Reviews and Reports

A History of the Scottish People 1560–1830 by T. C. Smout. Collins 1969. Pp. 576. £3.15.

The period covered by Christopher Smout's book has had much written about it but never better and never in this way. The title is significant: this is a comprehensive survey of a whole people, not simply another political history. The author deals with centuries which saw the political identity of the nation redefined, its religion re-made and its way of life re-directed. Dr Smout, inspired in part by the works of earlier Scottish historians, has attempted to relate these tremendous movements to the state and development of the Scottish people. The outcome is a grand and original work which blazes a trail for future workers and puts paid to those all too common and intolerably dull accounts of Scotland which divorce history from life and society.

The author achieves his ends without any sacrifice of form or accuracy to originality. One may indeed criticise him both in points of detail and in his general approach but there is nothing more impressive about this book than its beautifully contrived structure, its careful scholarship and its reasoned judgments. This is a craftsman's job, with solid foundations and graceful proportions. The illustrations are an integral part of the book, chosen from a wide variety of sources, often unpublished. New research is incorporated, notably in the field of social structure, and the annotated reading list, though necessarily not exhaustive, will prove a valuable guide to further study.

It is a history in which the actual course of events does not dominate and blur everything else. The line is drawn lightly and clearly so as to reveal a crowded and animated picture of Scottish life in town and country. Perhaps the best, certainly the most original, chapters are those dealing with the structure and characteristics of this society: its distribution and economic bases, its social classes and occupational groups, and their education, outlook, values and ways of life. The patient not only survives this rigorous analysis but takes on a more robust life.

In the early chapters we are shown the older, traditional society, which possessed the characteristics of many more modern 'primitive' peoples. It is a society based on kinship, in which status is fixed by inheritance and authority goes by descent. Knowledge and skills are handed on by example and word of mouth and not exposed to overmuch questioning, so that custom controls most of life. Religion is compatible with magic and with a widespread belief in witchcraft. The economy is largely a subsistence one, with only a modest degree of specialisation, and markets are narrow.

Central government is weak, and law and order are frequently disturbed by powerful feudal magnates and tribal chiefs. From this traditional society, which still existed in most parts of rural Scotland in the seventeenth century, there emerges in this most skilful account a new and different Scottish society with the rational outlook of eighteenth-century European man, the mechanical skill and economic power of the Industrial Age, the centralised institutions of the modern state and the urbanised proletariat of the nineteenth-century capitalist world. One may perhaps argue that change is over-emphasised and elements of continuity underplayed in this book. Certainly the focus is principally upon those areas of the midland valley and the south-east Lowlands where change was most rapid and striking. But this is a legitimate bias, difficult to avoid in presenting the story of Scottish development in these important centuries. Dr Smout has interpreted the history of a small northern people in terms of the evolution of a traditional into a modern industrial society, and so has given his subject a truly universal application.

The fifth and sixth chapters, following an extensive introduction on mediaeval Scotland, are devoted to a survey of rural life and society in Scotland before the Age of Improvements. They are examples of the author's skill in handling a great mass of information and of his lucid and lively presentation. Scotland was a land of small settlements, set among arable strips and grazings, usually shared by the joint tenants. Poverty and lack of mechanical aids made co-operation indispensable, but rules for promoting co-operation could act as a strait-jacket, and the older Scottish agriculture, like most unimproved forms of agriculture, was intensely conservative and fairly unproductive. An unvarying diet, great physical hardship and sometimes famine conditions were the portion of the bulk of the Scottish people in the seventeenth century. Dr Smout warns the reader against romanticising the past, and rightly, but he indicates some of the strength and stability of this society, with its expertise in co-operation, its regulating institutions such as the baron baillie court, and its rich cultural heritage. One would have wished for more about the popular tradition of music and story, so vital and widespread a part of Scottish life, if only because the undoubted hardships of rural life were made tolerable and indeed dignified by it. And one regrets that there was not room for the fishing communities alongside the agricultural townships and the miners; they have played an immensely important part in Scottish life. But these chapters are a splendid piece of historical writing and are the best concise account of the subject known to the reviewer.

Democracy is a word totally inapplicable to traditional Scotland. It was a hierarchical society and most people were born into a place in it which could rarely be changed. The laird was everywhere the dominant figure in rural life, much more so than his English counterpart, in the Lowlands as in the Highlands, but the author makes it clear that land-owning carried its obligations and that there was on the whole a remarkable social cohesiveness and absence of social conflict. If rents were heavy, and labour dues galling, the tenants and sub-tenants enjoyed the benefits which could flow from

having a resident laird with a concern for them. (One could moreover point to areas of central and eastern Europe where rents, even so recently as the nineteenth century, well exceeded a third of the tenant's product, which was the norm in Scotland.) The laird was one's shield and support in this patriarchal society, and in the Highlands the poets, in an ancient imagery, eulogised him alive and lamented him when dead, as if he were a god, tempering the seasons and causing the earth to bear crops.

Dr Smout highlights important features of this rural society. Relatively few tenants possessed land on a permanent footing. Amongst these we can number the Highland tacksmen who were kinsmen of the chief. Already in the sixteenth century the security of customary or 'kindly' tenants had been seriously eroded. But rights to land and grazing were widely diffused through all ranks from the substantial tenants at the top to the humble cottar whose work was rewarded with a strip of land and grazing for a cow. It was in fact only the inferior servants who received any part of their reward in cash. (It might be added that dairymaids appear to have been able to save up a tocher for marriage by having the right to the grazing of a cow.)

