

Relation with the Celts

Introduction

The process of domination led by England in the Celtic kingdoms depended largely on the kings of England from William I to Edward I ; however, especially in Wales and Ireland, it was the role of the Anglo-Norman aristocracy. Later the domination transmuted into conquest by 1305

1- Wales :

William I concentrated more on winning land by conquest, and allowed his lords to win Welsh lands. By the beginning of the 12th the Normans held much of Wales, and under Edward I they built castles, mixed with and married the Welsh. They spoke Norman, French & Welsh not English.

The English considered Wales part of England for all practical purposes & Edward made his own son (Edward II) Prince of Wales. From then on, the eldest son of ruling king or queen has usually been made Prince of Wales.

2. Ireland :

It was **conquered** by Norman Lords in **1169**. **Henry II, afraid of his lords becoming too independent**, went to Ireland himself & forced Irish chiefs & Norman lords to accept his lordship. This was with the help of the pope who hoped to keep the Irish Celtic church under his control. **Dublin** (an old Viking town) was made capital of the new colony

The east was conquered but much of the west was still in the hands of Irish chiefs. This rest was the responsibility of Edward I who led new wars there. The English crown couldn't impose its authority on some Norman lords & Irish chiefs.

Later on, some **Anglo-Irish lords** built strong stone castles as they had done in Wales. They became almost completely independent from the English Crown and some of them became more Irish than the Irish themselves.

3. Scotland : a different story

Scotland was a separate, unitary kingdom with a status recognized by the Kings of England and the rulers of the Continent. Its institutions and political development in the 12th & 13th centuries placed it in a league altogether different from that of the small native polities of Wales & Ireland. Its story tells a lot about a profound transformation and a prominent resistance.

In Wales & Ireland, Norman knights fought Irish & Welsh chiefs on their own. With the Scots, it was only the capacity of the English king & his large army. Scottish kings were stronger than the Welsh kings. Most English kings didn't try but Edward did. Since Saxon times, there were close connections between the Scots & the English royal families.

Scotland also followed the English model of feudal state & gave land to Norman knights in return for their loyalty. But the feudal system didn't develop in the Highlands where there was the tribal clan system. Some Scottish kings even held land in England & did homage promising loyalty to the English kings for that land

The crisis over succession

A series of military conflicts between the Kingdom of England and the Kingdom of Scotland took place in the late 13th and early 14th centuries.

In 1290, there were 13 possible heirs to the Scottish throne

The most likely were 2 men: **John de Balliol & Robert Bruce (both Norman-Scottish knights)**. To avoid civil war, Edward I was invited by the Scottish nobles to settle the matter. Earlier, Edward showed much interest in joining Scotland to England by arranging for his own son to marry Margaret, the heir to the Scottish throne, but she had died in a shipwreck.

The Anglo-Scottish Wars (or Wars of Scottish Independence) 1296 – 1346:

Initially he told both men to do homage to him & accept his overlordship. Then, he invaded Scotland & put John de Balliol (17th November 1292 on the Scottish throne) whom he forced to provide money & troops for the English army. In this way, De Balliol was never happy over four years as king.

On 26th December, King John of Scotland swore homage to King Edward of England.

Then Edward invaded Scotland again and defeated the Scots at the Battle of **Dunbar on 27th April**. John Balliol abdicated in July. During the invasion Edward stole the sacred Stone of Destiny¹ which he relocated to London on 28th August. Edward convened a parliament at **Berwick**, where Scottish nobles paid homage to him as King of England

The Stone of Destiny : The Celtic name of the stone upon which the true kings of Scotland have traditionally been crowned is Lia Fail, “the speaking stone”, or the stone which would proclaim the chosen king.

Resistance Movement :

Edward's violence led to the creation of a resistance movement led first by **William Wallace**, a Norman Scottish knight whose army (the People's Army) was destroyed by Edward I in 1297. Wallace was caught & executed (his head was put on a pole on London Bridge)

¹ The Stone of Destiny was important because any Scottish coronation would be meaningless without it. It remained at Scone until it was forcibly removed by the English King Edward I (**“Hammer of the Scots”**) after his Scottish victories in 1296, and taken to Westminster Abbey in London.

Edward wanted to make Scotland part of England like Wales. Some Scottish nobles accepted him, but on the very day Wallace died **Scottish nationalism** was born in the hearts of the many people who refused the rule of the English

The next leader was **Robert Bruce** who raised an army and continued struggle against **Edward I**. After his death in **1307**, his son Edward II came to rule. He invaded Scotland in 1314, but Bruce destroyed his army. Edward II himself had been lucky to escape.

Six years later, the Scots wrote to the pope (Rome) that they would never accept English authority. Other unsuccessful attempts took place. Then England gave up its claim to control Scotland in 1328. But this was not long before war started again because of England's war with France which involved the Scottish through the treaty.

The Auld (old) Alliance: the Secret Franco-Scottish Treaty (since 1295)

A Scottish Council of War was convened to advise King John. The twelve member council, comprising four bishops, four earls and four barons, sent a delegation to negotiate terms with King Philip IV of France. A treaty said that the Scots would invade England if the English invaded France, and in return the French would support the Scots. This alliance didn't operate all the time, but when it did, it benefitted France more than England.

The king of France began to interfere with England's trade in France (in both Gascony and Burgundy). The French move to control these areas was a direct threat to England's wealth, and led to war against the French. This time, it was easy to persuade the rich merchant classes to pay for the war since the threat was to their trade and necessary to fight. Edward III declared war on France in 1337. This was later called **the Hundred Years War**, which couldn't finally end until 1453. At first, the English were more successful thanks to their military experiences in Wales and Scotland as well as the important Welsh longbow which led to victories in 1346 & 1356. The French king himself was taken prisoner and had to buy his freedom for £500,000. True to the Auld Alliance, the king of the Scots (David) had attacked England in 1346, but he was defeated and taken prisoner, but Edward III allowed the French to ransom him. Soldiers captured a great deal of treasure. In 1360, Edward III who had won back the parts previously held by the English crown signed the treaty of Brétigny in which the French recognized this new ownership. Yet, the war didn't end since the French began fighting again. The struggle between the English and French Kings over the French territories continued into the 15th century.