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Austin M. Setter
Western Michigan University

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England and Scotland, 1286-1603

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Andy King and Claire Etty. *England and Scotland, 1286-1603*. London: Palgrave, 2016. Pp. ix, 236. \$104.00.

Authors Andy King, lecturer in history at the University of Southampton, and Claire Etty, senior assistant researcher at the Oxford English Dictionary, came together to write a new book in the ongoing series *British History in Perspective*. Their book, *England and Scotland, 1286-1603*, acts as an easy to read introduction to and current synthesis on the relationship between England and Scotland from Alexander III's death (1286) to the ascension of Scotland's King James VI to the English throne (1603). Through this synthesis, the authors successfully provided an introductory text accessible for non-academics and entry-level historians while also subtly answering questions concerning the period such as what prevented peace, how the relationship influenced each society, and how could a Scottish king rise to power on the English throne after 250 years of constant war.

The book began with a brief historiographical section that addressed the regular English bias due to the availability of extant medieval sources. Following that, it traced the trends of the field that culminated in what King and Etty argued is the current romanticized idea of the relationship between England and Scotland. They explained that this relationship was heavily based on surviving notions from the historiographical traditions of both Whiggish and Romantic history. Thus, King and Etty, in the writing of this book, attempted to offer a more holistic interpretation of medieval relations based on both primary and secondary source material that would also appeal to a wide audience. Their hope was to provide the foundation for a better understanding of the complexities of the English-Scottish relationship throughout history that is not beholden to Scottish nationalism or English overlordship but instead is based on an analysis of their relationship with one another, as well as with the rest of the world, throughout history.

King and Etty defined their book's scope of time between the death of Alexander III, and Britain's renewed claim to overlordship of Scotland, and the ascension of Scotland's King James VI to the English throne. This selection offers over 300 years of relations to explore, all of which led King and Etty to conclude that the Anglo-Scottish relationship depended heavily on the Anglo-French relationship first and later the French-Hapsburg. Within this frame of reference Scotland and England defined themselves socially, politically, and religiously depending on the power and relevance of the kingdom of France. Scotland defined their relationship with England as one of oppression and unwarranted involvement and would take advantage of war between England and France to expand their holdings; however, England defined their relationship with Scotland in the context of overlordship of Britain and would actively engage in war with Scotland when they were not at war with France. These shifting relations enabled Scotland to conduct opportunistic raids and prevented England from fully subjugating their

northern neighbor. Towards the end of the book, the French relationship was redefined as France attempted to impress themselves upon Scottish rule and Scotland and England grew closer through their acceptance of Protestantism, which culminated in the unchallenged ascension of the king of Scotland to the English throne.

The book's chosen timeframe worked perfectly for King and Etty's examination. It excluded the relations before 1286 as Alexander III's death sparked renewed English involvement in Scottish rule, and the timeframe ends with the ascension of Scotland's king to the English throne, an event that shifted the interactions between the two kingdoms. The timeframe also allowed King and Etty to develop their argument/synthesis in an easy-flowing historical narrative that was inviting to those with little to no experience in the field as well as those newly established within the field. They complemented this narrative with a thematic examination in the second part of their book focused on specific types of interaction such as armies and warfare, relations between peoples, and national identity and propaganda. These areas provided a more complex look at how England and Scotland interacted throughout the chosen years and how the history of their interactions both influenced and continue to influence modern England and Scotland.

In keeping with their easy-to-access approach, King and Etty relied on endnotes as opposed to footnotes giving the readers a more uniform structure throughout the book. They also provided useful maps and both Scottish and English succession charts to help familiarize the reader with the many names and family connections. This approach continued into the bibliography and was one of the few criticisms of the work. While it was helpful by pointing towards other, more specialized secondary works, it would have benefitted greatly from a brief discussion or list of the most common primary sources for the benefit of new scholars.

Overall, King and Etty presented an easy to read history of English-Scottish interactions throughout the late Middle Ages. Their book provided not only a synthesis of the previous research but also a thematic approach that opened new questions and possibilities for research. The book succeeded in examining the questions of why peace was unobtainable and how the relationship shifted to allow for the king of Scotland to ascend the English throne. It also outlined inconsistencies that help further develop the framework for new research into medieval border communities, use of the medieval past, and the role of medieval Scotland in a global setting.