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‘The Order of the Elephant’ Symbols and Power in the Policing of Land Agitation in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland

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Abstract

The Crofters’ War of the 1880s saw widespread protest at the unequal and exploitative modes of land management used in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. In this article, a study is made of medals awarded by William Ivory, the Sheriff of Inverness-shire, to police in the Isle of Skye for their involvement in the arrest of land agitators. Using a material culture approach, the medals are analysed in terms of their symbolism and placed in the context of the Highlands and Islands, Britain and its Empire. The main source is a memorandum on the medals compiled by Sheriff Ivory, encompassing letters and statements intended to defend them, as well as an extant medal awarded by Sheriff Ivory and communication on the design of a second. The biases of the memorandum are balanced with primary source material from newspapers and Gaelic songs that reveal contemporary views on the issues discussed. The discussion offers insight into the power dynamics involved in the policing of land agitation, and how the role of the police was perceived at the time.

> [Ivory] would himself, in his own way, show his appreciation of the services of his “angels”; and he did it. He had a medal struck off, and had it forwarded to several of the Skye policemen in commemoration of their retreat before the children and old women of the island.[1]

The article from which this excerpt is taken, printed in the *Scottish Highlander* on 2 September 1886, announced that William Ivory, the Sheriff of Inverness-shire, had awarded medals to policemen involved in the prevention of land agitation in the Isle of Skye. These awards were made at the height of what has popularly become known as the ‘Crofters’ War’, a period of intense unrest which saw various forms of protest and resistance, including rent strike, land raids and deforcements, deployed against land management practices across the Highlands and Islands.[2] This article will explore, through the lens of material culture, how the symbolism of Ivory’s medals was interpreted differently by various groups, and how the awards affected policing and power dynamics at the time.

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[1] ‘Sheriff Ivory’, *Scottish Highlander*, 2 September 1886, 4.

[2] T. M. Devine, *Clanship to Crofters’ War: The Social Transformation of the Scottish Highlands* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), 218–19.

While the material culture focus is selective, the medals and the issues surrounding them were well documented and therefore offer a valuable opportunity for insight. Land agitation in the Highlands and Islands was not isolated or unique. During the late nineteenth century, many instances of popular protest such as the Irish Land Wars and the New Unionism movement resulted in the breakdown of law and order. Charles Townshend has argued that the 'British way' of policing such uprisings was to 'work out arrangements for each case on a trial-and-error basis', meaning that the response to each new case was informed by previous successes or failures in restoring order.[3] Thus interrogating the construction of meaning and power in individual instances of protest policing – such as through the material medium of Ivory's medals – may offer vital insight into concurrent and contiguous social movements and the evolution of state responses to them.

Writing in 1992, M. A. Crowther described Scotland as 'a country with no criminal record' due to the lack of research conducted into the history of its law enforcement and justice system.[4] While some gaps have more recently been addressed by writers such as Mark A. Mulhern, David G. Barrie, Anne-Marie Kilday, and David G. Barrie and Susan Broomhall, extensive gaps remain.[5] Little attention has been paid to the policing of the Highlands and Islands or, specifically, of land agitation, despite extensive research into the subject of the Crofters' War generally. An essay by Ewen A. Cameron, 'Internal Policing and Public Order, c.1797–1900', has contributed to progress in this area, although Cameron focuses on the use of the military as support for the civil power.[6] Specific research is still needed into the contemporary police, vitally important to the justice system as the 'public face of the law', to understand the symbolic construction of their authority and its perception by the public.[7]

An emerging field of enquiry into medals as material culture has begun to explore their significance as symbols.[8] However, as Craig P. Barclay argues, its energy has largely stemmed from the 'interests and needs of collectors and armchair warriors', meaning that much of the research has concentrated on military awards and individual recipients.[9] Civilian medals have received little attention, despite the fact that, through the course of the nineteenth century, organisations such as first-aid groups centred on the expanding railway, the St John Ambulance Brigade and the Lifesaving

[3] Charles Townshend, 'Martial Law: Legal and Administrative Problems of Civil Emergency in Britain and the Empire, 1800–1940', *The Historical Journal* 25/1 (1982): 194.
[4] M. A. Crowther, 'Scotland: A Country with No Criminal Record', *Scottish Economic & Social History* 12 (1992): 82.
[5] Mark A. Mulhern, ed., *The Law. Scottish Life and Society: A Compendium of Scottish Ethnology*, vol. 13 (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2012); David G. Barrie, 'Anglicization and Autonomy: Scottish Policing, Governance and the State, 1833 to 1885', *Law and History Review* 30/ 2 (2012): 449–94; Anne-Marie Kilday, *Crime in Scotland 1660-1960: The Violent North?* (London: Routledge, 2018); David G. Barrie and Susan Broomhall, *Police Courts in Nineteenth-Century Scotland: Magistrates, Media and the Masses*, (Ashgate Publishing Company, 2014); David G. Barrie and Susan Broomhall, *Police Courts in Nineteenth-Century Scotland: Boundaries, Behaviours and Bodies* (Ashgate Publishing Company, 2014).
[6] Ewen A. Cameron, 'Internal Policing and Public Order, c.1797–1900', in *A Military History of Scotland*, ed. Edward M. Spiers et al. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012).
[7] Kenneth B. Scott, 'Policing in Scotland', in *The Law. Scottish Life and Society: A Compendium of Scottish Ethnology*, vol 13, ed. Mark A. Mulhern (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2012), 599.
[8] See, for example, Matthew Richardson, *Contested Objects: Material Memories of the Great War* (London: Routledge, 2014); Jody Joy, 'Biography of a Medal: People and the Things They Value', in *Matériel Culture: The Archaeology of Twentieth-Century Conflict*, ed. John Schofield et al. (London: Routledge, 2002); Craig P. Barclay, 'Heroes of Peace: The Royal Humane Society and the Award of Medals in Britain, 1774–1914' (PhD thesis, University of York, 2009).
[9] Barclay, 'Heroes of Peace', 16.

Society began to issue members with medals for long service or particular proficiencies.[10] The Ivory medals, as awards for civilian policemen, fall into this latter group. Despite being mentioned in several texts, they have never been critically examined.[11] It is this research gap that this article seeks to address by examining the Ivory medals.

Anne E. Kane, writing on the role of meaning construction in social movements, argues that symbols are important in signifying social relationships and experiences, providing the basis of shared understandings which in turn foster alliances, camaraderie, and mobilization.[12] At the same time, she emphasises the importance of considering how these types of symbols are viewed by those who interact with them outside such movements.[13] Jody Joy explores this principle in the context of medals specifically by examining the layered meanings of a medal awarded to her grandfather for his military service, pointing out that such objects must be 'socially constituted' to acquire meaning.[14] She goes on to argue that the symbolism of objects means that they can 'act to create and maintain particular social relationships' and therefore that 'things play an active role within our society, just like human beings.'[15] Following this argument, we shall explore the Ivory medals as symbols both belonging to and imposed on the police. We shall do so from various perspectives, including that of the crofters and cottars who were themselves subject to policing, that of the Scottish press who publicised the medals, that of key political figures who utilised them in their campaigning, and that of the institution of the police itself. In following this process, we shall demonstrate how the symbolism of the medals shaped social relationships, fostering both alliances and divisions.

Sheriff William Ivory

Despite his foundational role in the policing of land agitation and his presence in scholarship on the subject, relatively little research has dealt with Sheriff Ivory specifically. To understand the provenance and purpose of the medals, we must first learn something about the person who created and awarded them.

By the 1880s, Sheriffs rarely took an active role in quelling unrest.[16] Ivory, by contrast, became personally involved in the policing of land agitation, and was often present in Skye to oversee matters himself. The *Celtic Magazine*, established by Alexander Mackenzie with the goal of 'stripping away the romantic view of life in the Highlands and presenting the realities of the situation', reflected on Ivory's personal involvement in an article printed in March 1885.[17] Titled 'Terrorism in Skye: Sheriff

[10] Barclay, 'Heroes of Peace', 95–96.
[11] I. M. M. MacPhail, *The Crofters' War* (Stornoway: Acair, 1989), 122; Ewen A. Cameron, 'Communication or Separation? Reactions to Irish Land Agitation and Legislation in the Highlands of Scotland, c.1870–1910', *The English Historical Review* 120/487 (2005): 647; Laurence Gouriévidis, *The Dynamics of Heritage: History, Memory and the Highland Clearances* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2010), 84; Ewen Cameron, *The History of Gaelic Scotland: The Highlands since 1880* (School of History, Classics and Archaeology Website, 2013), 34, https://www.research.ed.ac.uk/en/publications/the-history-of-gaelic-scotland-the-highlands-since-1880.
[12] Anne E. Kane, 'Theorizing Meaning Construction in Social Movements: Symbolic Structures and Interpretation during the Irish Land War, 1879–1882', *Sociological Theory* 15/3 (1997): 250, 252.
[13] Kane, 'Theorizing Meaning', 256.
[14] Joy, 'Biography of a Medal', 134.
[15] Joy, 'Biography of a Medal', 142.
[16] Elspeth Reid, 'The Sheriff in the Heather: Beaton v. Ivory', University of Edinburgh, School of Law, *Working Papers*, no. 35 (2013): 3, https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2330752.
[17] Ewen A. Cameron, 'Poverty, Protest and Politics: Perceptions of the Scottish Highlands in the 1880s', in *Mìorun Mòr Nan Gall? ('The Great Ill-Will of the Lowlander?'): Lowland Perceptions of the Highlands, Medieval and Modern*, ed. Martin MacGregor and Dauvit Broun (Antony Rowe Ltd., 2007), 220.

