium dominus Jhesus Christus post passionem suam et Resurreccionem ipsos in vltimis terre finibus constitutos quasi primos ad suam fidem sanctissimam conuocauit. Nec eos per quemlibet in dicta fide confirmari voluit set per suum primum apostolum uocatione quamuis ordine secundum vel tertium, sanctum Andream mitissimum beati Petri Germanum, quem semper ipsis preesse voluit vt Patronum.

Hec autem Sanctissimi Patres et Predecessores vestri sollicita mente pensantes ipsum Regnum et populum vt beati Petri germani peculium multis fauoribus et priuilegijs quamplurimis Munierunt, Ita quippe quod gens nostra sub ipsorum protectione hactenus libera deguit et quieti donec ille Princeps Magnificus Rex Anglorum Edwardus, pater istius qui nunc est, Regnum nostrum acephalum populumque nullius mali aut doli nec bellis aut insultibus tunc assuetum sub amici et confederati specie inimicabiliter infestauit. Cuius iniurias, Cedas, violencias, predaciones, incendia, prelatorum incarcerationes, Monasteriorum combustiones, Religiosorum spoliaciones et occisiones alia quoque enormia et innumera que in dicto populo exercuit, nulli parcens etati aut sexui, Religioni aut ordini, nullus scriberet nec ad plenum intelligeret nisi quem experientia informaret.

A quibus Malis innumeris, ipso Iuuante qui post uulnera medetur et sanat, liberati sumus per strenuissimum Principem, Regem et Dominum nostrum, Dominum Robertum, qui pro populo et hereditate suis de manibus Inimicorum liberandis quasi alter Machabeus aut Josue labores et tedia, inedia et pericula, leto sustinuit animo. Quem eciam diuina dispositio et iuxta leges et Consuetudines nostra, quas vsque ad mortem sustinere volumus, Juris successio et debitus nostrorum omnium Consensus et Assensus nostrum fecerunt Principem atque Regem, cui tanquam illi per quem salus in populo nostro facta est pro nostra libertate tuenda tam Jure quam meritis tenemur et volumus in omnibus adherere.

To the Most Holy Father and Lord In Christ, the Lord John, by divine providence supreme pontiff of the Holy Roman and Universal Church, his humble and devout sons [...], and other barons and freeholders and the whole community of the realm of Scotland, send all manner of filial reverence, with devout kisses of his blessed feet.¹

We know, Most Holy Father and Lord, and we gather from the chronicles and books of the ancients, that among other eminent nations our own nation of the Scots has certainly been distinguished with many acclamations, which, crossing from Greater Scythia through the Tyrhenian Sea and the Pillars of Hercules, and dwelling among the most ferocious tribes in Spain throughout the course of many eras, could not be subjugated by any people however alien, and coming thence twelve hundred years after the passage of the People of Israel over the Red Sea to the Seat in the West which they now hold, the Britons having been expelled and the Picts having been utterly destroyed, and often having been attacked by the Norwegians, Danes, and Angles, obtained that Seat through many victories and untold labors and held it free from all feudal obligation, as the historians of old always testify, in which Realm three hundred kings of their royal progeny have reigned, interrupted by no foreigner.²

The merits and noble qualities of whom, did they not gleam from other things, shine forth clearly enough from this: that the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Jesus Christ, after his Passion and Resurrection, called them together, settled at the ultimate ends of the earth, just as the first to his most holy faith. Nor did he wish them to be confirmed in word of faith by anyone but the firstcalled of his apostles, though second or third in degree, Saint Andrew the Most Mild, the Blessed Peter's brother, who desired always to have charge over them as their patron.

