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Edited by

Bron Taylor

Scotland

As the glaciers of the last ice age finally left Scotland as a bare and empty landscape about 10,000 years ago, pioneer species such as hazel and birch started to recolonize the land, the now-extinct wolf, bear and lynx returned, and people resettled (Edwards and Ralston 2003). These people left their mark in megalithic structures typically erected some 5000 years ago, such as the lunar-aligned Calanais Standing Stones on the Isle of Lewis. Such monuments are often found in beautiful places. Some probably had astronomical and ritual functions. Little can be said about this with certainty, but one claim that can be made without question is that they represent art. As such, the ancient sites have been described as "the longest show running"; a doorway to the imaginal realm where nature and the imagination intersect. The standing stones accordingly testify to a tripartite link between community, spirit and place and, as such, in all probability, to the early presence of nature religion – namely, the understanding that the spiritual realm interpenetrates and animates the natural world.

Scotland's original Pictish inhabitants may have had a matrilineal structure, but little is confidently known about them. The Romans were largely kept out of Scotland; they built two defensive walls to keep the Picts back. According to Tacitus' *Agricola* (ca. 98), the Pictish chieftain Calgacus said of the Romans:

> Harriers of the world . . . they make a desolation and they call it peace . . . We, the noblest souls in all Britain, the dwellers in its inner shrine, had never seen the shores of slavery and had preserved our very eyes from the desecration and the contamination of tyranny: here at the world's end, on its last inch of liberty . . . Then let us fight as men untamed, men who have never fallen from freedom.

During the second half of the first millennium the Scots of Dalriada, originating from Ireland and speaking Gaelic, subsumed whatever had gone before with patriarchal chieftain structures based around the extended family or "clan." Irish-Scots' Celtic monasticism, resting on a Druidic "Celtic Old Testament" base, embodied a rich nature spirituality.

These Irish roots were later used to assert, before the Pope, Scotland's claim of right to be a nation free of Anglo-Norman suzerainty. English invaders based their claim to control Scotland on Geoffrey of Monmouth's "translation" of the *Historia Regum Britanniae* of 1135 – parts of which were probably Geoffrey's own creation, as he later claimed to have lost the original manuscript. The *Historia* maintained that Britain was named after Brutus of Troy who had arrived in the twelfth century B.C.E. after pillaging France and Africa, inspired by an oracular mandate to dominate "the round circle of the whole Earth." Geoffrey claimed Brutus had cleared Scotland or "Albany" of Picts and giants, giving it to his youngest son, Albanactus.

During the Wars of Independence (1296–1424) with England, Edward I used this myth to legitimatize his colonizing conquest of Scotland. As embellished in the Hollywood movie, *Braveheart*, William Wallace and King Robert the Bruce drove the English out. However, to consolidate Scotland's free status they required papal recognition. This was achieved through the Declaration of Arbroath, 1320, a remarkable document that drew on Irish charter texts to trounce Geoffrey's Brutus myth (Ferguson 1998).

The Declaration links Scottish origins to ancient Scythia by the Black Sea, as described, for example, in the *Irish Book of Invasions* (ca. 1168 in final form). This portrays the Scots coming from Scythia to assist Nimrod with building the Tower of Babel, their leader learning all 72 languages of the world after its fall, his being summoned as Pharaoh's linguist while the Israelites were still in slavery, his marrying Pharaoh's daughter ("Scota," hence "Scotland," implying that the Mother of the Nation was black), his reconstructing Gaelic from the 72 languages (hence Gaelic's sometime designation, "the language of Eden"), his people providing the Israelites with bread and wine on the eve of their Red Sea departure, and then later, having received Moses' blessing, completing a 440-year-long migration via Spain to Ireland, and from there, according to the *Scotichronicon's* account (ca. 1449), on to Scotland, bringing as proof of their peregrinations the Stone of Destiny – Jacob's pillow from the original Genesis 28 version of Stairway to Heaven. Scottish nationhood is thereby symbolized by a holy stone, returned in 1996 from Westminster Abbey to Edinburgh Castle. This *axis mundi* stone, we might note, originally symbolized the connection between heaven and the land that Jacob was given; and that in a context where God pronounced blessing on all the world's peoples.