Ivory's Latest Folly', the article claimed that 'that gentleman would appear to be very fond of figuring at the head of military expeditions' for his personal involvement in exercises and arrests.[18] Ewen Cameron describes Ivory's behaviour as having 'descended to the pursuit of personal vendettas' against certain individuals.[19] Ivory's involvement in policing land agitation made him generally disliked in his district, especially by the tenantry, to the extent that MacPhail describes him as 'almost certainly the most unpopular man in the Highlands and Islands' for his conduct during the 1880s.[20]

Though he held the office of Sheriff for nearly forty years from 1862–1900, it was for his policing of land agitation in the 1880s that Ivory was largely remembered.[21] Obituaries published following his death on 20 October 1915 are revealing. The *Edinburgh Evening News* took a comparatively neutral position, noting simply that Ivory was 'prominent in quelling crofter disturbances'.[22] By contrast, the *Inverness Courier* portrayed a more complicated figure, touching on Ivory's controversial conduct, describing him as not having had 'the peculiar gifts which bring forensic success' and remarking that his tenure was 'made remarkable by the crofter disturbances', through which he was 'brought into some sharp conflicts and had to be assisted both by naval and by military forces.' The same article even mentioned one of the most contentious moments in Ivory's career: his attempt to seize access to telegrams sent by and to land agitators by confronting a telegraph clerk, Mary Jane MacKenzie, in the Portree Post Office in May 1885. As the *Courier* reported, this incident was discussed in the House of Commons, though ultimately the Lord Advocate at the time, John MacDonald, defended Ivory from punishment.[23] Interestingly, the obituary published by *The Scotsman* – a strong supporter of the landlord cause – omitted to mention Ivory's involvement in the policing of land agitation at all.[24] Examining the power dynamics around Ivory's medals can offer insight into a figure who is central, though under-examined, in the literature on Highland and Island land agitation of the 1880s.

The Medals

The main archival record of the medals is a memorandum comprising a series of letters and statements that was compiled by Sheriff Ivory himself for Arthur Balfour, the Secretary for Scotland at the time. In this document, Ivory is defending himself in the face of criticism from the Chief Constable of the Inverness-shire police, Alexander McHardy, and other, unspecified 'County Gentlemen'. In a framing letter sent with the memorandum, Ivory directly accuses McHardy of mishandling the matter of the medals, and states that his intention in compiling the memorandum is to 'enable [Balfour] rightly to understand the conduct of the Chief Constable' which, he argues, was 'insubordinate', and had been encouraged 'in no small degree' by the unnamed 'County Gentlemen'.[25] In what follows, we shall examine the biases inherent in Ivory's memorandum in light of contextual information about events surrounding the records, contemporary newspaper reports, and evidence discerned from Gaelic song and poetry.

[18] 'Terrorism in Skye: Sheriff Ivory's Latest Folly', *The Celtic Magazine* 10/113 (1885): 203.
[19] Cameron, 'Communication or Separation?', 646–47.
[20] MacPhail, *The Crofters' War*, 194.
[21] 'Resignation of Sheriff Ivory', *Elgin Courant and Morayshire Advertiser*, 16 March 1900, 4.
[22] 'Father of the Faculty of Advocates', *Edinburgh Evening News*, 21 October 1915, 4.
[23] 'The Late Sheriff Ivory', *Inverness Courier*, 22 October 1915, 4.
[24] 'The Late Sheriff Ivory', *The Scotsman*, 23 October 1915, 8.
[25] Sheriff William Ivory to Arthur Balfour, 16 December 1886, National Records of Scotland HH1/161.

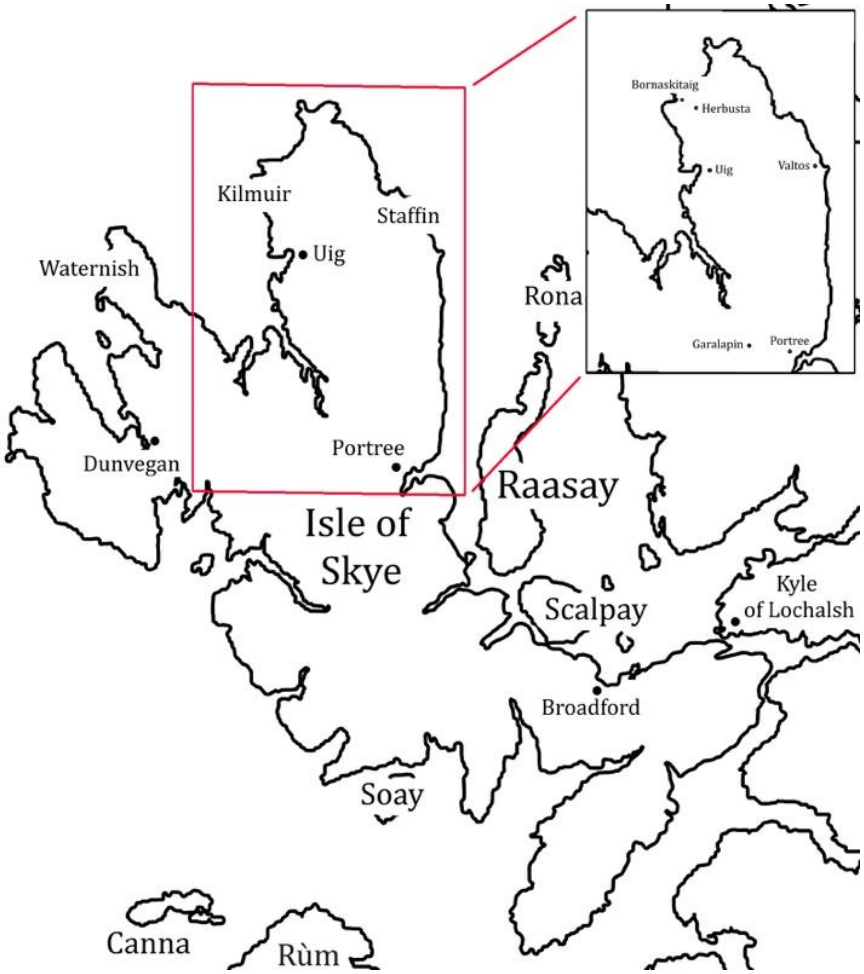

Figure 1. The Isle of Skye

The first of the Ivory medals was awarded in connection with the arrest of Norman Stewart, a crofter from Valtos on Major William Fraser's Kilmuir estate in the Isle of Skye who was president of the branch of the Highland Land Law Reform Association there.[26] On 26 December 1884, a sheriff officer serving summonses in Kilmuir was 'deforced'[27] by a group of the tenants from the surrounding area.[28] Three men – Norman Stewart, Alexander Stewart, and Murdo MacDonald – were subsequently tried for this offence, with only MacDonald being found guilty.[29] During the trial, Norman Stewart successfully defended himself against charges of mobbing and rioting by bringing forward witnesses who testified that he had tried to prevent violence during the confrontation.[30] Ivory's medal, however, was specifically attached to the arrest of Norman Stewart, potentially due to his belief that Stewart was a key figure in the organisation of unrest in the district – an opinion which became the source of a libel case which will be described in more detail below.

[26] James Hunter, *The Making of the Crofting Community* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2010), 159.
[27] 'Deforcement' is defined as 'the crime of opposing a public officer, as a messenger in the execution of his duty, or an officer of the revenue'; see Robert Bell, *Dictionary of the Law of Scotland Intended for the Use of the Public at Large, as Well as of the Profession*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: John Anderson & Company, 1815), 1:241.
[28] Hunter, *Making*, 289.
[29] 'Sheriff Ivory's Mountain and Mice: Trial of the Men of Glendale and Valtos', *The Celtic Magazine* 10/115, (1885): 326.
[30] MacPhail, *The Crofters' War*, 120–21.

The Deputy Chief Constable for Inverness-shire, Donald Aitchison, wrote a report about the arrest of Stewart in which he described how a group of police and marines landed in Staffin Bay at 8am on 30 January 1885. They marched to Valtos where they unsuccessfully searched several houses before Stewart was seen walking across a moor about 500 yards away. Aitchison then described how four of the policemen accompanying him chased Stewart, apprehending him as he tried to cross a dyke. The response by the township population indicates their anger at Stewart's arrest, and gives an idea of the opposition faced by the police:

> Seeing that he was apprehended the natives who were looking on ran towards them, some of the men flourishing short sticks which they carried, and using threatening language, and seemed ready to fight. At this time the marines doubled towards the crowd and they kept back.[31]

After Stewart's arrest, Ivory insisted that the four policemen responsible deserved a reward for their service. He suggested medals to both the Police Committee and the Commissioners of Supply of the County of Inverness, who were responsible for the day-to-day management of the police force and its resources.

Ivory's medals were not, however, a popular idea, and he was rebuffed for various reasons. There was a concern that they would sow dissent within the ranks of the police force itself, causing jealousy between individual officers. Chief Constable McHardy, who was directly accountable for the management of the police, wrote to Ivory that he believed the four policemen responsible for the arrest deserved 'some special mark' but that he did not know how this could be done 'without leaving the others out, who I believe would have acted similarly had they been equally placed.'[32] These sentiments were later echoed by Hugh Davidson, the County Convener and a member of the Police Committee, who wrote to Ivory that the medals were 'calculated to excite feelings of jealousy among the members of a force all equally willing and ready to perform whatever duties are entrusted to them.'[33] Another reason given for opposing the idea was that there were already rewards in place for the police. McHardy pointed out in a memorandum in October 1885 that good service resulted in promotions, and listed several examples from within the police force in Skye specifically.[34] At a meeting on 9 April 1886, the Police Committee insisted that the police did not need a reward because 'they have not been unmindful of the comfort of the force', and argued that increases in pay and allowances, as well as improvements made to police accommodation, had already constituted a bonus.[35] There was also fear that the medals would serve as a provocation to the already-restless tenantry of the island, with Convener Hugh Davidson writing to Chief Constable McHardy that 'every effort ought to be made by the police to avoid irritating the people.'[36] Finally, Davidson argued that 'it is contrary to the practice among the Police Force in Scotland to bestow medals for the performance of Police duty.'[37]

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[31] Donald Aitchison, 'Report of Mr Aitchison Regarding Arrest of "Parnell" at Valtos, 4 February 1885', National Records of Scotland, 1885, HH1/161/1.
[32] Alexander McHardy to Sheriff William Ivory, 27 March 1885, National Records of Scotland, HH1/161/5).
[33] Hugh Davidson to Sheriff William Ivory, 9 December 1886, National Records of Scotland HH1/161/29.
[34] 'Memorandum by Chief Constable anent Special Service of Police in Skye, 14 October 1885', National Records of Scotland HH1/161/6.
[35] 'Minutes of Meeting of the Police Committee of the County of Inverness, 9th April 1886', n.d. National Records of Scotland HH1/161/11.
[36] Hugh Davidson to Alexander McHardy, 1 December 1886, National Records of Scotland HH1/161/26..
[37] Davidson to Ivory, NRS, HH1/161/29.