The author makes it clear that rural society below the laird was far from uniform and formed a graded hierarchy. The tenants formed a privileged group, less numerous than the crofters, cottars and servants, in the Lowlands at any rate. Within the tenants' ranks too were men with substantial farms calling themselves 'gentlemen' in the Lowlands. Such upper tenants existed in the Highlands too and were normally the kinsmen of the chief. Below the tenants were the sub-tenants, who had their own specialised functions and a modicum of land. In the unimproved Highlands this class must have outnumbered the direct tenants. Finally there were the landless servants, who would be unmarried and would hope eventually to acquire a cottar's holding. However small a man's holding was, having one was a matter of great importance and helped to stabilise rural society by acting as a strong disincentive to emigration. One wonders if the cottar had much chance of improving his lot and rising to become a tenant. On the whole it seems unlikely that this occurred frequently, though the movement of tenants' children down into the lower ranks must have been common enough. It is worth observing here that the Highland tacksmen, requiring as they did adequate provision in land for their children, to prevent their losing rank, had strong incentives to push the chiefs into conflicts over land, especially in periods when, as in the sixteenth century, there seems to have been a land shortage. Chances of rising in one's social station through ability are generally reputed to have been uncommonly high in Scotland. But Dr Smout's book would suggest that only very exceptionally did a boy from a humble home enjoy the opportunity of higher education, in this period at any rate.

The vast majority of the population of seventeenth-century Scotland were rural dwellers. Towns were small and still closely linked with the agricultural environment. It was in the towns that specialised crafts and trade and wealth were concentrated (though Scottish merchants, however rich, were not given to needless outward show).

Convention-bound as the townsmen often were, they had wider horizons than the rural population, were more conscious of their common interests and more capable of exerting political pressure. Firm allies of the Government in its policy of extending its control over feuding nobles, predisposed towards the new religious movements for reform and greater lay control, the townsmen—and the lairds who had much to gain materially from the Reformation and whose control over their tenants, gave them such political importance—constituted a highly significant force making for rapid change in a land where hitherto, except in catastrophic situations, society developed gradually. The emergence of a new Scotland is the grand theme of the later chapters of this book.

In general the author sees this transformation as a necessary and beneficent process which delivered the mass of people from the physical hardships and hazards of the pre-Industrial age, and gave them a fuller and more civilised life. It is therefore very much a story of amelioration that the author presents: the achievement of more settled government, greater material security and wealth, wider horizons of thought, greater social mobility.

The author sees the achievement of general law and order as the pre-requisite of any kind of advance, and as the Highlands and Borders were *par excellence* the homes of disorder, feuds and *creachs*, these regions had to be reduced and the chiefs disciplined. This had been often attempted before but never with real success until the reign of James VI. His reign and that of his immediate successors saw the foundations of effective government laid. The result was a marked growth of prosperity as peaceful trade expanded across the border and with foreign countries. Its effects can be seen in the town houses of the merchants and somewhat later, in the mansions which began to replace the town-houses. Which is all good and well, but the author overrates the wisdom and effectiveness of the Government. Its Highland policies were frequently brutal and short-sighted, as when clan chiefs like Argyll and Huntly were made agents of royal policy and earned, in the case of Argyll at any rate, such general hatred that, as a direct consequence, the Government faced an even more serious threat in the Jacobite movement than the chaotic feuding of the sixteenth century ever presented. Earlier, the Government's handling of the threat which Macdonald's power constituted had been equally maladroit. By abolishing the Lordship of the Isles in 1493 James IV destroyed the one institution capable of controlling the western chiefs and bears much of the responsibility, as Gregory showed, for the century of internecine savagery which ensued, surely too prolonged and terrible to be dismissed in Dr Smout's allusion to increased disorder 'in the short term'. So inveterate has been the stupidity and blunders of Government in relation to the Highland region that one is driven to the conclusion that a more autonomous development would have ensured a happier outcome.

The author's chapters on the burghs and the Reformation are excellent. Without the towns the Reformation would have been unthinkable, though equally without the lairds its ultimate success over most of the country would have been impossible.

The story on the whole is not an edifying one. If there was moral fervour there was also much private interest. The opportunity to set up a soundly financed system of education and poor relief was not realised, but fortunately neither were the reformers' ambitions for a theocratic state. Dr Smout's fair and balanced account makes clear the need for reformation, but equally the distortions which it underwent. The new kirk sessions were much more concerned with enforcing a narrow morality than with the pursuit of social justice. The intolerance and fanaticism of the new Church seem a poor swap for the genial negligence of the old, if one may comment on the account given by Dr Smout. Music and literature were greatly impoverished in the seventeenth century, except in the Highlands, where the reforming movement had a more restricted success.

Religious strife in the seventeenth century belongs more to the old mediaeval Scotland than to the new. More significant for the future was the beginning of a revolution in thought with the achievements of mathematicians like Napier and savants like Sibbald, which eventually would diffuse a more tolerant and rational attitude to life and end the persecution of witches, blasphemers and other deviants, which survived into the early eighteenth century. Scotland, too, was expanding her horizons politically and registering the influence of her southern neighbour.

The Union of Parliaments helped to widen the base of Scotland's political, economic and cultural activity and as such is regarded by Dr Smout as a step in the right direction. The present reviewer would emphasise the Union of Crowns in 1603 as perhaps of greater significance, since it not only led irresistibly to the events of 1707 but, by transferring the court to the South, it introduced the greater Scottish nobles to ideas and manners and a style of life previously alien to the Scots. Transferred back to Scotland by the great magnates in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, these new ideas and influences gradually spread to the upper ranks of society, to the lairds, the lawyers, the merchants and eventually to the lower ranks. Already by the mid-seventeenth century the Marquis of Argyll was engaged in laying out gardens and planting trees, and soon after his son was requiring higher rents, commuting rents in kind for money in some districts and selling quantities of Kintyre grain in the Glasgow market. Argyl[was an early example of the landlord whose frequent residence away from his estate made it necessary for him to turn the products of his lands into cash. As this fashion spread among the nobility and lairds in the course of the eighteenth century, it gave an impetus to the commercialisation of estate management and ended by changing the whole basis of rural society in Scotland.