Weighing all this, however, the Most Holy Fathers your predecessors, stirred in mind, supported that same realm and people with many favors and numerous perogatives, as the Blessed Peter's Brother's personal possession. So indeed our line lived, hitherto free and unmolested, under the protection of those same until that Mighty Prince of the English, Edward, father of the one who is now King, under the guise of a friend and ally, infested as an enemy our headless realm and people, who were then accustomed to neither malice nor treachery, wars nor insults, of whose massacres, violences, predations, burnings, incarcerations of prelates, torchings of monasteries, spoilings and killings of Religious, and all the other innumerable enormities which he exercised against the aforesaid people, sparing neither age nor sex, religion nor rank, no one could write or even fully comprehend save whom experience alone could inform.³

From which innumerable evils we have been set free, by the help of He who after injuries heals and restores, through that most vigorous Prince, our King and Lord, the Lord Robert, who for his people and lineage, for the purpose of liberating from the hands of Enemies just as another Macabee or Joshua, sustained labors and hardships, hungers and perils, with glad spirit, who also, by divine disposition and according to our laws and customs which we will sustain to the death, by right of succession and all our due consent, we have made our Prince and King; to him, just as to He through whom salvation has been established for our people,⁴ and for the purpose of maintaining our *libertas*, we cleave as much by right as by merits, and to him in all things we will adhere.⁵



Quem si ab inceptis desisteret, regi Anglorum aut Anglicis nos aut Regnum nostrum volens subicere, tanquam inimicum nostrum et sui nostrique Juris subuersorem statim expellere niteremur et alium Regem nostrum qui ad defensionem nostram sufficeret faceremus. Quia quamdiu Centum ex nobis viui remanserint, nuncquam Anglorum dominio aliquatenus volumus subiugari. Non enim propter gloriam, diuicias aut honores pugnamus set propter libertatem solummodo quam Nemo bonus nisi simul cum vita amittit.

Hinc est, Reuerende Pater et Domine, quod sanctitatem vestram omni precum instancia genuflexis cordibus exoramus quatinus sincero corde Menteque pia recensentes quod apud eum cuius vices in terris geritis cum non sit Pondus nec distinctio Judei et greci, Scoti aut Anglici, tribulaciones et angustias nobis et Ecclesie dei illatas ab Anglicis paternis oculis intuentes, Regem Anglorum, cui sufficere debet quod possidet cum olim Anglia septem aut pluribus solebat sufficere Regibus, Monere et exhortari dignemini vt nos scotos, in exili degentes Scocia vltra quam habitacia non est nichilque nisi nostrum Cupientes, in pace dimittat. Cui pro nostra procuranda quiete quicquid possumus, ad statum nostrum Respectu habito, facere volumus cum effectuo.

Vestra enim interest, sancte Pater, hoc facere qui paganorum feritatem, Christianorum culpis exigentibus, in Christianos seuientem aspicitis et Christianorum terminos arctari indies, quantumque vestre sanctitatis memorie derogat si (quod absit) Ecclesia in aliqua sui parte vestris temporibus patitur eclipsim aut Scandalum, vos videritis. Excitet igitur Christianos Principes qui non causam vt causam ponentes se fingunt in subsidium terre sancte propter guerras quas habent cum proximis ire non posse. Cuius inpedimenti Causa est verior quod in Minoribus proximis debellandis vtilitas propior et resistencia debilior estimantur. Set quam leto corde dictus dominus Rex noster et Nos si Rex Anglorum nos is pace dimitteret illis iremus qui nichil ignorat satis novit. Quod Christi vicario totique Christianitati ostendimus et testamur.

Quibus si sanctitas vestra Anglorum relatibus nimis credula fidem sinceram non adhibeat aut ipsis in nostram confusionem fauere non desinat, corporum excidia, animarum exicia, et cetera que sequentur incomoda que ipsi in nobis et Nos in ipsis fecerimus vobis ab altissimo credimus inputanda.

Ex quo sumus et erimus in hiis que tenemur tanquam obediencie filii vobis tanquam ipsius vicario parati in omnibus complacere, ipsique tanquam Summo Regi et Judici causam nostram tuendam committimus, Cogitatum nostrum Jactantes in ipso sperantesque firmiter quod in nobis virtutem faciet et ad nichillum rediget hostes nostros.

Sanctitatem ac sanitatem vestram conseruet altissimus Ecclesie sue sancte per tempora diuturna.