In response, Ivory's memorandum included statements from Inspector Malcolm MacDonald and Alexander Boyd, Portree, noting that policemen from Glasgow were given rewards for 'special apprehensions.'[38] He also stated that the Police Committee itself had voted for rewards for the Glasgow police involved in an 1882 confrontation between law enforcement and land agitators, known in English as the 'Battle of the Braes'.[39] In all of these cases, however, the reward took the form of money or a certificate of acknowledgement. There was no cited example of medals previously having been awarded. While research conducted by Inspector C. W. Tozer in 1950 shows that police medals were not unheard of in Great Britain in this period, those of the later nineteenth century were usually awarded for a span of good service. Examples include a bronze medal awarded to Liverpool policemen with '20 years' service free from punishment as laid down in Police Regulation', or in connection with service at a particular event, such as the Queen Victoria's Police Jubilee Medal of 1887.[40] Medals attached to specific moments of courageous service, broadly construed, were introduced later, with the Cardiff City Police Bravery Medal introduced in 1908 'for acts of bravery', and the Aberdeen Constabulary Medal in 1909 for 'members of the Force who specially distinguish themselves in the execution of their duty.'[41] There does not seem to have been a precedent for the awarding of medals in connection with a specific arrest.

Nonetheless, Ivory decided in July 1886 to take matters into his own hands and 'give [the policemen] a small present himself' in the form of a 'small silver ornament'.[42] This first Ivory medal will be referred to as the Norman Stewart Medal in this article. The second Ivory medal, which will be referred to as the Garalapin Medal, was awarded to seven policemen involved in making arrests on 26 October 1886 following a deforcement in Garalapin near Portree on Lord MacDonald's estate, when a sheriff officer was prevented from serving writs by a crowd of men and women from the surrounding townships.[43]

For unknown reasons, neither of these medals was awarded at a formal ceremony. They were, instead, sent by registered post, with letters written by Sheriff Ivory. The lack of ceremony could be interpreted as Ivory's attempt to avoid negative attention, but it is also significant in constructing the symbolic meaning of the medals. In examining civilian medals issued during the Second World War, Ellena Matthews emphasises the importance of the presentation ceremony both as acknowledgment of an individual's actions and as 'establishment of the medal as a meaningful object' in the eyes of the general public.[44] Jody Joy argues that 'without the performance associated with medal-giving the recipient is given an "object" rather than a "thing"'.[45] This distinction is based on social status: 'objects' are static and defined by their purpose, while 'things' are dynamic, their interpretation based on their interactions and relationships both with other 'things' and with people. Both Matthews and Joy argue that the lack of a presentation ceremony

[38] 'Statements by Chief Constable Aitchison, Inspector MacDonald, Portree, Sergeant Boyd, Dunvegan, William MacLeod, Constable, Colbost, Angus MacDonald, Constable, Waternish, William MacDonald, Constable Lochend & Hugh Chisholm, Constable, Uig, in Regard to the Silver Ornaments Presented to 4 Constables for Apprehension of Norman Stewart (Alias "Parnell") at Valtos in January 1885', National Records of Scotland HH1/161/32, NRS.
[39] 'Memorandum in Regard to the Silver Ornaments Presented by Him to Four Constables for Apprehending Norman Stewart ("Parnell") at Valtos on 30 January 1885 – with Relative Correspondence Contained in 33 Original Documents', 1886, National Records of Scotland HH1/161.
[40] Inspector C.W. Tozer, 'Provincial Police Medals', *Police Journal* 23/4 (1950): 298.
[41] Tozer, 'Police Medals', 301.
[42] 'Memorandum in Regard to the Silver Ornaments', 1886. NRS HH1/161.
[43] MacPhail, *The Crofters' War*, 197.
[44] Ellena Matthews, *Home Front Heroism: Civilians and Conflict in Second World War London* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2024), 169.
[45] Joy, 'Biography of a Medal', 135.

to establish a social meaning for medals means that they do not take on the meanings and associations intended by the presenter. Instead, as in the case of the Ivory medals, meanings and associations must be derived from the symbolism of the objects themselves and the social dynamics at play around them.

Figure 2. Front (L) and back (R) of the Norman Stewart Medal. Image © National Museums Scotland.

A Norman Stewart Medal (Figure 2) is now held by the National Museums of Scotland. Cast in the shape of a shield surrounded by a circle and topped by an elaborate crown, it is inscribed with the words, 'Arrest of Parnell, Valtos, 30 Jan. 1885' on one side and 'For Zeal & Activity, From Sheriff Ivory' on the other.[46] 'Parnell' was a nickname given to Norman Stewart for his role in leading agitation on the Kilmuir estate, beginning with rent strikes from 1877.[47] The nickname referred to Charles Stewart Parnell, the president and parliamentary spokesperson of the Irish National Land League, who also led the pro-Home Rule Irish Party.[48] However, the name 'Norman Stewart' would have been fairly well-known within the social networks surrounding land agitation and beyond, thanks to the extensive newspaper coverage of his arrest and trial. Thus, the decision to have the medals engraved with 'Parnell' as opposed to 'Norman Stewart' is interesting and would be received differently by the various groups interacting with the medals.

According to the *North British Daily Mail,* the nickname 'Parnell' may have been bestowed by Sheriff Ivory himself: 'Norman Stewart, of Valtos, *alias* (according to Sheriff Ivory) "Parnell."'[49] Elspeth Reid writes explicitly that it was Ivory who had 'dubbed' Stewart 'Parnell.'[50] Indeed, an article printed in *The Scotsman* on 12 February 1885 consisted of a report written by Sheriff Ivory

[46] With thanks to Ewen A. Cameron for this information.
[47] MacPhail, *The Crofters' War*, 31; *Ornament, Watch Chain*, 1885, K.1997.1133, National Museum of Scotland.
[48] Hunter, *Making*, 188.
[49] 'Bringing Sheriff Ivory to His Knees', *North British Daily Mail*, 1 July 1887, 4.
[50] Reid, 'Sheriff in the Heather', 7.

about his activities in the Isle of Skye earlier in the year, in which he described the arrest of Norman Stewart: 'We had apprehended Norman Stewart, *alias* "Parnell", the leading ringleader of the mob, and the principal promoter of the former lawless proceedings in the district.'[51] This article became the subject of a libel case in 1887, in which Norman Stewart received £25 in damages to his reputation from Sheriff Ivory for having the report, which was written for the Lord Advocate, printed in the newspaper.[52]

However, references to Norman Stewart as 'Parnell' predated the report, with the nickname appearing in the *Aberdeen Press and Journal* on 12 November 1884: 'Norman Stewart, crofter, Valtos (local Parnell, as he is termed by his brethren, because of his appearances at these meetings, where he used to take up and expound the doctrines of the "uncrowned king").'[53] The 'uncrowned king' is a reference to Parnell's own nickname, 'the uncrowned king of Ireland', which he carried throughout his political career.[54] The use of the word 'brethren' suggests that the nickname was given to Stewart by other agitators in the region, though this information is not given a source. The article was credited as 'From our special correspondent', implying that the newspaper had an employee in Skye who collected the details from the region itself, lending the claim some credence. [55] While this account does not ultimately prove that the nickname came from within Stewart's own community, it does show that, at the least, the nickname predated Ivory's libelous article, disproving the idea promoted by the *North British Daily Mail* and Reid that the Sheriff was the source of the label. Regardless of its origin, Ivory adopted and deployed the 'Parnell' label for Stewart to varying effect.

Given the symbolism of Parnell's name within the Irish land movement, its substitution for Stewart's real name on the Norman Stewart Medal played into emotions surrounding the perceived spread of land agitation into the Highlands and Islands. The minutes of a meeting of the Police Committee of the County of Inverness in April 1886 effectively demonstrate a belief in this link by mentioning the rising use of incendiarism in the Highlands and Islands: 'There is evidently springing up a desire to imitate the Irish peasantry.'[56] For Ivory, who made public his desires to suppress the crofters' revolt through militaristic means and his belief that Stewart was central to organising the unrest, his use of the medal to reinforce an association between Stewart and fears of increasing violence is perhaps unsurprising.[57]

For those who viewed land agitation in a positive light, however, the use of 'Parnell' on the Norman Stewart Medal may have had the opposite effect, lending official endorsement to Norman Stewart as a symbolic leader of land agitation in the Highlands and Islands. This interpretation is supported by the way he is portrayed in *Oran Beinn Lì* ('Song on Ben Lee'), composed by the Skye bard and outspoken supporter of the crofting cause Màiri Mhòr nan Òran ('Big Mary of the Songs') to celebrate the awarding of the grazing of Ben Lee to the Braes crofters by the Land Court in 1887.[58] The dispute over the Ben Lee grazing was the root cause of the 'Battle of the Braes', a confrontation

[51] 'The Recent Expedition to Skye', *The Scotsman*, 12 February 1885, 7.
[52] 'Bringing Sheriff Ivory to His Knees', *North British Daily Mail*, 1 July 1887..
[53] 'Causes of the Rebellion', *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 12 November 1884, 5.
[54] F. S. L. Lyons, *Charles Stewart Parnell* (London: HarperCollins, 1977), 114.
[55] 'Causes', *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 5.
[56] 'Minutes of Meeting of the Police Committee of the County of Inverness, 9th April 1886', NRS HH1/161/11.
[57] MacPhail, *The Crofters' War*, 113–14.
[58] Hunter, *Making*, 223; Donald E. Meek, *Tuath Is Tighearna/Tenants and Landlords: An Anthology of Gaelic Poetry of Social and Political Protest from the Clearances to the Land Agitation* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press for the Scottish Gaelic Texts Society, 1995), 165.

between the crofters and cottars of Braes in the Isle of Skye and a group of over fifty policemen led by Sheriff Ivory.[59] In the song, Mairi Mhòr thanks the supporters of the crofting cause who have supported them in reaching this point, dedicating one verse to Norman Stewart specifically: [60]

Thugaibh beannachd gu 'Pàrnell',	Take a blessing to 'Parnell'
Thug a' bhuaidh air an 't-Sàtan',	who vanquished the 'Satan',
Air chor 's nach faicear gu bràth e	so that he will never be seen
Tighinn air àrainn na tìr.	coming near to the land.