Revealingly, the Declaration of Arbroath locates sovereignty of the Scottish people not in the sovereign, but in the "Community of the Realm" which is "the community of Scotland." As such, and consistent with the principle that only God can own the land (Leviticus 25), Scotland had a King or "Queen of Scots" as distinct from a "Queen of Scotland." Resonant with the spirit of Calgacus, the Declaration asserts, "It is in truth not for glory, nor riches, nor honors that we are fighting, but for freedom – for that alone, which no honest man gives up but with life itself" (Scottish Records Office, 1320). And while Scotland might have had its "Auld Enemy" in the English, the importance of loving the enemy was constitutionally embedded in the Declaration's modification of Galatians 3:28 ("There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus"), asserting that under "the

Church of God," there is "neither weighting nor distinction of Jew and Greek, Scotsman or Englishman." Thus Scottish identity is generally considered to be civic rather than ethnic: at its best, a person belongs inasmuch as they are willing to cherish, and be cherished, by a place and its peoples.

While the nobles of Scotland as the medieval signatories to the Declaration looked to Rome (and successfully so) for recognition of national sovereignty, the Scots Reformation parliament of 1560 repudiated Rome. Protestants saw late medieval Catholicism as having been lax to the point of almost being "pagan." It is perhaps to the imperative of asserting narrow puritanical rectitude in order to give boundary and faith-based justification to spiritual revolution that we can trace the origins of the neglect, and even fear, of both nature religion and mysticism that has characterized much mainstream Reformed Church religious discourse in Scotland through until the late twentieth century.

That said, John Calvin, the benchmark of Scots Presbyterian Protestantism, was not averse to the love of nature. His *Institutes* (III:XIV:20) speak of the Creation as that "beautiful theatre" in which we might do well "to take pious delight." Similarly, the formative 1647 *Westminster Shorter Catechism* affirms that "God executeth His decrees in the works of Creation and Providence."

However, the seventeenth century, under James VI, who became James I of a "United Kingdom" with England in 1603, saw organized religion applied as an instrument of inner (psychological) and internal (within the British Isles) colonization. As with James' policy in Ulster, muscular Protestantism was indoctrinated through, for example, his 1609 Statutes of Iona and in the 1616 education act. These helped to propagate a Protestant ethic of transcendental deferred gratification such as Max Weber would have recognized as the hallmark of the early-modern mindset.

In Ulster, James' policies wronged the indigenous Catholics and wrong-footed the poor Scots Protestants who he "planted" there. In Scotland, the underlying imperial and mercantile ethic of his polices attacked indigenous bardic politics and laid the ground for the 1707 Union of Parliaments, by which Great Britain emerged as the world's foremost exemplar of neo-Roman presumptions of Empire. Following the Jacobite uprising of 1745, British forces in the Battle of Culloden near Inverness (1746) crushed clan power, and key markers of indigenous culture such as the wearing of the tartan kilt were proscribed. Robert Burns, the national bard, was to say of this era in his poem, *Strathallan's Lament* written in 1787: "The wide world is all before us / but a world without a friend."

With the indigenous leadership now either compulsorily Anglicised or crushed in the remote Highland centers of resistance, land became valued as a commodity rather than for the number of people it could support. Improved breeds of sheep, and demand for wool from the Napoleonic wars, triggered the "Highland Clearances" in which perhaps some half-a-million people were directly, or indirectly from economic pressure, forced off their native territories until the passing of the Crofters Act in 1886. Ironically, displaced indigenous Scots often colonized other native people's territories, the oppressed in some cases becoming oppressor. Much of rural Scotland became, in effect, one of the world's first casualties of what would now be called "globalization."

As with the famine in Ireland, many ordinary pious peasants internalized their oppression as punishment from God. At Croick, a congregation huddled in the churchyard awaiting the arrival of their emigrant ship scratched on a windowpane, "The people of Glen Calvie, the sinful generation." The 1712 Patronage Act had permitted landlords to appoint clergy within the established Church of Scotland. Some of these preached a gospel focused only on a transcendent pie-in-the-sky-when-you-die salvation. As if in antithesis to nature religion, the Earth was portrayed as a realm that had been corrupted with the sin of Adam. It was portrayed as fallen in its own right, rather than merely enduring the consequences of Adam's Fall. The Earth as Christ's "footstool" (Matthew 5:35), the very seat of the immanent presence of God, was overlooked. It was too often presumed that when Jesus condemned "the world" he included nature, rather than, merely, the corrupted human sociological order known as "worldliness."

Accordingly, the oppressed were, to the landlord's convenience, encouraged to write the world off rather than to discern and seek to redeem it. In any case, Calvin's double-predestination suggested that, ultimately, destiny fell outside of human control. It was mainly to break with patronage under the influence of an emerging liberation theology that the Church of Scotland split in the 1843 "Disruption." In an effort, not always successful, to embody spiritual freedom, the Free Church of Scotland emerged as a more truly Presbyterian or grassroots alternative that recognized the authority of "Christ as Lord" unmediated by any landlord. One of the Disruption's practical consequences was to give spiritual legitimatization to the land reforms that took place at the cusp of the nineteenth–twentieth centuries, and which preserved agrarian "crofting" communities.