Datum apud Monasterium de Abirbrothoc in Scocis Sexto die mensis Aprills Anno gracie Millesimo Trescentesimo vicesimo Anno vero Regni Regis nostri supradicti Quinto decimo.

Whom, if he should desist from that which has been begun, wishing to subject our Realm to the King of the English or to England, we could be compelled to drive out forthwith as our enemy and as a subverter of his rights and ours, and we could make another our King who could suffice for our defense. For as long as a hundred of us remain alive, we will never under any circumstances be reduced to submission to the lordship of the English. Truly, we fight not for glory, riches, or honors, but for *libertas* alone, which no *bonus* gives up save along with his life.

Hence it is, Reverend Father and Lord, that we exhort your Holiness with bended knees and every impudence of prayers,⁷ inasmuch as, considering with sincere heart and devout mind that for Him whose vice-gerent you are on earth there should be no weighing nor distinction between Jew or Greek, Scot or Englishman, seeing with the eyes of a father the tribulations and straits brought by the English to us and to the Church of God, that you should deem fit to warn and to have exhorted the King of the English, for whom what he already holds ought to suffice since it was once wont to sustain seven kings or more,⁸ that he should leave we Scots, abiding in poor Scotland outside of which there is no habitation and desiring nothing but out own, in peace. For him we in fact desire to do anything we are able, with respect to our own tradition, for ourselves to gain peace.

It is truly in the interest of yours⁹ to act on this, Holy Father, who sees the ferocity of heathens raging against the sins of the Christians, and the boundaries of Christendom curbing inward every day, and you must see how much your holy memory would suffer if (God forbid) the Church in any part should suffer eclipse or scandal in your time. Arouse therefore the Christian Princes who, putting forward a false cause as a real one, feign not to be able to go to the aid of the Holy Land¹⁰ because of the wars which they have with their neighbors, the truer reason of whose impediment is that in their lesser neighbors they find their own advantage in fighting and weaker resistance. But with what glad hearts would we and our aforesaid Lord King go there if the King of the English left us in peace, He from whom nothing is hidden well knows, which we profess and declare to the Vicar of Christ and all Christendom.

But if your Holiness will not apply very much credit or sincere faith to the tales of the English or refrain to favor them to our prejudice, the ruin of bodies, the destruction of souls, and other things which trouble will follow, which will be done by them to us and by us to them we believe ought to be imputed to you by the Most High.¹¹

From which, we are and will be ready to fulfill your will in all things to you His vicar, as obedient sons--insofar as we are bound--and to Him as the High King and Judge we commit the maintenance of our cause, casting our thoughts on Him and hoping firmly that he will instill virtue in us and bring our enemies to naught.

May the Most High preserve your holiness and health to His Holy Church for the length of your days.