Dr Smout emphasises the gradually developing character of the Improving movement, and he gives a fascinating account of it. We owe to the enlightened Scottish gentry and nobility, and to the architects and gardeners whom they employed, the charm and elegance of new towns and villages, mansion houses and gardens and trees, and innovations in farming practice which meant not only heavier crops and bigger cattle but deliverance from the danger of periodic famine (though no doubt better

transport and communications were equally important in this). But it took half a century for the Improving movement to become more than a pleasant and often expensive hobby and for its promise to be fully realised in more efficient tenant farms and a vastly expanded production capable of meeting the demands of the quickly growing towns. Landlords became content at the end of the century to leave technical improvements to their tenants whilst they themselves reaped higher rents. Dr Smout's statement, however, that the steep rise in rents was a late eighteenth-century phenomenon needs some qualification. Campbell of Knockbuy, a Lochfyneside laird who concentrated on cattle-raising, doubled his rents between 1730 and 1760 and again between 1760 and 1780, and his estate was probably not untypical of the cattle-raising areas of the West. As the century went on, the Improvement of the age of amenity turned into the Improvement of the age of commerce, bringing with it a new toughness and a greater impersonality in the relations between social classes. Land, rising fast in value with the appearance on the rural scene of East and West Indian merchants and the *nouveaux riches*, ceased to be the normal currency for compensating labour, and a depressed rural proletariat made its début, largely divorced from social contact with the owners and tenants, and with no land rights. In many ways the new rural society reflected the polarisation taking place in the towns, where industry from the 1780s was creating a modern working class out of touch and sympathy with the entrepreneurs.

Dr Smout re-creates the bustling, exciting, optimistic later decades of the eighteenth century, when human achievement was so patent and human perfectibility seemed within reach. Scotland was in the forefront of this expansionist movement, and her thinkers, writers, architects, engineers and farming experts enjoyed fame and influence in Europe. In analysing the origins of this great era Dr Smout, whilst acknowledging the fertilising influence of foreign, notably English, ideas and examples, emphasises the crucial importance of the seed-bed in which they were nurtured in Scotland, where, especially in the Lowlands, native vigour and ability were combined with seriousness, ambition and excellent education. In an interesting and persuasive revision of the Weber-Tawney thesis of the origins of modern capitalism in the Protestant Reformation Dr Smout argues that the mental and moral attributes which gave the Lowland Scot his formidable advantage in the world of industry, trade and achievement generally, were a legacy from his Calvinistic background and represented a translation into more worldly terms of the serious and self-disciplined effort which had formerly been directed to the service of religion. One must own that the determined onward march of the Scottish lairds and merchants, lawyers and professional men, farmers and artisans, had something of the character of a pilgrimage of a chosen people towards the promised land. But it was a very tangible promised land with material rewards, and these are clearly the heirs as much of the revolution in scientific thought as of Knox's Reformation. It was necessary for the stifling influence of seventeenth-century religion to be relaxed before the latent powers of this society could be realised. A base of leisure, education and wealth was necessary too, and the patronage of the aristocracy. But

the middle layers of Scottish (and almost exclusively Lowland) society were those which contributed most to this vast and creative expansion of energy.

The book ends at 1830, with the Scottish people recognisably modern in their distribution, occupations and outlook. The growth of population since about 1750, examined by the author in an excellent chapter, had been accompanied by a process of becoming concentrated in the towns of the midland valley, where now they faced perils and problems in their way no less fearful than the famines which had stalked the scene a century earlier: filth and squalor, crowding and disease, accidents and poverty, oppression and insecurity. These features of industrialised modern life are vividly depicted in the closing chapters. In the remoter country areas, lacking easy access to the markets of the towns, huge tracts of once populous land were now sheep-farms, and in narrow coastal strips in the Highlands there were congested and poverty-stricken communities eking out their livelihood by manufacturing kelp.

Between the splendours and achievements of the Age of Improvement and the miseries of a large part of the Scottish people in this new world there is a terrible contradiction. It is a contradiction which emerges from Dr Smout's book but one which the author does not stress. Indeed he appears virtually to identify Improvement with improvement and therefore describes the emergence of the Highland crofting system (rather than of a modern farming system) as the one failure of the Improving movement. Surely, however, Improvement was basically orientated towards raising standards of efficiency and rationality in economic life, and only incidentally towards social amelioration. It could give us both the highly productive farms of the Lothians and the new crofting townships of the Highlands. In each case it represented a rational, efficient and remunerative return on capital (for at the time kelp was highly profitable). And of the two developments, crofting was undoubtedly less disruptive of rural society, permitting as it did the continuance of the native population with some small stake in the land. True, a period of wretchedness for the crofters and cottars of the West and North followed the end of the Napoleonic War as prices slumped and population rose. But the uprooted population now living in the industrial towns probably suffered just as much at this period. The fluctuations of a world market and the expansion of population were logical consequences of Improvement. It was both a blessing and a bane. Its potential for good, unless directed to humane ends by men of good will, could easily sharpen contrasts in the well-being of the different ranks of society.

Scotland paid dear, too, in cultural terms, for the great achievements of the Age of Enlightenment. What was Scottish in outlook, speech, music and the arts was forsaken by the polite and sophisticated and survived mainly among the unfashionable, the remote and the poor. After the brilliance of the Age of Enlightenment, Scottish letters, music and art were for the most part undistinguished. This much is brought out by Dr Smout in the closing chapter. But he greatly underestimates the native tradition, which he regards as backward-looking and uncreative. This is far from being the case, especially in the Highlands. Among country people the older tradition in

music, poetry and story retained a remarkable hold into our own day. It was still vigorous and creative through the nineteenth century, and in this century has emerged as an important influence in the poetry of such writers as Hugh MacDiarmid and Sorley Maclean and George Campbell Hay.