The 'vanquishing' described in this verse is interpreted by Donald Meek (1995) as a reference to the libel case between Stewart and Ivory in 1887, with Ivory portrayed as 'Satan' in contrast with Stewart, or 'Parnell', who is deserving of 'a blessing.' Clearly, the nickname was not regarded negatively by supporters of the crofting cause. On the contrary, it enhanced Stewart's standing as a worthy opponent for the Sheriff, and its use in the medal would reflect this meaning when viewed by someone within the land movement, lessening the sense of power imbalance. In designing the Norman Stewart medal, Ivory sought to emphasise a negative link between the land movements in Ireland and in the Scottish Highlands and Islands; and for those opposed to such movements the meaning of the medal was as Ivory intended. But for other groups, the 'Parnell' nickname was interpreted differently, depending on their perception of Irish land agitation, and their interpretation would shape their view of Stewart's place and power in the land reform movement.

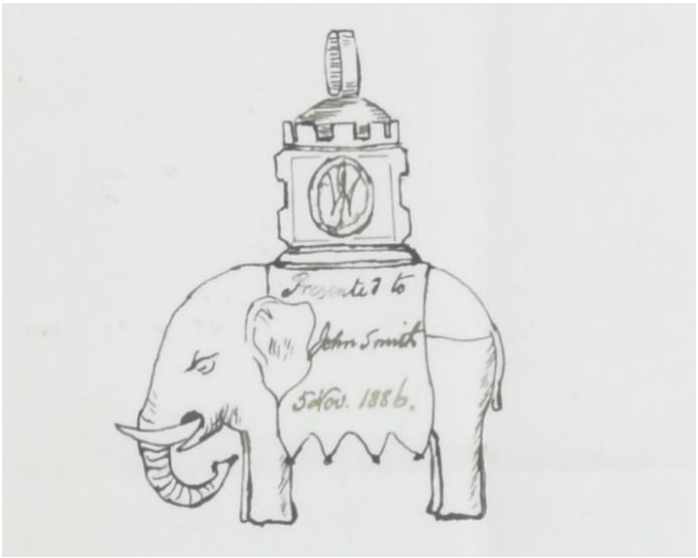

Figure 3. The Garalapin Medal design by Sheriff-Substitute Patrick Blair. National Records of Scotland, GD1/36/1/45/22.[61]

Much less is known about the design of the Garalapin Medal. A letter to Ivory from his direct subordinate, Sheriff-Substitute Patrick Blair, on 5 November 1886 hints at a possible design: 'A simple plain cross will not look so well as one with a little engraving on it. The engraving gives it a richer look, and would please the men better.'[62] Two days later, on 7 November, Blair sent a letter

[59] T. M. Devine, *The Scottish Nation, 1700-2000: A Modern History* (London: Allen Lane, 1999), 428.
[60] Meek, *Tuath is Tighearna*, 163, and translation, 264.
[61] Sheriff Blair to Sheriff Ivory, NRS, GD1/36/1/45/16.
[62] Sheriff Blair to Sheriff Ivory, NRS, GD1/36/1/45/16.

enclosing a sketch of a design showing an elephant with an elaborate decoration mounted on its back, bearing a symbol which could be interpreted as based on Ivory's initials: W. I (*Figure 2*). Below the design, Blair wrote the caption: 'The Order of the Elephant, or an adaptation of your crest!'[63]

Though it is unclear which design was ultimately chosen, the idea that Ivory would mark the public police force with his own crest is significant and echoes the Sheriff's use of his own name on the reverse of the Norman Stewart Medal. Ivory's symbolic linking of himself to the arrest of the Garalapin crofters and especially of Stewart, whom he clearly regarded as his opponent, justifies Cameron's assertion that Ivory pursued 'personal vendettas' in his work. Ivory's centrality in the design of the medals also ties them to his own reputation among the Skye tenantry, as borne out in Mairi Mhòr*'s 'Oran Cumha an Ibhirich'* ('Elegy Song on Ivory'), a mock-elegy printed in the *Scottish Highlander* on 6 January 1887, in which the bard pretended that the Sheriff had died and described him thus: [64]

Saighdear, mas fhìor,	A soldier, supposedly;
Chan fhacas a ghnìomh	he was to be seen in action
Ach air siteig no liath òtraichean,	only on a dung-hill or on grey muck-heaps;
'S e 'na bhòcan air cloinn	he was a spectre haunting children
'S air mnathan san oidhch',	and women at night,
Gus na sgreamhaich e'n Roinn Eòrpachail.	until he disgusted Europe.

The use of '*mas fhìor'* ('supposedly') in the first line of the verse throws doubt on his military credentials, an idea mirrored in the imagery of his battle-grounds being *siteig no liath òtraichean* ('a dung-hill or grey muck-heaps'). This is taken further by the imagery of him as a *bòcan* ('spectre') frightening women and children rather than opponents more capable of defending themselves. The idea that Ivory would particularly identify the medals he awarded to the police with himself by marking them with his name or crest created an association between the medal's wearers – the police – and this perception of him as an antagonist with military associations, albeit dubious ones.

By comparison, the King's Police Medal was established in 1907 to recognise the service performed by both police officers and firemen.[65] The regulations specifically mentioned that to qualify, individuals had to display 'conspicuous gallantry in saving life and property.'[66] The medal bore a portrait of King Edward VII on one side and, on the other, a 'clothed and helmeted watchman standing outside the walls of city...armed with a sword and with a lamp at his feet'.[67] The use of the watchman and the inscription 'TO GUARD MY PEOPLE' emphasised the protective role of the police and the fire brigade and their commitment to maintaining the common good. [68] Ivory's medals, by contrast, were seemingly more about him than about the recipients. The symbolism of the 'Order of the Elephant' design for the Garalapin Medal implied that the loyalty of the wearer was to Ivory himself. The inscription on the Norman Stewart Medal celebrated the apprehension of one individual and exaggerated his supposed crimes – crimes of which he was ultimately proven to be innocent.

[63] P. Blair to Sheriff William Ivory, 7 November 1886, NRS, GD1/36/1/45/22.
[64] Meek, *Tuath Is Tighearna*, 168, and translation, 268.
[65] Barclay, 'Heroes of Peace', 237–38.
[66] P. E. Abbott and J. M. A Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards* (Nimrod Dix, 1981), 118.
[67] Barclay, 'Heroes of Peace', 238.
[68] Barclay, 'Heroes of Peace', 238.

Ivory of Khartoum

The symbolism of these medal designs can be read in conjunction with R. I. Mawby's model of policing, in which it may be seen on a continuum from 'control-dominated' to 'community-oriented' practice. The main priority of the police in a control-dominated system is to 'maintain order', and in a community-oriented one is to 'provide a public service that addresses the wider needs of the community.'[69] Mawby argues that a control-dominated system is closely associated with the modes of law enforcement in the British colonies, where the police 'provided the key instrument of government in imposing order on a reluctant population'.[70] The design symbolism of Sheriff Ivory's medals clearly identifies his policing priorities as lying within the 'control-dominated' model, prioritising the imposition of law and order rather than responding to the needs of the community being policed.

The link implied here between the management of the British colonies and that of the Highlands and Islands is not without significance in relation to Ivory's medals. In March 1885, the *Oban Times* printed a song by Niall MacIll'-Leathain with the title '*Òran Aighearach* [A Humorous Song]: A New Expedition to Khartoum', satirising Ivory's leadership of the policing of the Highlands and Islands.[71] The song referred to the Mahdist War, which involved British forces in Khartoum under the leadership of the British Governor-General of Sudan, Charles Gordon, from March 1884. On 26 January 1885, the Mahdist army entered Khartoum and slaughtered 10,000 people, including Gordon, seizing control of the city in a move that was seen as threatening the British Empire itself.[72] MacIll'-Leathain's *Òran Aighearach* was presumably written once the British public had learned of the fall of Khartoum from newspaper articles in columns published adjacent to those covering land agitation in the Highlands and Islands.[73] While this juxtaposition could be explained by the newsworthy nature of events in both places, it nonetheless would allow readers to draw a mental association between the two conflicts – especially readers of newspapers like the *Oban Times* and the *Glasgow Evening Post*, for whom the issue of land agitation was significant. According to Kane, 'associations of similarity and difference' are key in constructing the meaning of symbols, and so this proximity in reporting and MacIll'-Leathain's use of the Sudan conflict in his parody of Ivory is significant in understanding how the Sheriff was perceived by the readers of these newspapers.[74]

The song portrays Ivory as leading an expedition to Khartoum in HMS *Plover,* a ship which between 1848 and 1854 had been involved in the unsuccessful search for the Franklin Expedition, lost in 1845 while attempting to map the North-West Passage.[75] Two verses mention medals:

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[69] R. I. Mawby, 'Models of Policing', in *Handbook of Policing*, ed. Tim Newburn (Cullompton, Devon: Willan Publishing, 2008), 37.
[70] Mawby, 'Models of Policing', 37.
[71] Niall Mac Ill'-Leathain, 'Oran Aighearach (A New Expedition to Khartoum)', *Oban Times*, 21 March 1885, 7. Thanks to Sìm Innes for bringing this item to my attention; see Innes, '*An Curaidh gun Mheang*? Gaelic Song and Poetry on Sir Eachann MacDhòmhnaill (Sir Hector MacDonald, 1853 –1903)' [forthcoming].
[72] Christopher Szabla, 'Civilising Violence: International Law and Colonial War in the British Empire, 1850–1900', *Journal of the History of International Law* 25 (2023): 92.
[73] See, for example, 'Presentation of Medals to Soudan Heroes', *Glasgow Evening Post*, 2 February 1885, 3; 'The Crofters' Agitation: Excitement in Skye', *Glasgow Evening Post*, 2 February 1885, 3; 'A General Order', *Oban Times*, 10 October 1885, 2; 'More Land to Crofters', *Oban Times*, 10 October 1885, 2.
[74] Kane, 'Theorizing Meaning', 250.
[75] W. Gillies Ross, 'The Type and Number of Expeditions in the Franklin Search 1847–1859', *Arctic* 55/1 (2002): 63.

Sann bheir iad dha medal *nuair thilleas e dhachaidh,*
Air dheannadh le creidhe le òrdugh a chruin,
Bidh iomhaigh a Mhadi air a ghearradh gu h-àrd ann
'S bithidh cuimhne gu brath air a bhlàr aig Khartoum.

[They will give him a medal when he returns home,
Made out of clay by order of the Crown,
The image of the Mahdi will be inscribed into it,
And the battle at Khartoum will be remembered forever.]