Amongst the peasantry a strong nature religion – expressed as awareness of the immanence of God and through supernatural belief and totemistic animism – is continuously evident. However, much of this has been caricatured as residually "Papist," (as with most of Carmichael's great nineteenth-century collection, the *Carmina Gadelica*), or of the faerie faith, and therefore merely superstitious (as with the Rev. Robert Kirk's seventeenth-century *Secret Commonwealth*). Recent work, such as that of the American Gaelic scholar, Michael Newton, and the Scots historian, James Hunter, reflects a continuous close

engagement between people and nature expressed in the bardic tradition often outside of or on the margins of the mainstream church. As a generalization, this represents human society as resting on the bedrock of ecological community under the Providence of God. Nature transfigures humankind in a grounded transcendence, thus the motto of Stornoway in the Outer Hebrides is "God's Providence is our inheritance," and the great twentieth-century Gaelic poet, Sorley MacLean, writes in *An Cuilithionn* (The Cuillin): "Beyond the lochs of the blood of the children of men / beyond the frailty of plain and the labor of the mountain . . . / beyond guilt and defilement; watchful / heroic, the Cuillin is seen / rising on the other side of sorrow" (in Hunter 1995: 175).

In the late twentieth century, a few activists, including the present author, used the above analysis of history in an effort to reintegrate nature, spirituality and a bardic politics in the public life of a Scotland developing a "devolved" or semi-detached relationship with the rest of the "United Kingdom." The Isle of Eigg Trust, established in 1991, successfully enabled the residents of a Hebridean island to revolt and rid itself of its landlord and establish a democratic community land trust. This in turn helped stimulate flagship land-reform legislation in the Scottish Parliament, which was reestablished in 1999.

Similarly, when the Isle of Harris was threatened by multinationals wanting to make it a center for European production of roadstone with perhaps two massive "superquarries," theological testimony against violating the integrity of the creation was made by a panel that included Scotland's leading Calvinist, the Rev. Professor Donald Macleod, and the then-warrior chief of the Mi'Kmaq First Nation in Nova Scotia, a Sacred Pipe Carrier.

Attention was drawn in the public inquiry through the Mi'Kmaq testimony to the need for "defense of Mother Earth." Scripture passages such as Genesis 2:15, Proverbs 8, Job 38 and Romans 8 were invoked to argue that it is not creation that is fallen (and therefore treated as fit to have its national scenic areas ravished), but humankind. Professor Macleod noted that the function of the creation is to reflect the majesty of God and that "to spoil the creation is to disable it from performing this function [giving rise to] the consideration that rape of the environment is rape of the community itself" (Macleod in McIntosh 2001: 234). Accordingly, the present writer concluded, an appropriate relationship with nature is one of *reverence*. This is not *pantheism* – God as nature – but it should be understood as, *panentheism* – God being present in the creation as, for example, in Job or Hebrews 1:3.

The Scottish Government that, in the previous year, had abolished feudalism, rejected the superquarry in 2000. The "harriers of the world" may hover yet in the guise of globalization, but the spirit of Calgacus, increasingly expressed through nonviolent direct action, remains strong in fighting, as Tacitus described it, "desecration and the contamination of tyranny: here at the world's end."

Alastair McIntosh

Further Reading

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See also: Celtic Christianity; Celtic Spirituality; Christianity (6c) – ReformationTraditions (Lutheranism and Calvinism); Christianity (6c2) – Calvin, John and the Reformed Tradition; Christianity (7c) – Liberation Theology; Christianity in Europe; Faerie Faith in Scotland; Ireland; The Protestant Ethic.

Scouting

Founded during the Progressive Era, the early Scouting movement in the United States embraced the era's widespread beliefs in Darwinism, in the restorative power of nature, and (for the boys) in the spiritual dimensions of physical activity ("muscular Christianity"). Lord Robert Baden-Powell founded the Boy Scouts in England in 1908, and in 1910 a group of men already active in youth work in the United States gathered in New York City to found the Boy Scouts of America (BSA). Juliette Gordon Low created the first troop of Girl Scouts in 1912, and by 1915 the Girl Scouts of America (GSA) was incorporated. Although technically not part of the "Scouting" movement, the Camp Fire Girls, founded by Luther and Charlotte Gulick in 1910 and incorporated in 1912, shared Scouting's ideas and approaches to building nature-based recreational programs for children and adolescents.

Ernest Thompson Seton (1860–1946) played a central role in bringing into the BSA ideas about the relationship between nature and religion. Seton had been experiment-