This neglect of the popular tradition affects Dr Smout's treatment of the Highland area in the early nineteenth century, otherwise so percipient. From this book, with its account of destitution and squalor and 'rural slum' conditions, one would not be prepared to find exquisite and highly elaborate music and poetry vigorously alive among ordinary crofters and cottars, and alive not only in the sense of perpetuating an earlier heritage (although it did that) but in the sense of renewing it in creative and socially relevant work. Bards like Donald Maclean ('the Cooper') in Tiree composed eulogies, laments and satires of telling force and beauty, no longer exclusively for the lairds and tacksmen. Nor were such men isolated or uncommon sports. In Donald the Cooper's township of eighty or so people there flourished at the end of the nineteenth century nearly a score of bards, who entertained the local population with their songs. (Their number is exceptional but not the existence of poets as a normal element of the community). The poets of the nineteenth century sometimes recall, in their imagery and laconic style, the earlier court songs but they relate to their own situation and conditions and are in no sense backward-looking. Whatever the material conditions of the Highland population of the early nineteenth century, they had nothing of the 'slum' mentality and were indeed infinitely more civilised than most of the dwellers in the cities of the plain. One would conclude from the reference to the Highlanders' 'massive problem of illiteracy' at this time that the author believed that their only hope for the future was to become rapidly conditioned to what the Lowland towns had to offer by a process of re-education. It is sad that the ruling classes believed this at the time and that a highly civilised people was subjected in the nineteenth century to a flattening process of religious propaganda and an alien secular education that helped to destroy a remarkable culture and to deplete communities of their most talented members.

Yet it must be said that the Highlanders themselves co-operated in the process. Dr Smout brings out forcibly the important effects which flowed from the chiefs' transformation into landlords, and the blow which this dealt to the social structure and to Gaelic civilisation. What ought to be added is that an almost equally potent solvent of Highland life was the seasonal flow of young men and women, through much of the eighteenth century, from the West Highlands to the Lowland harvests, into domestic service, to the great western herring buss fishing, and later to the bleach-fields and the cotton factories. In years of crop failure around 1740 these migrations involved huge numbers of people, and one gets the impression that few families below the level of tacksmen in the later half of the century could have broken even without the invisible earnings of their young migrant members. This spontaneous activity was probably more effective than any educational method in preparing the Gaels for new ways of life. Older people in the Highlands were shocked at the luxuries and novelties, the

Anglicisms of speech and manner which the young came back with, and by the high wages which they expected. They were simply, however, following their betters, the lairds, in adopting the values of the south. For such as these, becoming weaned from their rich oral culture, it may be right to speak of a problem of illiteracy, though ironically they would have been the last to see themselves as a deprived generation.

If there are judgments and assumptions to be challenged in this book, they do not affect the magnificent achievement that it represents. One cannot give anything like a complete impression of the wealth of learning and sanity which it embodies but must commend it to the reader to read (and re-read) for himself. It is endlessly stimulating and prompts a thousand thoughts. It will provoke new research in neglected areas of social history and related fields, and it sets a standard in the writing of history which many aspire to but few rival. Dr Smout is to be congratulated on having given Scotland a history for which her neighbours will have cause to envy her.

ERIC CREGEEN

The Declaration of Arbroath by Sir James Fergusson, Bart. Edinburgh University Press 1970. Pp. vii+54, with two facsimiles of the Register House copy of the Declaration.

The first thing to be said of this little book is how attractively it has been produced. Covers, paper, typography, the facsimile tucked into a wallet at the back, even the end-papers which cleverly reproduce the last part of a Scotichronicon MS version of the Declaration—all are a delight to look upon and handle. It is excellent that the Edinburgh University Press and Sir James Fergusson came together in this way to celebrate the 650th anniversary of the Scots lords' letter to Pope John XXII. The second thing to say is that Sir James's essay is much more than a *pièce d'occasion*. His detective predilections and skills have been aroused by certain puzzles, certain silences, of which previous historians have indeed been aware but which they have been too lazy or incurious to investigate. The passage in which Sir James reconstructs the history of the printed editions of the Declaration from (how aptly!) Mackenzie of Rosehaugh to his own constitute a wholly original and enormously valuable contribution to the historiography of a famous state paper. Even so, the aspect of the book which is likely to prove of most permanent worth is the reconstruction of the 'original' text derived from the author's careful examination of the relationship between the Register House text and the version, preserved in a number of forms which vary slightly, to be found in Walter Bower's Scotichronicon. For the historian, Sir James's most arresting conclusion appears on p. 21: 'I now feel certain that what Bower had before him was the draft of the Letter, and that from a comparison of it with the Tyninghame manuscript [*i.e.* the Register House copy] it is possible to reconstruct a text approximating very closely to that which went to Avignon. Further, from a study of both versions I think some new light can be thrown on the manner and circumstances in which the Letter