Ach sgriobhaidh e 'n toiseach a dhionnsaidh a' Scotsman*,*
Dh-innseadh gu'n do choisainn e onair us cliù,
'S thig ordugh a Sasunn o Office *a chogaidh,*
Victoria Cross *thoirt do* Bhobbies *nam* Mule.[76]

[But first he'll write to *The Scotsman*,
To inform that he earned honour and fame,
and an order will come from the War Office in England,
To give the Victoria Cross to the bobbies of the Mullahs.]

MacIll'-Leathain's song was printed just over a month after Ivory's report about the arrest of Norman Stewart appeared in *The Scotsman*, and the second verse quoted here makes an oblique reference to that report in suggesting that Ivory would write to the same paper about his success in Khartoum in an attempt to claim '*onair us cliù*' ('honour and fame'). MacIll'-Leathain's suggestion that Ivory's medal would be made of '*creidhe*' ('clay'), a cheap, plentiful material lacking permanence, clearly reveals his satirical intent, as such a medal would be as worthless as the claim it recognised. The song reflects failure onto Ivory in two ways: first, by referring to the *Plover* as part of the failed search for Franklin; and second, by linking Ivory's activities in Skye to the fall of Khartoum and the failure of the expedition sent to prevent it.

During the siege, there had been intense public outcry for the government to send assistance to Gordon's forces in Khartoum. Eventually, the Gordon Relief Expedition, led by Field Marshal Garnet Wolseley, was launched.[77] Adrian Preston has described the expedition as a 'patchwork of muddle and confusion' that arrived in Khartoum only to find that the city had already fallen and Gordon was dead – an outcome that earned the British government intense criticism from a public which had come to idolize Gordon during his defence of Khartoum.[78] Interestingly, medals were a contentious issue during the Mahdist War: British troops complained because those who had previously served in the Egyptian leg of the conflict were exempt from receiving medals for their service in Sudan, despite having been given the lower honour of a 'clasp' as opposed to a proper medal.[79] Preston blamed this discontent on rampant nepotism in the appointment of staff on the Gordon Relief Expedition: 'when news came of the fall of Khartoum a general desertion of disappointed medal-hunters took place.'[80]

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[76] Mac Ill'-Leathain, 'Oran Aighearach (A New Expedition to Khartoum)', *Oban Times*, 21 March 1885, 7.
[77] Cynthia F. Behrman, 'The After-Life of General Gordon', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 3/2 (1971): 48.
[78] Adrian Preston, 'Wolseley, the Khartoum Relief Expedition and the Defence of India', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 6/3 (1978): 256; Behrman, 'Afterlife', 49.
[79] Edward M. Spiers, *The Victorian Soldier in Africa*, Studies in Imperialism (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 109.
[80] Preston, 'Wolseley', 256.

For readers aware both of the fall of Khartoum and of Ivory's activities in Skye, the mention of medals in MacIll'-Leathain's song would imply that Ivory's Skye medals were similarly ill-deserved. MacIll'-Leathain underlines this point by describing Ivory's fictional Khartoum medals as bearing the image of the 'Mahdi', Mohammed Ahmed, who led the Mahdists in their rebellion.[81] This reference suggests that, from the perspective of the British public, the inept management of the Gordon Relief Expedition gave the Mahdist forces an easy victory. In picturing Ivory as a failed defender of Khartoum, MacIll'-Leathain suggests that the Sheriff has become a danger to the British empire, enabling the perceived 'regressive threat' of the Mahdist forces to take hold.[82] While the song does not claim that Ivory was actually a proponent of the British colonial project or a supporter of the Mahdists, it does portray him as wearing a medal made of clay and inscribed with the image of the Mahdi – an image that reflects the internal corruption of the British army which is damaging the empire from within.

While MacIll'-Leathain's *Òran Aighearach* was published before Ivory issued either of his medals, it may have coloured how they were received. In his discussion of medals and their meaning, Kane emphasises how the inter-reliance of symbols in 'relationship to other symbols in a symbolic structure' shapes how those symbols are received by a particular audience.[83] We must, therefore, consider that where MacIll'-Leathain's imagined medal, bestowed on Ivory by the Crown, bears the image of the Mahdi – the 'enemy' of the British at the time – the medals Ivory himself bestowed on his policemen eventually bore his own name and possibly, in the case of the Garalapin Medals, his crest.

Police authority in the Highlands and Islands

Relations between police and tenantry in the Highlands and Islands were tense well before the Crofters' War. David Barrie and Susan Broomhall describe the nineteenth-century police as an 'instrument of coercion' for the lower classes throughout Scotland, with much of their time devoted to policing the working class, suppressing political activities and trade unions.[84] This tension increased throughout the century as new legislation sanctioned the policing of everyday life in relation to drinking habits and popular pastimes.[85] In the Highlands and Islands specifically, the police were particularly mistrusted for their perceived loyalty to the landed class. Ewen Cameron has described how they were viewed as 'agents of the landlords' by the crofters' movement, not only for their role in suppressing land agitation, but also for the fact that management of the police force lay with committees predominantly composed of commissioners of supply, local justices, and county councillors.[86] Before the Local Government (Scotland) Act of 1889 mandated that local county councils be elected by the people, appointments to such bodies tended to be dominated by landed interests.[87] This perceived loyalty of the police force to the landed class meant that the symbol of the uniformed policeman was a loaded one in and of itself.

In the 1880s, the police uniform in the Isle of Skye consisted of a tunic and trousers, with either a cap or a helmet, depending on the officer's rank, bearing the ornament of the police. Whistles were worn on a chain in a specified way, allowing for individuals to draw attention or call for assistance when

[81] Spiers, *The Victorian Soldier*, 99.
[82] Szabla, 'Civilising Violence', 92.
[83] Kane, 'Theorizing Meaning', 250–51.
[84] Barrie and Broomhall, *Police Courts*, 1:24.
[85] Barrie, 'Anglicization and Autonomy', 480.
[86] Cameron, 'Communication or Separation?', 648.
[87] Barrie, 'Anglicization and Autonomy', 488.

required.[88] Daniel Donnelly and Kenneth Scott have described the uniformed police officer as a 'visible symbol of the link between the state and society, expressing a continuing and unspoken guarantee of the maintenance of law and order which is the first duty of the state towards its citizens.'[89] Uniforms, however, also create a sense of shared identity and cohesion among the wearers. Frances Heidensohn describes the police as 'bands of brothers, bound to each other by the nature of the dangers they confront and their consequent need for solidarity and protection', and the wearing of a uniform would have served as a visual reminder of this bond.[90] While some police were recruited from within the communities in which they served, the wearing of the uniform separated them from the general population, creating a conflict of identity and loyalty for those who belonged to both groups.[91]

Ramya Kasturi, in discussing the wearing of uniforms in a military context, argues that a uniform 'confers legitimacy upon its wearers' by implying that those wearing it are subject to the control of an organisation and will face consequences for misconduct.[92] In the Highlands and Islands, the Commissioners of Supply who managed the police force were deeply unpopular, described by *The Celtic Magazine* in 1885 as a 'close conclave of lawyers, landlords, and factors.'[93] In the eyes of many in the crofters' movement, the Commissioners could not be trusted to serve the best interests of the tenants; and because the police uniform symbolised their association with the Commissioners, the police could not be trusted, either. Instead of the uniform conferring legitimacy, as implied by Kasturi, what was bestowed was suspicion as to the loyalties of the police.

This suspicion would only have been compounded by the wearing of medals. Because it was important that the police be a civilian body, 'not greatly different from members of the general public' and thus able to create and sustain relationships with communities, they were not intended to be seen as military personnel.[94] Medals, however, had already begun to carry the connotation of war, as it became normal practice, from the 1840s onwards, for British soldiers and sailors to publicly display their service in military campaigns, and 'it became commonplace for medals to be seen gracing military chests.'[95] The linkage between medals and the battlefield is significant, given that Ivory awarded his medals during what eventually became known as the 'Crofters' War.' Though the nickname was adopted much later, the military symbolism of the uniformed police officer wearing one of Ivory's medals highlights how these events would have been perceived by land agitators themselves.[96]

Interestingly, this perception of the police as the enemy did not extend to the military itself, despite the presence of marines in the Highlands and Islands at several points during the 1880s and their involvement in the suppression of unrest. Hunter describes the marines as having been 'very cordially received' when they arrived in the Isle of Skye in mid-November of 1884.[97] An explanation

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[88] Alexander McHardy and Inspector Malcolm MacDonald, 28 May 1886, National Records of Scotland HH1/161/13.
[89] Scott, 'Policing', 599.
[90] Frances Heidensohn, 'Gender and Policing', in *Handbook of Policing*, 2nd ed., edited by Tim Newburn (Cullompton, Devon: Willan Publishing, 2008), 643.
[91] Cameron, 'Communication or Separation?', 649.
[92] Ramya Kasturi, 'Stolen Valor: A Historical Perspective on the Regulation of Military Uniform and Decorations', *Yale Journal on Regulation* 29/2 (2012): 428.
[93] 'Terrorism in Skye', *The Celtic Magazine*, 208.
[94] Scott, 'Policing', 601.
[95] Barclay, 'Heroes of Peace', 94.
[96] MacPhail, *The Crofters' War*, vii.
[97] Hunter, *Making*, 210.

may lie in the longstanding relationship between Highlanders and military service. In her exploration of male identity in the nineteenth-century *Gàidhealtachd*, Elizabeth Ritchie describes how the military provided an important source of employment in the Highlands and Islands, with individuals often enlisting as 'young impressionable men, so the military shaped their personal and public identities.'[98] Men from the Highlands and Islands may consequently have identified with the marines in a way that they did not with the police, possibly explaining why, in June 1885, it was reported that 'the crofters believe the Marines were sent [to Skye] to protect them from the police.'[99] This idea is upheld by '*Na Croitearan Sgiathanach*' ('The Skye Crofters'), a poem composed by Niall MacLeod from Glendale in the Isle of Skye, which contrasts the heroism shown by Highlanders in the British military with the failure of those in power to protect their interests in the land:[100]

Gun chuimhn' air na fiùran	Forgotten those heroes
A dhìon dhuinn ar dùthaich,	who protected our country,
Le an airm-chogaidh rùisgte	with their weapons bared ready,
Thug cùis dhe gach nàmh.	who taught tyrants to heed.