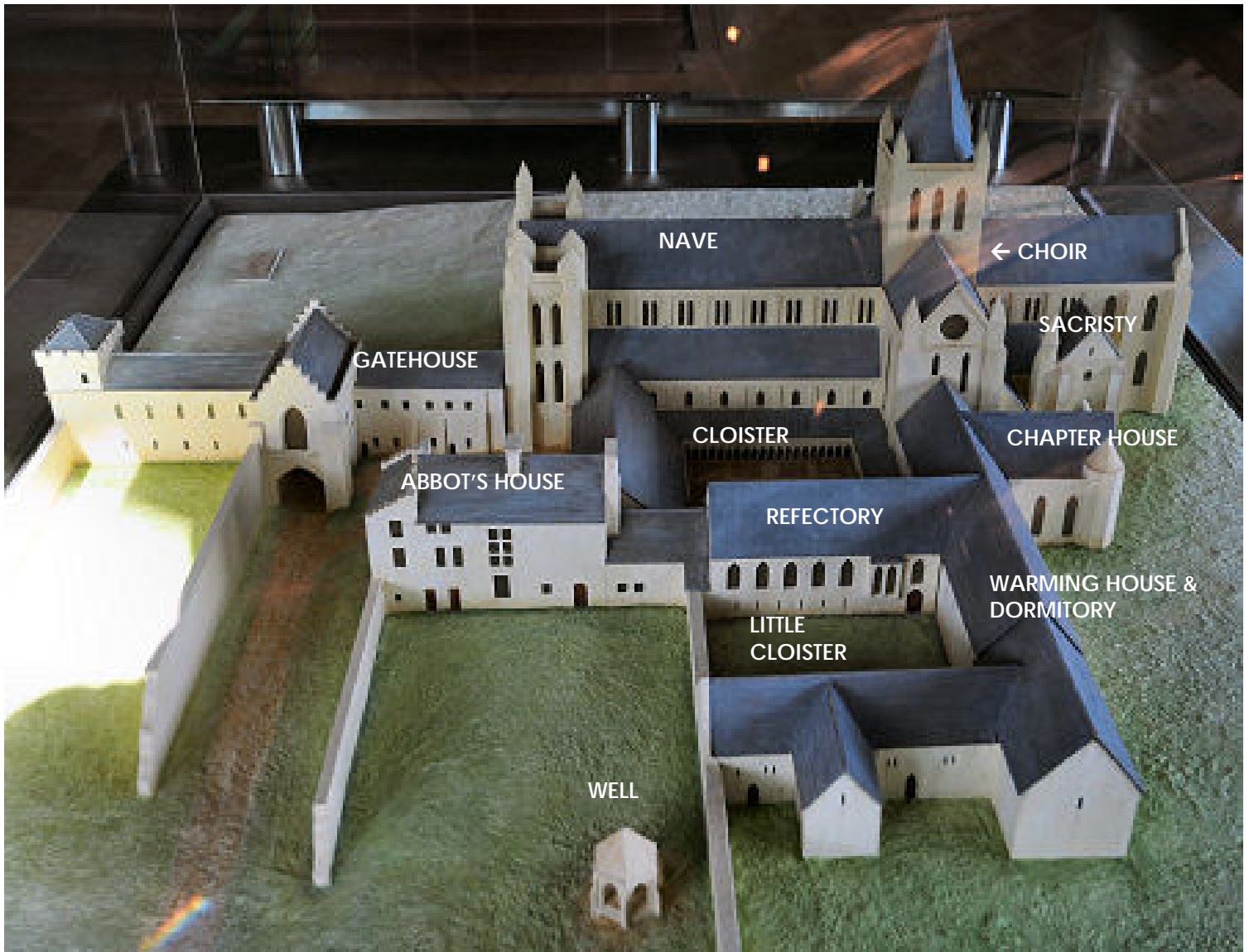
Given at the Monastery of Arbroath in Scotland on the sixth day of the month of April in the year of grace thirteen hundred and twenty and the fifteenth year of the reign of our aforesaid King.