was composed, revised and sealed.' Such a reconstructed text is important because the 'original' has not been preserved in the papal archives (although the pope's reply, whose text does survive, shows that it was duly received). And in the pages which follow, Sir James does indeed throw light which is both new and most illuminating. Briefly, his hypothesis is as follows. The letter was drafted in advance of some actual gathering of the Scottish magnates, not at Arbroath but probably in the south-east, perhaps near where the king was, if not actually in his presence. The author of the draft is taken to have been the Chancellor, Bernard of Linton, abbot of Arbroath (hence the place-date). A certain number of lords were intended and expected to be named as senders of the letter and to authenticate it with their seals. Most of these, but not quite all, were duly named in the superscription and appended their seals. Others attended the gathering or fixed their seals (or both) unexpectedly. The loyalty and goodwill of certain barons were in doubt, perhaps up to the very last moment. Naturally the letter sent to the *curia* must have been definitive and must have been sealed by the senders; but because of the uncertain position at home, an equally authoritative, and therefore sealed, copy had to be made. This was made in such haste that though finely engrossed its scribe made numerous slips of eye and pen. It is this copy which is now in the Register House. In a sense it has always been part of the national archives, despite the lengthy period when it was, however irregularly, in the possession of the earls of Haddington at Tyninghame. And if it had not been for their irregular possession, we should almost certainly not have it today. Meanwhile, a draft which gave nearly but not quite the final version of the text was preserved long enough to be accessible to Walter Bower. He reproduced it in the Scotichronicon, but unfortunately Goodall's edition almost silently substituted the Tyninghame text for Bower's own.

This, in merest skeleton, is the chief part of the thesis adumbrated in this book. Such a summary does much less than justice to the evidence led and the arguments deployed. The book has the fascination proper to all good detective stories, but it also possesses permanent value. During the course of the thirteenth century the people of Scotland, the lieges of the king of Scots, came, however imperfectly and incompletely, to realise a conception of nationhood which was to endure essentially unchanged for more than four centuries. The process may be seen as the birth of the later medieval Scots realm and nation. The Declaration of Arbroath has made this process articulate in a particularly memorable fashion. The truth of this proposition is not affected by the fact that during the half-century or so after 1290 the question of which family or individual had the right to hold the throne perplexed many Scotsmen. Nor is it affected by the equally indubitable fact that in this period many known (and presumably unknown) Scots did not behave as though they knew or cared about the Scottish nation in this new sense. To argue otherwise seems no more sensible than to say that nineteenth-century Britain was not urbanised or industrialised because in 1900 the greatest employers of labour remained, as in 1800, agriculture and domestic service. The historian must see things not only as they actually were and had been,

but also as they were coming to be, as they were going forward. And what, politically speaking, was going forward in thirteenth-century Scotland, as in contemporary Spain, France and England, was the strengthening of national monarchy interacting with the growth of national consciousness. It is this (among other things) which makes the letter to the pope so rewarding to study. It may of course be viewed from many angles: as a specimen of a multiple-sealed document; as a splendid exercise in Latin rhythmic prose; as a counterpart and response to the English barons' letter of 1301; as an appeal to international opinion via the only acceptable international tribunal; as a demonstration—and test—of Scottish feudal loyalty to Bruce; as a test of Bruce's loyalty to the Scots; and so on and so forth. But in the last resort, the Declaration makes its contribution to European and ultimately world historiography as a classic statement of national consciousness and national aspirations in the earliest phase of the development of the national states, later the nation-states, of Europe. Sir James Fergusson has most fittingly crowned his long and fruitful career as Keeper of the Records of Scotland by giving us a study which will be essential for historians of medieval Scotland and an indispensable starting-point for all future work on Abbot Bernard's masterpiece.

G. W. S. BARROW

Everyday Life of the Pagan Celts by Anne Ross. Batsford, London and Putnam, New York 1970. Pp. 224, 100 figs. and pls. £1.50.

This is an exciting and well-written account of many aspects of pagan Celtic society between 700 B.C. and A.D. 500. Dr Ross, who was a member of the research staff of the School of Scottish Studies between 1961 and 1965, has used three sources of information about the Celtic world, namely archaeological remains, classical writings and representations, and finally Irish epic tales and laws. These different types of evidence have been skilfully blended into a study of the appearance, dress, weapons, fortifications, religion and art of the Celtic tribes. For some topics, such as physical appearance, armament and settlements, the evidence of material remains and the more dispassionate descriptive writings of classical authors are complementary; and in some cases the Irish tales provide colourful detail which confirms what can be discovered from earlier sources. Of course it would have been safer to begin with the archaeological information or the evidence provided by Greek or Roman writers, although these were often second-hand or even biased against the barbarian way of life, and then to use the more narrative information of the epic tales. It would then have been possible to separate the contemporary material from the Irish tales, contemporary only by inference and certainly insular in detail. But Dr Ross has been right not to do this, for by interweaving the information, she has provided a much more coherent picture of the workings of society and its attitudes to religion and to the gods of the Celtic world. She states constantly that the points of detail may not be true for the complete Celtic

area throughout the period under discussion: the survey is of necessity an idealised one and in this lies the strength of the book.

Some of the most interesting chapters are those where the archaeological evidence is least important and where, without using the Irish material, no clear picture could be obtained. Chapter 4 on 'Games and Hunting; Music and Entertainment; Food and Drink' is a good example of this. The dice, gaming pieces, representations of people with 'hockey-sticks', and even the tankards of the archaeological record are made more vivid when illustrated by an epic tale. Dr Ross's best chapters are perhaps those where she uses her insight into Celtic learning and religion. This section (chapters 5 and 6) can be viewed either as a sufficient and satisfying part of her present book, or as an introduction to the fuller complexities of the religion of this period described in her work on *Pagan Celtic Britain*. This volume will find many new readers, their interest awakened by these two chapters.

Dr Ross has deliberately concentrated on those aspects of Celtic life which seemed to her to be most distinctive; there is thus greater discussion of Celtic social organisation, religion and art than of such mundane matters as agriculture and technology. On the other hand, in building up a picture of everyday life in the Celtic world, these topics should not have been ignored, even though 'they differed little from other contemporary peoples'. The Celts contributed several agricultural and technological advances which might have been mentioned even in passing.