Donald Meek argues that this poem was likely composed in the aftermath of the Battle of the Braes, an idea supported within the text when MacLeod describes an episode of police brutality: *Mo dhaoine gan sgiùrsadh, aig ùmaidhean Ghall* ('My kinsfolk being battered, by daft Lowland men'). Although Meek translates the word *Gall* as 'Lowlander', reflecting the fact that many of the policemen involved in the Braes confrontation had been brought from Glasgow to supplement the police force in Skye, the word can also mean 'stranger' or 'foreigner', and its use here emphasises the sense of separation between the police and the people in Skye, notwithstanding MacLeod's assertion of an identification with the military, through the forgotten heroes who have served in the forces in the past.

Interestingly, due to the constraints of the English meter, the translation of the line *A dhìon dhuinn ar dùthaich* omits the word *dhuinn* ('for us'), which would make the more literal translation 'who protected for us our country', portraying the military service of Highlanders and Islanders as guardians of the community, rather than as collaborators in oppressing it. If MacLeod's poem can be taken as an indication of public sympathies, it seems clear that the marines, despite being overtly military in a way the police were not, were not viewed with the same animosity as the constabulary.

An eyewitness account of police misconduct, printed in the *North British Daily Mail*, further illustrates how Ivory's medals played into the negative perception of the police in Skye. In this account, 'Widow Hector MacDonald' describes how, while searching the township of Garalapin for those implicated in the deforcement, five or six policemen entered her house and demanded entry into a locked room. When she refused, one of the officers went outside, broke a window, and thus gained entry to the chamber. Concluding her complaint, she said 'I don't think a policeman, even although wearing an Ivory medal, should be allowed to break one of my windows with impunity.'[101] The widow's description of the policeman makes clear that he was one of the four who received medals following the capture of Norman Stewart earlier that year, demonstrates that the public were aware of the medals, and illustrates their association with destructive behaviour. The fact that she referred

[98] Elizabeth Ritchie, 'Men and Place: Male Identity and the Meaning of Place in the Nineteenth-Century Scottish Gàidhealtachd', *Genealogy (Basel)* 4/4 (2020): 15.
[99] A. Davidson and Sheriff William Ivory, 9 June 1885, NRS (GD1/36/1/27/4).
[100] Meek, *Tuath Is Tighearna*, 102, and translation, 224.
[101] 'Searching Houses Without Warrants', *North British Daily Mail*, 6 December 1886, 2.

to it explicitly as 'an Ivory medal' highlights the public association of the medals and their wearers with Sheriff Ivory. The words 'even although' suggest that she viewed the medals as giving the policeman the right to behave as he wished, even if his actions should not have gone unpunished. While the wearing of uniform should have encoded an expectation of consequences for misconduct, the expectation here was that the 'band of brothers' would protect their own, and their actions would not be regarded as misconduct, but rather be rewarded by the awarding of an 'Ivory medal.'

Additionally, the medals had a direct impact on how land agitators conducted themselves. On 25 October 1886, attempts were made to arrest a group charged with a deforcement in Herbusta, on the Kilmuir estate. The *Glasgow Herald* reported that

> In one of the intervals between his more active exertions his Lordship [Ivory] produced one of the medals distributed to the police who were engaged in the last expedition to the island, and declared that he would require to get some more so that there might be one for every man who effected a capture that day.[102]

The reference to 'the last expedition' was, presumably, to the events leading to the capture of Norman Stewart the preceding January, which resulted in medals for the policemen involved. Most of those implicated in the Herbusta deforcement, however, managed to escape, with only two people – Anne MacMillan and John Beaton – arrested at the time. The rest of the men, according to James Hunter, 'fled to the hills in a manner reminiscent of the aftermath of Culloden.'[103] They remained on the run for several weeks, evading capture despite repeated 'raids' on the township in efforts to apprehend them.[104] In the end, they presented themselves at the police station in Portree over the course of several days, from 23 November to 3 December.[105]

In narrating these incidents, Hunter states that the 'November weather forced [Ivory's] elusive quarries to surrender.'[106] An additional explanation, however, is offered in a letter from Ivory himself to the Under Secretary for Scotland, Francis Sandford, in which he asserts that the Herbusta men gave themselves up because 'they wished to prevent the Police getting any special mark of recognition for their capture.'[107] Explicit mention of the Ivory medals in the *Glasgow Herald* report – and, as we shall see, in subsequent reports across the country – leads to the conclusion that they are the 'special mark of recognition' referenced, and suggests that the Herbusta men were strongly reluctant to be arrested and provide a pretext for further medals being awarded. In other words, the medals had real-world implications for the ways in which land agitators interacted with the police and justice system. In addition, Ivory's letter to Sandford may be interpreted as an attempt to defend the medals; from his perspective, the eventual surrender of the Herbusta crofters was a success. The fact that the medals were key in their decision to do so would suggest that awarding them was having a positive effect on the maintenance of law and order in the district.

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[102] 'The Crofters. The Skye Expedition. Further Arrests for Deforcement.', *Glasgow Herald*, 28 October 1886, 7.
[103] Hunter, *Making*, 233.
[104] MacPhail, *The Crofters' War*, 197.
[105] P. I. Malcolm MacDonald, 'Copy Weekly Report at Skye. 27 Nov. 1886.', National Records of Scotland AD56/5; 'Copy Weekly Report at Skye. 6th December 1886.', National Records of Scotland AD56/5, NRS.
[106] Hunter, *Making*, 348.
[107] Sheriff William Ivory to Francis Sandford, 8 December 1886, National Records of Scotland HH1/153.

Press and public reaction to Ivory's medals

In his memorandum, Ivory sought to highlight the press reaction to his medals.[108] Specifically, he referenced an article printed by the *Scottish Highlander* on 2 September 1886, discussing the Norman Stewart Medals which had been sent to their recipients in July 1886. The *Scottish Highlander* was established in 1885 by Alexander Mackenzie, one of the founders of the Highland Land Law Reform Association, and it became one of the foremost pro-land reform papers in Scotland.[109] The article described the Norman Stewart Medal as commemorating the police's 'retreat before the children and old women of the island' and therefore as an 'insignia of their glorious discomfiture.' It recommended that Sheriff Ivory himself should wear one 'in commemoration of the wisdom and redoubtable bravery exhibited by him on his various visits to Skye' and concluded that the medals would be 'held specially suitable, not only for his Lordship, but for all concerned' if they were made of brass.[110] In describing medals awarded for police action against 'children and old women' and in noting Ivory's 'wisdom and redoubtable bravery', the article's satirical intent is clear, justifying its suggestion that the medals be struck from brass – a less valuable material.

The *Scottish Highlander* article was reprinted, either verbatim or nearly so, in at least seven other papers between 3 September and 11 September 1886.[111] Six of these used the headline '"War" Medals for the Skye Police', reinforcing the idea that such awards normally carried military, as opposed to civilian, connotations. These articles were significant in generating huge publicity for the incident, in raising wider questions about the symbolism of Ivory's medals, and ultimately in building on the mockery Ivory was already subject to for his conduct. While W. Hamish Fraser highlights how 'notoriously difficult' it is to get accurate circulation figures for newspapers at any time, it seems probable that readership of this article would have spanned Scotland.[112] It was published in provincial papers like the *Dunfermline Saturday Press,* as well as in national media like the pro-crofter *North British Daily Mail*. If they had not been so already, readers in major metropolitan centres including Edinburgh and Aberdeen became aware of Ivory's medals and the controversy surrounding them. Interestingly, however, in all of these articles the recipients themselves remained anonymous: the police were presented as a united front, with Ivory's the only name mentioned.

The issue of the medals surfaced again following the arrests in Garalapin and Herbusta. The *Oban Times*, another dependable advocate of the crofting cause, stated that Ivory was 'so well pleased' with the arrest of Herbusta cowherd John Beaton that he 'ordered a special medal to the constable who had apprehended him.'[113] The *Oban Times* article went on, however, to report that 'Beaton has instructed

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[108] 'Memorandum in Regard to the Silver Ornaments', NRS HH1/161.

[109] W. Hamish Fraser, *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Newspapers, 1850-1950* (Edinburgh University Press, 2023), 240.

[110] 'Sheriff Ivory', *Scottish Highlander*, 4.

[111] A full tally of reprints has been limited here by the titles available on the British Newspaper Archive. 'Sheriff Ivory Is Evidently a Man', *Dunfermline Saturday Press*, 11 September 1886, 2; '"War" Medals for the Skye Police', *Northman and Northern Counties Advertiser*, 11 September 1886, 2; '"War" Medals for the Skye Police – Ivory Again Distinguishes Himself', *Aberdeen Evening Express*, 3 September 1886, 2; '"War" Medals for the Skye Police – Ivory Again Distinguishes Himself', *North British Daily Mail*, 3 September 1886, 5; '"War" Medals for the Skye Police', *Aberdeen Free Press*, 4 September 1886, 6; '"War" Medals for the Skye Police', *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 4 September 1886, 2; '"War" Medal for the Skye Police', *Edinburgh Evening News*, 3 September 1886.

[112] Fraser, *Edinburgh History*, 15.