- 1 In the middle ages, letter-writing was governed by a strict set of conventions known as the *ars dictaminis*. This section is called the *salutatio*, or salutation, which not only lays out the to/from information but also marks the social relationship between the sender and receiver. This particular form of salutation is the one specified in period *ars dictaminis* manuals as the one for a ruler writing to the pope. This is possibly a significant move on the part of the writer, since the pope had not formally acknowledged the legitimacy of Bruce's government!
- 2 This is the beginning of the next formal section of the letter, called the *narratio*, or narrative, in which the writer is to explain the circumstances for the request that will come in the next section, the *petitio*, or petition. This first part lays out the mythological beginnings of the Scottish people. Traditionally, the Scots went to Ireland first, and then to Scotland, and the idea of them going straight from Scythia to Scotland appears for the first time here in the Declaration. This may be because Edward Bruce, King Robert's brother, had recently been killed in his failed attempt to become the King of Ireland. The pope would have known about this, of course, which means that Ireland would have been a little embarrassing to mention. Notice all the phrases that begin with "having been" here—the grammar is designed to make it look like the Scots destroyed both the Picts and Britons, when in fact the Britons had been driven out long before the Scots got there. The "Pillars of Hercules" refer to the Straits of Gibraltar.
- 3 The list of all the terrible things the English had done to the Scots closely follows a similar phrase in an earlier letter sent to the pope by the English, in which they say exactly the same thing about the Scots. Certain aspects of politics haven't changed since the fourteenth century!
- 4 In other words, Christ.
- 5 Judas Maccabeus (the "Maccabee") was a Jewish leader in the first century a.d. who led a Jewish rebellion against the occupying Romans in Israel; Joshua, in the Old Testament, is the successor of Moses, who led the Hebrew people into the Promised Land.
- 6 I have left the words "*libertas*" and "*bonus*" in Latin in order to preserve the idea that their Latin meanings are different from those of their English cognates. In Medieval Latin, *libertas* can refer not only to the ideas of individual and state freedom, but also the special privileges and prerogatives of the nobility. The word *bonus* is often translated as "good man" or "honest man," but it doesn't just mean "any decent person." It's a specialized term that refers to those who have the status to be able to participate in government, which, in the middle ages, means the landed freeholders and nobility. It's related to the term *bon homme* in French, also a term designating a landed gentleman. This passage, which asserts the right of the barons to depose a weak king, is the idea imported from the Conciliar Theory mentioned in the introduction.
- 7 This is the beginning of the next formal section of the letter, the *petitio*, in which the senders, having set up the circumstances, make their actual request.
- 8 The part of the British Isles now known as England was, in the early Middle Ages, broken up into seven different kingdoms, each with its own king. The writer is saying that the English shouldn't want any more territory since the territory they have now used to be enough for seven different kings.
- 9 The Latin only uses a pronoun here, "yours" with an implied referent (i.e. "your [things]"), a construction that works the same way as the phrase "you and yours" does in English. Since the pope, as the head of the Roman church, technically has the whole body of the faithful and all the possessions of the church under his care, "yours" means a bit more for him than it would for anyone else.
- 10 Pope John XXII, to whom this letter is addressed, was, at the time, trying to get together a new crusade to the holy land. He thought the Anglo-Scottish conflict was delaying the participation of both countries in his plan, which is why he had declared a truce between England and Scotland earlier. The Scots' recent recapture of Berwick broke the truce, and the Pope responded by placing Scotland under interdict. The Declaration is, in part, the Scottish response to this situation. Here, the writer picks up on the idea to insinuate that English aggression, not Scottish, was responsible for the violation.
- 11 This passage always strikes me as a little dangerous—the idea is basically, "if the killing continues, Your Holiness, it's all your fault!"



Model of Arbroath Abbey as it looked in 1320



Arbroath Abbey is located immediately to the north of the centre of the town of [Arbroath](#), which is itself on the coast 17 miles north east of [Dundee](#). At first sight its urban setting is unexpected: it's easy to forget that much of the town that now fills the space between the harbour and the abbey has developed since the abbey was first built, some eight centuries ago. For the modern visitor Arbroath Abbey can readily be missed, despite plenty of brown tourist signs. It should certainly not be overlooked. What you find when you seek it out is one of the most extensive and most interesting abbey ruins in Scotland, with plenty to see and do, plus an excellent visitor centre.