Professor Piggott has given a warning about the use of Irish literary evidence 'that we should not too closely compare Cú Chulainn with Commius, nor the state of affairs at Manching with that of Emain Macha' (*Ancient Europe*, p. 227. Edinburgh 1965). If this reviewer has any slight doubt about Dr Ross's book it is not that the Irish material has been compared—this is successfully and sensitively done—but that the reader is left with a picture of insular, and especially Irish, Celtic society. The social and mercantile organisation of the Celtic world, for which Manching may stand as an example, is not immediately apparent. But this is a minor criticism when the book is taken as a whole. Dr Ross's most important contribution has been to provide the general reader with a reliable introduction to the Celtic 'ideal', discussing the motivating forces in Celtic life and not merely their surviving pots and pans. The book is well illustrated with photographs and attractive line drawings.

GRAHAM RITCHIE

Temenos. Finnish Society for the Study of Comparative Religion, Helsinki. Volume 5, 1969. Pp. 248. $5.

This attractively produced periodical first appeared in 1965 and is devoted to studies in comparative religion written by scholars in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. The contents of volume 5 cover a wide field, ranging from North America to the

Near East (with a natural bias towards northern Europe), and from the Classical period to modern times (though with a strong preference for historically documented rather than contemporary religions). For readers whose primary concern is with Scottish studies, one of the most interesting contributions is that of Gustav Henningsen, who bases his article on his rediscovery of the original papers of Alonzo de Salazar Frias, the early seventeenth-century inquisitor who painstakingly investigated charges of widespread witchcraft in the Basque provinces of Spain, and found them to be without foundation. These documents are of vital importance for a fuller understanding of the witch-craze all over western Europe, and their more detailed publication, promised by the author, will be a very welcome event.

Henningsen sensibly sees the witch-craze not as a struggle against age-old heathen practices but as the persecution of all who deviate from the norms of their society by the creation of an imaginary 'out-group' to which they are then said to belong. In an interesting article Martti Haavio deals with the beliefs of a genuine out-group, the Lapps, and especially with the evidence for the identification of their supreme god. Haavio concludes that he corresponds closely to the Norse fertility-god Freyr, and that his title 'Ruler of the World', recorded by eighteenth-century missionaries, is not honorific but derogatory, a translation of the 'Prince of this world' (*i.e.* the Devil) in St John's Gospel. He also argues, with a wealth of comparative material, that the pillar set up beside the altar of the supreme god was not, as is commonly supposed, a replica on earth of a cosmic pillar supporting heaven, but merely the pole to which the sacrificial victim was tied.

Torbjörg Östvold also deals with Scandinavian material, and takes the myth of the war of the Aesir and Vanir to be a myth of the Fall, when lust for gold brought disaster and war to mankind. As background to this ethical interpretation she sees an ancient conflict between the gods of fertility and war, linked to the rites of the yearly cycle, and adapted to suit the new prominence of Odin in the special social conditions of the Viking period. In the peace-agreement and exchange of hostages which conclude the war she detects a fusion both of opposed deities and of opposed ways of life—that of the cultivator and that of the Viking. Her work will be of interest to all who are concerned with the interpretation of mythic material in terms of theology, history or sociology.

Moving further south, Haralds Biezais takes as his text the description of the gods of the Naharvales in the *Germania* of Tacitus, and proceeds to destroy the lofty edifice of speculation which has been built around them. He finds no evidence for twin-gods in Germanic religion, or for any connection with stags, or for any survival of such ideas beyond the Classical period. His contribution, though largely negative, is a salutary lesson in the use and misuse of sources.

H. Ludin Jansen is also concerned with the Classical field when he considers the literary portrait of the Greek prophetess Cassandra given by Aeschylus in the *Agamemnon*. His conclusion is that in appearance, behaviour and the form of her prophecies the dramatist's character was drawn from contemporary life and would be immediately

recognisable to the audience. But the seer-in-the-street and her prophecies of doom have been used by the author to convey a significance which far transcends the ordinary. In a very real sense the prophet of the Oresteian trilogy is Aeschylus himself.

Peder Borgen spreads his net wider when he examines the so-called 'Golden Rule' as it appears in Graeco-Roman, Jewish and New Testament sources. He shows that no distinction can be made between a 'primitive' negative version and a positive version with a higher ethical content, but still considers the New Testament version to be not merely a survival of the age-old doctrine of retaliation, but an integral part of the Gospel message of charity and love.

In a completely different sphere Jussi Aro illustrates from the works of the Egyptian author Taha Husain the wide-ranging influence of dervish-chiefs on the lives of members of their orders, and their ability to impress people, both individually and *en masse*, by the use of cloudy pronouncements which give an impression of knowledge of things beyond the horizons of ordinary men. He suggests that a profitable comparison could be made with the leading figures of Protestant revivalist movements. This is a hint that might well be taken up by students of Scottish religion.

In a short article Jes P. Asmussen considers the word for 'tent' in Judaeo-Persian translations of the Bible, and after showing that two forms of the word (by'n and gwy'n) are philologically possible, but only one (by'n) has so far been found, he produces no fewer than eighteen examples of the other form, selected from a manuscript in the British Museum. This discovery will cause delight in linguistic circles, but it is a little difficult to see why it should be announced in a journal of comparative religion.

Perhaps the least convincing article in the volume is that in which Åke V. Ström seeks the source of the non-Biblical material to be found in early Mormonism in the legends and beliefs of the Delaware Indians. Many of the parallels produced by the author seem too vague and general to be acceptable as proof of specific influence, and although their sheer number may be felt to give some weight to the case, at least one reader (who admittedly is no expert in either field) finds it difficult to accept the claim that 'there are strong Red Indian elements in early Mormonism'.