[113] Ewen A. Cameron, *Land for the People?: The British Government and the Scottish Highlands, c.1880–1925* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1996), 14.

a solicitor in Glasgow to take immediate proceedings against the parties who had put him under arrest.'[114] Thus began a protracted legal struggle in which Beaton sought justice for unlawful arrest; and although Beaton was ultimately unsuccessful, the proceedings significantly damaged Ivory's reputation.[115] The *Oban Times*'s decision to draw an association between these events and Ivory's medals was calculated to undermine both Ivory and the symbolism of the medals themselves. On the same day, an article in the *Highland News* took a similar line, noting that Ivory had sent a written reprimand to a sheriff officer guilty of misconduct during a series of poindings in Skye earlier in the year: 'surely it is the irony of fate that it should have been penned by the same judicious hand which bestows a medal upon the policeman for capturing an innocent crofter herd-laddie.'[116] The *North British Daily Mail* drew the broad conclusion that Ivory's medals had 'demoralised the police and outraged every idea of discipline.'[117]

Newspapers also reported on how Ivory's medals were received within government circles. In November 1886, Dr Charles Cameron, Liberal MP for the Glasgow College constituency and proprietor of the *North British Daily Mail*, presided over a public meeting in City Hall, Glasgow, that aimed to encourage action 'to curb the illegal and inhuman conduct of Sheriff Ivory and his band of moonlighters'. Dr Cameron argued that the institution of the medal for police involved in the apprehension of crofters demonstrated Ivory's 'desire to entrap crofters'.[118] Later that month, at a meeting at the Literary Institute, Edinburgh, Cameron again argued that 'when a judge gratuitously superseded the chief constable and issued a medal for the capture of crofters, he thought a probable cause of persecution was made out', and stated that he had sent to Skye for further information so the matter could be presented to the Court of Session.[119]

The medals were also discussed at a meeting that same month between the Secretary for Scotland, Arthur Balfour, and a deputation of representatives of the Land League, Celtic and Gaelic associations from London and Bristol, and a group of sympathetic MPs. While the meeting's overall aim was to address the disturbances in the Highlands and Islands and their policing, Dr Roderick MacDonald, the Crofters' Party MP for Ross and Cromarty, raised the issue of the medals directly. The *Aberdeen Press and Journal* reported the following exchange between MacDonald and Balfour:

> Dr MacDonald said it was a fact that the Sheriff was so enthusiastic that the year before last he, at his own expense, gave medals to the police for catching crofters, as he called them. (Laughter.) He talked about—
>
> Mr Balfour said that the personal peculiarities of Sheriff Ivory were scarcely relevant.
>
> […] Dr MacDonald said he has seen the medals but if it was thought that this had no bearing on the question he would not pursue the point. The medals, however, had been

[114] 'A Special Medal', *Oban Times*, 4 December 1886, 2.
[115] Reid, 'Sheriff in the Heather', 8.
[116] 'Poinding' is the seizing of an individual's goods against their debt. It was frequently used to address rent and rate arrears in the Highlands and Islands in the 1880s. 'On Thursday Morning', *Highland News*, 4 December 1886, 2.
[117] '"General" Ivory's Recall', *North British Daily Mail*, 24 November 1886, 4.
[118] The matter does not seem to have made it to the Court of Session, 'Dr Cameron, M.P., and Sheriff Ivory', *Edinburgh Evening News*, 11 November 1886, 2.
[119] 'The Imprisoned Crofters – Meeting of Sympathisers in Edinburgh', *Invergordon Times and General Advertiser*, 1 December 1886, 3.

> given last year, and the Commissioners refused to allow the police to wear them, and this year again the police were promised medals by Sheriff Ivory to catch crofters.[120]

It was noted during the meeting that this was the first contact the MPs involved had had with Balfour in his new governmental position as Secretary for Scotland – a fact that demonstrates the importance, to them, of the matter of Ivory's medals. By specifying that Ivory funded the medals himself, MacDonald strengthened his point that they could be interpreted as proof of Ivory's enthusiasm for 'catching crofters'. Then, despite Balfour's interruption and dismissal of the issue as one of Ivory's 'personal peculiarities', MacDonald asserted the importance of having it on record that, despite the Commissioners of Supply having prevented the police from wearing the medals, Ivory had promised to award more. MacDonald clearly implied that Ivory had allowed his enthusiasm to outweigh what was appropriate both to his position as Sheriff and to the delicate situation in which he was operating.

Thanks to MacDonald and Cameron discussing Ivory's medals at political meetings, the issue was adopted by those promoting the crofting cause within parliament as a symbol of Sheriff Ivory's misconduct and his mistreatment of the tenantry of the Highlands and Islands. In September 1886, the pro-crofter *Scottish Highlander* printed an article condemning *The Scotsman*'s approach to Highland and Island land agitation, describing the paper as 'always the unscrupulous enemy of the Celtic race' for its pro-landlord leanings.[121] Perhaps unsurprisingly, therefore, *The Scotsman* printed one of very few defences of the medals. Significantly, this came in the form of a letter to the editor, lending distance from the opinion of the publication itself while implying that it came from a member of the general public who was not personally involved. The missive described the medals as a 'meritorious' acknowledgement of the 'efficient discharge of the trying duties' in which the police were engaged, and concluded by calling for a reward for Ivory himself:

> But I think the time has now arrived when Scotia's law-abiding sons, and especially those of the extensive county over which he so ably presides as his Sovereign's chief officer of justice, should adopt steps with the view of recognising the worthy Sheriff by presenting him with a suitable memorial in commemoration of the daunting yet forbearing spirit which he displayed in carrying out the laborious and hazardous work which faced him so frequently and so long in that turbulent part of his country.[122]

The idea of distinguishing 'Scotia's law-abiding sons' who recognise the service carried out by Ivory from those who do not is strengthened when the anonymous writer signs off as 'A Law-Abiding Highlander'. The publication of this letter clearly implies that the writer's stance aligns with *The Scotsman's* coverage of land agitation throughout the period, and supports the symbolism of the Norman Stewart Medal in suggesting an association between the tenantry of the Highlands and Islands and lawlessness.

Ivory's defence

That the press coverage had a direct impact on how the medals were used by the policemen themselves was made clear in Ivory's memorandum, which contained statements elicited from those who had received them. Police Constable William MacLeod stated that he did not receive any instructions from his superiors on whether he ought to wear his medal, but 'observed in the newspapers that the Chief

[120] 'The Condition of Skye: Deputation to the Secretary for Scotland', *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 19 November 1886, 5.
[121] 'The "Scotsman" and the Highlanders', *Scottish Highlander*, 2 September 1886, 4.
[122] 'Sheriff Ivory and the Highlanders of Skye', *The Scotsman*, 22 December 1886, 5.

Constable had given instructions we were not to wear it.' Thereafter, he removed it from his watchchain and stopped wearing it.[123] The newspaper in question is not named, but it is likely that it was either the *Scottish Highlander* article or one of its reprints, which read: 'it is said that Mr McHardy, Chief-Constable of the County, has prohibited the men from wearing the Sheriff's medals.'[124]Another of the recipients, Angus MacDonald, stated that his attention was drawn to the article by Reverend Donald MacCallum, the strongly pro-crofter Church of Scotland minister for the Waternish parish.[125]

The question of whether the constables were allowed to wear the medals, and whether they had been prevented from doing so, was one which occupied much of Ivory's memorandum. Seeking to downplay their potential impact as symbols, the memorandum included several statements from the recipients which were similar in structure to 'precognitions', preliminary statements from witnesses prepared in the course of investigating a crime. In their statements, it is clear from the frequency and order in which specific topics arise that the constables were responding to prescribed questions, albeit ones that were omitted from the final statement. Their responses were clearly heavily edited, like precognition statements, not just to achieve brevity and uniformity, but also to give prominence to information Ivory wished to highlight.[126] Thus, it is not insignificant that three of the four recipients stated that they had worn their medals under their uniform where they could not be seen, supporting Ivory's assertion, in a statement framing the memorandum as a whole, that this is what he had intended them to do. Two recipients further stated that they did not believe the medals were designed to be worn outside the uniform.[127] The implication is that the question of where the medals were worn and where their recipients believed they were intended to be worn was one of the prompts in the construction of the statements, and thus clearly significant in Ivory's defence of the medals.

One recipient, Hugh Chisholm, reflected that 'The pendant had a ring on it and I understood it was meant to be attached to my watch chain & not worn on the breast of my uniform like a medal.'[128] Chisholm's seeming differentiation between his award and 'a medal' is an important one in Ivory's memorandum, and it appears frequently in the Sheriff's own commentary on the documents within it. He specifically refers to the objects as 'silver ornaments' and, on three separate occasions, directly rejects the label of 'medal'. In the margins of a letter written by Hugh Davidson, Ivory rebuts Davidson's use of the word 'medal' by writing: 'No "<u>medals</u>" were ever presented by him to the constables' (emphasis in original).[129] On another occasion, he refers to a letter written by Chief Constable McHardy, objecting to the fact that, though McHardy had had access to the letters of acknowledgement from the recipients of the awards which did not use the word 'medal', McHardy had used the word himself.[130] In another of McHardy's letters included in the memorandum, Ivory has highlighted McHardy's line, 'On the occasion when you showed the medal to me in my office', and added, in the margin: 'I showed no

[123] 'Statements [...] in Regard to the Silver Ornaments'.
[124] *Scottish Highlander*, 'Sheriff Ivory'.
[125] 'Statements [...] in Regard to the Silver Ornaments'.
[126] Robert S. Shiels, 'The Crown Practice of Precognition in Mid-Victorian Scotland', *Law, Crime and History* 5, no. 2 (n.d.): 35.
[127] 'Statements [...] in Regard to the Silver Ornaments'.
[128] 'Statements [...] in Regard to the Silver Ornaments'.
[129] Davidson to Ivory, NRS, HH1/161/29.
[130] 'Letters of Acknowledgement from PC A. MacDonald, William MacDonald, William MacLeod, and Hugh Chisholm', 1886, National Records of Scotland HH1/161/18.

"medal" to the C.C.'[131] Ivory's constant objection to the word 'medal' in these documents shows a desire to avoid the usual symbolism a 'medal', but clearly his strategy met with mixed success.

The Norman Stewart Medal held by the National Museums of Scotland is labelled in their collections as 'Ornament, watch chain' and further described as a 'silver fob for a watch.'[132] Though it is unclear how the object came to be labelled in this manner, its designation as an 'ornament' shapes public perception of the one on display today, suggesting that Ivory's campaign enjoyed some success. Laurence Gouriévidis has, however, criticised the display in which the medal is included for its 'oversimplified and archetypal vision of the Clearances', arguing that despite the 'invaluable' artefacts on display, they are framed within a narrative of 'national emigration' which does not fully portray the complexities of the era.[133] The use of 'ornament' in connection with the Norman Stewart Medal plays into this simplification, firmly eschewing the connotations associated with 'medal'.

At the time the medals were awarded, however, the 'medal' label was applied to them both by those around Ivory and by the press, thus associating these objects with the significance usually ascribed to medals. Interestingly, extant medallions produced in connection with franchise demonstrations which took place in Scotland in 1884 were also compared with medals:

> In most cases, these medallions have been holed so that they may be worn; some examples still have the pins or ribbons attached by which they were fixed to lapels and coats. They have thus taken the aspect of the medal.'[134]

Ivory's 'ornaments', as he wished them to be known, had 'a small silver ring attached to it in order that the constables, if they wished to wear it as a pendant on their watch chains […] might so wear it.'[135] Thus, as in the case of the franchise medallions, they had taken on 'the aspect of the medal', as demonstrated by the overwhelming number of contemporary sources which referred to them as such.