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ARBROATH ABBEY TODAY



Arbroath Abbey from South of the Two Cloisters



Abbot's House



West Front of Abbey



Nave Looking West



Gate House



West End of the Abbey

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ARBROATH: THE HERITAGE LINK

William P. Bruce, FSA Scot

On July 4th, 2000, my wife and I got up early and enjoyed a huge traditional Scottish breakfast. A half mile walk down to a traffic circle and transit hub, and she boarded a bus to Herriot-Watt University for a conference session while I descended to track level at Haymarket Station. I boarded a ScotRail train which took me across the huge railway bridge over the Firth of Forth and on up the eastern coastline to the small city of Arbroath. The railway station at Arbroath is immaculately groomed, as is the city beyond. I passed up cabs in order to walk to my destination - the ancient Arbroath Abbey with its partially preserved buildings and grounds. A new visitor center was in the process of being constructed. (That visitor center is now complete and in full operation under the auspices of Historic Scotland.) I was one of only a very few visitors that day, and quite certainly the only American. I spent a very long time walking through the well-kept grounds and both the intact buildings and the ruins, pausing now and again to read inscriptions on grave stones and interpretive markers, and attempting to decipher the meaning of carved stone. My camera shutter was kept busy, despite the dead gray sky - there was just so much to see and record. For me, the most impressive view was of the semi-ruinous arches that were once part of the church. The grace and symmetry taught me a respect for the architects and artisans who produced them, and raised my eyes toward heaven - which was, of course, their intention. The church nave has now become a lawn - only a partial wall and a portion of the chancel still standing. It must have been an awe-inspiring experience to worship in that setting. In that lawn is a marker denoting the burial place of William the Lion, an early King. The abbot's house, dating from medieval times, is totally intact and is an amazing remnant of that era, almost one of a kind. At one point I sat down on the lawn near where an archeological excavation was taking place (something I just had to investigate for myself) and where I could look out over the grounds and buildings - and just reflect. I tried to imagine what this place must have been like in March and April of 1320, when Abbot Bernard, with the assistance of others including Bishop William Lamberton, here composed the text of what has become known as the Declaration of Arbroath. As some may know, this document was in the form of a letter from the Scottish nobility to Pope John XXII, asserting that the

independence of the Scottish nation must not be called into question, especially and particularly, by the English. Here I was, an American of Scots heritage, at what might be called a seat of Scottish independence, on our American independence day. It is difficult to convey in words the thoughts and emotions which filled my mind at that time, but both pride and patriotism certainly made up the bulk of those thoughts. The impact on my personality and experience was dramatic indeed.

Soon more practical matters asserted themselves on my consciousness. I was getting hungry, despite my large breakfast. So it was another walk from the Abbey grounds into the center of the city where I looked for a place to eat - and there it was - about the only place I could have chosen under the circumstances. It was the Bernard de Linton Pub - and the only reference to him I found - I trust there are many others. The steak and ale pie was delicious as well as inexpensive. I photographed the outside of the pub - I could hardly do otherwise. (As of 2006, the pub is still there but, sadly, under another name.) It was then back to the train station and back to Edinburgh. As the conductor inspected my BritRail Pass, he paused in his rounds to converse a bit and asked about my travels. I told him about how I had decided, as an American of Scots heritage, to visit Arbroath on American Independence Day. He was quite impressed, the meaning of such a visit not lost on this very knowledgeable man. I think I made a better friend for the USA in that moment and with that man. Ever since that day, I have been more aware of the political, social, historical and practical impact of our heritage. As a result of that experience I am more convinced than ever of how important it is for us to "act on our heritage" and not just sit back and savor it, as enjoyable as that might be. Our heritage as Scots and our heritage as Americans are indeed, an almost perfect match.

*Current research suggests that there may have been both an Abbot Bernard and a Bernard de Linton, two distinct personages.

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Also published in *"The Blue Lion"*, volume 13, #2, May, 2007.



Bernard of Killwinning

In the early years of the struggle for Scottish independence a number of clergy including Robert Wishart, Nicholas Balmyle, Bishop Lamberton, and Abbot Bernard of Killwinning Abbey (later known as Abbot Bernard of Arbroath) were close to and very supportive of Robert the Bruce.

Abbot Bernard was a witness to the enthronement of King Robert I in 1306 and was appointed by King Robert as Chancellor of Scotland, and while Bishop Wishart was imprisoned by King Edward II. In 1306, King Robert appointed Bernard and Master Stephen of Dunnideer as vicars and lieutenants on Bishop Wishart's behalf.

At the St. Andrew's Parliament in 1309 a manifesto supporting Bruce's claim to the throne was well-known to Abbot Bernard and he may also have been a participant in the creation of the manifesto. In 1311, he was made Bernard Abbot of Arbroath and concurrently held the Chancellor of Scotland office, and in 1328 he became Bishop of the Isles. In these posts, he traveled extensively to Norway renewing the Treaty of Perth originally signed in 1266 whereas the Scots kings were bound to pay a perpetual annuity to Norway. He negotiated the Treaty of Inverness in 1312 which ensured continuous positive relations with Norway. He introduced fresh practices to protect the King's Seal, and to manage charters, rolls, and grants as many of these were lost in King Edward I's attempt to conquer Scotland. As the King's closest councilor, Abbot Bernard was certainly at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314 with the relic casket known as the Breccbennoch of Saint Columba (now called the Monymusk Reliquary) which held the relics of St. Columba and would be present at battles in the midst of the army.