As well as these articles the volume contains a rather scrappy discussion of structuralism as applied to myth and folk-tale, and a number of interesting and authoritative reviews. Its layout and general appearance are very good, and it has been carefully produced, with only a few misprints, although a little more attention could have been paid to proof-reading the Greek quotations.

J. G. MACQUEEN

Sir Walter Scott, The Man and Patriot by Moray McLaren. Heinemann, London 1970. Pp. 244. £2.75.

'If I may be allowed to express one regret', writes Moray McLaren in *Sir Walter Scott, The Man and Patriot* (London, Heinemann, 1970), 'it is that I was born too late to have

enjoyed Walter Scott at Abbotsford' (p. 154). This sets the tone of the author—very much one of enjoyment—for Moray McLaren disclaims any intention of setting out to 'do' a book on Sir Walter in the big sense. He takes for granted his reader's knowledge of the general outline of Scott's life, he prefers 'a study of his immense influence on the world of his era' (p. x), promising particularly an account of North American receptions of Scott.

Within this proposed framework, Mr McLaren has produced a pleasant and readable, easy-going book on Scott's life and fiction. In fact much of Scott's life is re-told, and the reader is taken through the major events of Scott's life and the publication of the more important works in more or less chronological order. The style is likewise easy-going. 'It is astonishing', writes Mr McLaren of Scott's father, 'now to think that a well-doing and well-connected lawyer like the elder Walter Scott could have settled in and tried to bring up a family in such a festering spot as Old College Wynd. But that was the Edinburgh way of it then. Reputable lawyers neither knew nor cared much about germs . . .' (p. 26). The style is that of a Scott enthusiast at his ease, speaking conversationally to the world at large of an interest that has been part of his life.

Two main areas of unease present themselves to the reader. One is this relaxed style and approach, pleasant in biographical narration, but (in this book) frequently unsuccessful when applied to the novels themselves. The reader learns little about Scott's style from the following: 'He bashed ahead, and achieved or missed his effects by a kind of happy accident' (p. 230).

The Heart of Midlothian, we are told, ' . . . is Scott at his pure best. As such it is recognised by Scots readers not only in Scotland but wherever they may find themselves. It has been less popular in England, partly because of the essential Scottishness of the story, and partly because of the wealth of broad Scots which English readers find difficult, or say they find difficult, to understand' (pp. 138–9). *Redgauntlet* comes in (on pp. 168–84) for some particularly uncritical treatment.

An uncritical approach to Scott's literary output is one criticism, the other is dissatisfaction at not finding very much new in this book. The promised American chapters do not contribute much to the book as a whole. The life-story is familiar largely from Lockhart, certainly now from Johnson. The critical comments enlighten little. What remains is Moray McLaren's view of Scott—after all what this book claims to be, and what it is. But at £2.75 for a rather unattractively-produced and carelessly proof-read volume of 244 pages, it is an expensive introduction to Scott's work, and an expensive luxury for the enthusiast.

IAN CAMPBELL

Sir Walter Scott, 1771–1971: a Bicentenary Exhibition organised by the Court of Session, the Faculty of Advocates and the National Library of Scotland in the Parliament House, Edinburgh, 15th August–11th September. National Library of Scotland, 1971. Pp. 60. 50p.

A reviewer of this catalogue who has been on Lord Clyde's planning committee of the Exhibition must seem (in classic Edinburgh phrase) like the cook who should come from the kitchen and criticise the dinner. But since the present reviewer did no more than occasionally murmur 'Throw in a bay-leaf', it is hoped that without impropriety he may now cry 'Perfection'; for the catalogue is excellent. There are chapters on Scott's Edinburgh and the Borders; his friends; influences on music, theatre and literature; connections with law; and, above all, his work as poet, novelist, miscellaneous writer and editor. These chapters are balanced by descriptions of the exhibits, from The Queen's and other collections, ranging from portraits of genius by Raeburn and Geddes to *The Tea-table Miscellany*, one of the 'two or three old books which lay in the window-seat' at Sandy-Knowe. For this great Exhibition, assembled in the glorious building familiar to Scott, as an Advocate, most of the loans came from the adjacent National Library, the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, and Abbotsford. To all the owners who agreed to be parted from their treasures, many must be grateful. The catalogue has an attractive cover showing on a brown ground the emblem of the Exhibition, the noble, kindly features of the Chantrey bust. Brown is used again for the many splendid illustrations; and the contrast between them and the text (black, with wide columns for narration, narrow for catalogue-entries) is admirable. The authors are Messrs Eric Anderson and Basil Skinner (portraits and other pictures), Miss Marion Linton and Mr Alan Bell, the Editor (books and manuscripts), Mr David Edward (buildings), and Professor Trevor-Roper (Scott's influence abroad). Along with designer, printer, and publisher, they have produced a work of lasting value and pleasure.

W. BEATTIE

The First International Saga Conference. Edinburgh, 21st–28th August 1971.

This conference was the occasion for an international gathering of scholars. It was sponsored by the Departments of Educational Studies and English Language at Edinburgh University. Mr Hermann Pálsson, reader in Icelandic, presided over the conference, and Mr James Chisholm, senior lecturer in Educational Studies, was responsible for its organisation. The papers that were delivered ranged from textual criticism of saga manuscripts to more literary topics, and some were outstanding. In addition, there were some lively discussions about saga studies, both in general, and with particular reference to undergraduate teaching. There can be no single measurement for the

success of such a conference, but at any rate there was general agreement, both that the proceedings of this conference should if possible be published, and that in the future other such conferences should be held. Committees were elected to examine both matters, and there was a general welcome given to an invitation to hold a conference in Iceland in 1973. Anyone wishing to be kept in touch with developments should write to Hermann Pálsson at the Department of English Language, University of Edinburgh, David Hume Tower, George Square, Edinburgh 8.