In using the term 'medal', Chief Constable McHardy repeatedly expressed his opposition to these objects. He asserted that Ivory had more than once demonstrated a wish that they be worn publicly. He wrote to Ivory, reminding the Sheriff that, before he had awarded the medals, he had shown one to McHardy in his office 'and placed it against Supt. Aitchison's breast, on his tunic, and made a remark that you thought it looked well there.'[136] While we have seen that Ivory denied that any such exchange had taken place, its importance does not lie solely in the truth of where Ivory intended the medals to be worn. This article has argued that the ornaments were widely perceived as 'medals', regardless of whether they were worn over the uniform or under it. Even without considering the possible role of the press in shaping their behaviour, three of the four recipients admit, in their statements, to wearing them openly on their watch chains when out of uniform.[137] The policeman would have been a familiar figure within the community he policed, and so those in direct, regular contact with him would have seen him in plainclothes. In any case, the wearing of a medal under the uniform did not guarantee that it was

[131] Chief Constable Alexander McHardy and Sheriff William Ivory, 13 December 1886, National Records of Scotland, HH1/161/28.
[132] *Ornament, Watch Chain*.
[133] Gouriévidis, *Dynamics of Heritage*, 84.
[134] Mark Nixon et al., 'The Material Culture of Scottish Reform Politics, c.1820–c.1884', *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies* 321 (2012): 43. https://doi.org/10.3366/jshs.2012.0034.
[135] 'Memorandum in Regard to the Silver Ornaments', NRS, HH1/161.
[136] Chief Constable Alexander McHardy to Sheriff William Ivory, 8 December 1886, National Records of Scotland HH1/161/27.
[137] 'Statements [...] in Regard to the Silver Ornaments'.

hidden from view: Constable MacDonald admitted that his Sergeant had commented on his 'one day when the breast of my uniform was particularly unbuttoned.'[138] Thus, the circumstances in which the medals were worn, how they were worn, and what they were called – the questions Ivory focused on in his memorandum – do not appear to have influenced their power as a public symbol, and the answers given by the constables are thus of secondary importance.

Instead, the importance lies in how the questions themselves illustrate the tension that existed between Sheriff Ivory and Chief Constable McHardy regarding policing in the Highlands and Islands. The Police Scotland Act 1857 dictated that Chief Constables were to direct their forces according to the orders given to them by the Sheriff.[139] Thus, by law, McHardy fell below Ivory in the chain of command. In practice, however, interpersonal politics led to a struggle between McHardy and Ivory for control of the police force. McHardy had seemingly already challenged Ivory's authority by commanding that the medals were not to be worn. Additionally, Ivory insisted that McHardy had intentionally failed to send to him the awardees' letters of receipt for the medals, meaning that he 'never learned that the ornaments had duly reached [the recipients]' until he made 'special inquiry' into the matter himself.[140] McHardy himself had issued instructions that 'any communications from the men should be sent to him thro' [Inspector MacDonald] as regarding police duty.'[141] The recipients of the medals had clearly tried to follow this protocol, with Angus MacDonald and Hugh Chisholm stating that they had written to McHardy to ask whether to correspond with Ivory directly themselves, though they received no reply. The other two recipients sent their letters of receipt to McHardy to be forwarded, which he did not do. William MacLeod and Angus MacDonald both reported that they did not write to Ivory directly because they feared repercussions from McHardy.[142]

This breakdown in communication stemmed from pre-existing tensions within management of the police force. Minutes of a meeting of the Police Committee for the county on 2 October 1886 reveal that Ivory had asked Inspector MacDonald to send him regular 'secret' reports on the state of Skye 'without being sent through the Head Office or communicated to the Chief Constable.' On discovering this subterfuge, McHardy brought it to the attention of the Police Committee, stating that it was 'a violation of the existing rules' and 'calculated to destroy the discipline of the force.' The Committee decided to enforce the pre-existing rules on the matter, whereby communication between the police force and the Sheriff of Inverness had to pass through the Chief Constable.[143] This matter having been settled, the tension seemingly re-focused on the medals, awarded without the Chief Constable's approval, and the awardees' receipts, sent to the Chief Constable as the rules dictated but never forwarded to the Sheriff. This situation allows us to interpret the medals, from within police management, as a site for enacting and exacerbating pre-existing tensions.

We have seen how the constables were prevented from wearing the Norman Stewart Medals, as illustrated by their statements and the evidence from the press in the matter. With this controversy in mind, Ivory appears to have anticipated the same issue when he awarded the Garalapin Medals. Between 7 and 13 December 1886, Ivory received seven letters of receipt from policemen to whom

[138] 'Statements [...] in Regard to the Silver Ornaments'.
[139] Reid, 'Sheriff in the Heather', 2.
[140] 'Memorandum in Regard to the Silver Ornaments'.
[141] 'Statements [...] in Regard to the Silver Ornaments'.
[142] 'Statements [...] in Regard to the Silver Ornaments'.
[143] 'Excerpt from Minutes' of Meeting of the Police Committee of the County of Inverness Held on 2nd October 1886', n.d., National Records of Scotland HH1/161/21.

he had awarded a 'silver ornament' – the Garalapin Medals.[144] These acknowledgements are now held in the National Records of Scotland and, while there is no record of the letter Ivory sent to accompany the awards, the contents of the responses can give us some insight into what it said. In three of the seven letters, recipients promised to inform Ivory if anyone should object to them wearing the medals.[145] In a fourth, P.C. Simon Fraser told Ivory that he would 'wear [it] as directed and adhere to the instructions in your letter.'[146] The clear implication is that Ivory wished to pre-empt protest against the medals, and instructed their recipients to tell him if anyone should try to prevent their wearing them. This reads as a challenge: Ivory expected there to be resistance against the Garalapin medals, from both within and outwith the structure of law enforcement, but still wanted them to be worn as a public symbol of the police role in subduing land agitation.

The symbolism of the medals was enduring. On the death of Inspector Alexander Chisholm in 1915, his obituary in the *Oban Times* reflected that he was 'one of those who received Sheriff Ivory's medal for meritorious service in Skye', as well as a recipient of the 'King Edward Police Medal'.[147] The latter is likely in reference to the King's Police Medal which, as we discussed previously, is a general award for distinguished service, while the former is clearly one of Ivory's medals. While Alexander Chisholm does not appear among the recipients of either the Norman Stewart or the Garalapin Medals according to the archival record of the NRS, he is repeatedly mentioned in records of the policing of land agitation. He was posted to Kilvaxter, Kilmuir, on 'special duty' in 1886, and served as a witness in the case against the Herbusta crofters.[148] He was also involved in searching Garalapin on the day of the arrests made there, when he was reported to have found 'the back part of a scythe' that one of the crofters was accused of wielding during the deforcement.[149] Other policemen involved with the Garalapin apprehensions received the Garalapin Medals, though Alexander Chisholm is not represented in the letters of acknowledgement Sheriff Ivory received for these. Whether this demonstrates an incomplete archival record with reference to the Garalapin Medals or suggests that Alexander Chisholm received a medal from Ivory on another occasion is unclear. Regardless, the inclusion of Chisholm's medal in his obituary hints at the long symbolic life of the award, as the article was printed thirty years after the medals were awarded. The medal is also described in positive terms, having been awarded for 'meritorious service.' This may seem uncharacteristic for the *Oban Times* which had been a staunch defender of the crofters' cause and opponent of Ivory's conduct in the 1880s. In the meantime, however, the paper's political stance had

[144] P.C. Farquhar Macrae to Sheriff William Ivory, 7 December 1886, National Records of Scotland (GD1/36/1/47/8); P.C. Robert Clark to Sheriff William Ivory, 7 December 1886, National Records of Scotland (GD1/36/1/47/9); P.C. Donald Macintosh to Sheriff William Ivory, 7 December 1886, National Records of Scotland, GD1/36/1/47/10; P.C. Alexander MacLennan to Sheriff William Ivory, 7 December 1886, National Records of Scotland, GD1/36/1/47/11; P.C. Angus McLaren to Sheriff William Ivory, 8 December 1886, National Records of Scotland, GD1/36/1/47/18; P.C. Hugh Chisholm to Sheriff William Ivory, 9 December 1886, National Records of Scotland, GD1/36/1/47/19; P.C. Simon Fraser to Sheriff William Ivory, 13 December 1886, National Records of Scotland, GD1/36/1/47/22.

[145] Macrae to Sheriff William Ivory; MacLennan to Ivory; P.C. Hugh Chisholm to Sheriff William Ivory, personal communication, 9 December 1886.

[146] Fraser to Ivory.

[147] 'The Late Inspector Chisholm, Fort William – Worthy Police Record', *Oban Times*, 16 January 1915.

[148] 'Appendix No. 66 - Book of Adjournal, 15 December 1885 – 31 January 1887', National Records of Scotland, JC4/83.

[149] 'Report Anent Samuel Nicolson & Others Deforcement', 30 October 1886, National Records of Scotland, GD1/36/1/44/35.

changed. Following the death of its radical editor Waverley Cameron in 1891, his sister Fiona Blair took over its management, and the paper adopted a 'more cautious Liberalism'; and by the early twentieth century, the newspaper was supporting Conservative electoral candidates.[150] The positive reframing of Ivory's medals could thus be viewed as a symptom of this shift in political alignment.

Conclusion

Overall, a material culture approach to Ivory's medals adds another dimension to our understanding of the policing of land agitation in the Highlands and Islands during the Crofters' War, allowing us to view it as part of the wider pattern of government responses to social movements in the late nineteenth century. The medals' association with Ivory – already unpopular among many living on the land – and their inherent military symbolism demonstrate how these awards exacerbated divisions between the police and the communities they were supposed to serve. The satirical content of Gaelic songs and poems played into those divisions, and even linked the policing of land agitation in the Highlands and Islands to wider administrative challenges within the British Empire. Contemporary newspaper reports showed how various political figures seized upon the issue of the medals as symbolic of Sheriff Ivory's mistreatment of the tenantry of the Highlands and Islands. Finally, our examination of Ivory's memorandum has allowed us to see how the Sheriff navigated the power structures in which he was embedded, and how the medals provided a practical focus for the enactment of conflict between Ivory and Chief Constable McHardy. Overall, the medals offer insight into the everyday reality of the relationships both within and outwith the police force, and show how the power dynamics within them were created and enforced on a symbolic level.

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