As Abbot Bernard of Arbroath, it is believed he is the principal author of the Declaration of Arbroath; although, for years he was incorrectly identified as Bernard de Linton. As you know from the previous information in this Blue Lion issue, the aim of the Declaration of Arbroath was to persuade the Pope to overturn the 1305 Papal recognition of England's supremacy over Scotland and to overturn the excommunication of Robert

the Bruce imposed after the murder of John Comyn in Greyfriars Church in Dumfries.

In his later years, from 1328 until his death in 1331, he was well known as Bishop Bernard of the Isles, Sodor, and Man. "It can hardly be doubted that Abbot Bernard played a principal part in the process by which in the face of severe penalties of excommunication, the clergy came to present a united front of patriotism to the papacy, to England, and to the other nations of western Christendom." ** Page 351

SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

** G.W.S. Barrow, *Robert Bruce*. Published by Edinburgh University Press, Fourth Edition – 2005

Summarized by Deborah Bruce Gottlieb, FSA Scot



Killwinning Abbey –
Burial place of Bernard of Killwinning



National Tartan Day

On April 7, 1997, a United States Senate Resolution was entered into congressional record, and on April 6, 1998, when the U.S. Senate passed Senate Resolution 155, National Tartan Day was officially and permanently recognized to commemorate the signing of the Declaration of Arbroath in 1320. The Scottish Coalition USA was the organization who facilitated the observance of Tartan Day in the U.S.

http://www.americanscottishfoundation.com/tartanday/scottish_coalition.html

Each year a Tartan Day Award is presented to individuals who have significantly supported and promoted American and Scottish culture.

In 2003, the very first Tartan Day Award was presented to Duncan A. Bruce of NYC. In addition to his stock trading business of many years, Mr. Bruce dedicated much of his time to defining the accomplishments of the Scottish people. He has written a number of outstanding books including *The Mark of the Scots*, which identifies Scottish achievers and achievements and portions of the book were used to create the U.S. Senate Resolution. He also authored *The Scottish 100* about Scots who were very influential, and *The Great Scot* which is a novel about Scotland's warrior King Robert the Bruce.

Mr. Bruce is a personal representative in the U.S. of the Rt Honourable 11th Earl of Elgin and 14th Earl of Kincardine, and is a member of many Scottish Societies including, to name a few, the Saint Andrew's Society of the State of NY, the Royal Order of Scotland, a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries Scotland, and an honorary member of the Family of Bruce International – USA.

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Family of Bruce International is a non-profit organization established to create and promote kinship amongst its family members and to encourage interest in the Family of Bruce and its history. Membership is open to persons interested in their Scottish heritage and especially those who qualify by surname, by descent, or by recognized septs: Carlisle, Carruthers, Crosby, Randolph, and Stenhouse. It is the only such organization recognized by the hereditary chief of the Name of Bruce, The Right Honorable the Earl of Elgin and Kincardine.

Mission Statement: To promote, honor, and preserve our Scottish and Bruce heritage by sponsoring activities, events, scholarships, and continual communication through the E-Magazine and website. We will therefore, provide educational information, tributes to our history and ancestors, and thereby attract Bruces and Septs into the enjoyment and celebration of our familial relationships.

CREST*: A lion statant with tail extended Azure, armed and langued Gules.

ARMS*: Or, a saltire and chief Gules, on a canton Argent a lion rampant Azure.

MOTTO: *FUIMUS* – We have been.

* The Crest and Arms belong to the Chief and can only be used by him. Use of the Crest surrounded by a buckled belt is acceptable.



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Map of Scotland and location of Arbroath