JOHN SIMPSON

Fourth International Conference on the History of Cartography. Edinburgh, 21st–24th September 1971.

The development of the History of Cartography as an academic discipline is symbolised by its being the subject of an international conference held in the University of Edinburgh. It was the fourth of a series which began with a symposium in the rooms of the Royal Geographical Society, London, in 1964.

Like geographical studies in general, the history of cartography makes use of other disciplines, among which are bibliography, textual analysis, historical background studies, physical geography, and various technologies such as surveying, navigation, engraving and printing.

It was thus appropriate that the conference should have been organised by a committee representative of the National Library of Scotland, the University of Edinburgh, the Scottish Record Office, the Edinburgh Geographical Institute, and the Scottish Geographical Society. Miss Ann Young, Map Room, National Library of Scotland, was general secretary.

Early maps, charts and estate plans are not only interesting in themselves but form sources for other studies, including that of place-names. It is nearly always desirable to know something of the history of a map before its contents are used as evidence.

The papers with some specific Scottish interest included:

C. Koeman, University of Utrecht, 'Life and works of Willem Janszoon Blaeu: new contributions to Bleau studies'.

J. C. Stone, University of Aberdeen, 'Origins and sources of the Blaeu Atlas of Scotland with particular reference to *Extima Scotiae* (*Atlas Novus*, 1964)'.

Roger H. Fairclough, Cambridge University Library, 'The manuscript Roadbook of George Taylor, 1785'.

Marcel Destombes, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, 'A new copy of the map of the British Isles by Gerard Mercator, 1564'.

A. B. Taylor, Edinburgh, 'Alexander Lindsay's Rutter of the Scottish seas, *circa* 1540'.

I. H. Adams, University of Edinburgh, 'John Ainslie, map-maker'.

A. B. TAYLOR

'*A Virtuous & Noble Education*'—an exhibition held in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh, 19 August—18 September 1971.

This admirable exhibition took us abroad in 1651 with two young Scotsmen, sons of the 3rd Earl of Lothian, and brought us home again with them in 1657. Like so many of their countrymen before them, Lord Kerr and his brother enrolled at Leiden University. They came to a country which was closely tied to Scotland by trade interests and religious and political sympathies. Again like many Scots of that period, they had a kinsman serving in the regular Dutch army. They studied at Leiden alongside students from Poland and other parts of Europe (as indeed would also have happened had they gone instead to the Universities of Aberdeen or St Andrews), in an age when differences in nationality mattered less than a shared Protestantism. They had their early struggles with the still international Latin language. They later took the route to the celebrated Protestant academy at Saumur in France, training ground of many Scots ministers of religion. During their years abroad the Kerr brothers learned to dance, to ride, and to dress as befitted apprentice courtiers. But they remained sober sermon-attenders, true to their Scottish inheritance. Although they did some sight-seeing (they went to Chartres and St-Denis), no record has survived of their responses, either of approbation or revulsion, nothing, understandably enough, to parallel the diarist John Evelyn's eloquent appraisal of French art treasures and monuments in the 1640s. Only one letter, urgently pressing for parental permission to go to Italy, shows the conformist biddable boys momentarily seeking, but in vain, a wider more complicated and heady intellectual environment than they were ever able to know.

Dr Duncan Thomson's intelligent and imaginative selection of exhibits, contemporary paintings and drawings, manuscript letters and accounts, books, weapons, furniture and plate, enabled us to enter in authentic detail into the boys' own experience, to see the neat towns where they lived, the water-ways and broad skies of their travels, the textbooks that they read, the personalities whom they met socially or in their schools, and to recapture the atmosphere in which they passed their studious days under the eye of their painstaking tutor, Michael Young. The catalogue has a long sympathetic and learned introduction, and is amply illustrated with representative items from the exhibition. Copies are still available, and for those who missed the exhibition itself it is well worth acquiring at 50p.

GEORGE HENDERSON

Books Received

Some of these books may be reviewed later in *Scottish Studies*

The Blind Harper (*An Clarsair Dall*). *The Songs of Roderick Morison and his Music.* Edited by W. Matheson. Scottish Gaelic Texts Society Vol. 12, Edinburgh 1970. Pp. 265. £2.75.

Carmina Gadelica: Hymns and Incantations collected by Alexander Carmichael, Vol. VI: Indexes. Edited by Angus Matheson. Scottish Academic Press, Edinburgh & London 1971. Pp. 271. £4.

The Ballad as Song by Bertrand Harris Bronson. University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, and London, 1969. Pp. 324.

Edinburgh Studies in English and Scots, edited by A. J. Aitken, Angus McIntosh and Herman Pálsson, Longman 1971. Pp. 247. £2.25.

Gaelic by Roderick MacKinnon. Teach Yourself Books, London 1971. Pp. 324. 55p.

The Brothers Grimm by Ruth Michaelis-Jena. Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1970. Pp. 212. £2.75.

The Industrial Archaeology of Galloway by Ian Donnachie. The Industrial Archaeology of the British Isles series, David & Charles, Newton Abbot 1971. £3.50.

Henry VIII's Scottish Diplomacy 1513–1524 by Dr Richard Glen Eaves. Exposition Press, Jericho, New York 1971. $6.50.

The Irish Flowerers by Elizabeth Boyle. Ulster Folk Museum, Holywood, Co. Down, and Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University, Dublin. Pp. 160+22 plates. £2.50.

A Compleat Theory of the Scots Highland Bagpipe by Joseph MacDonald. First published 1803. Republished, with a new introduction by Seumas MacNeill (from the 1927 edition of Alexander MacDonald, Inverness) by S.R. Publishers, Wakefield 1971. Pp. 48. £2.

[The Annual Bibliography for 1970 will appear in Volume 16. Editor.]