

# University of Guelph, Department of History

**Heather Parker**  
**PhD Final Oral Examination**

## **“‘In all Gudly Haste’: The Formation of Marriage in Scotland, c.1350-1600”**

### *A B S T R A C T*

**March 9, 2012**

**9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

**MacKinnon 026**

#### **Committee:**

Alan Gordon

**Chair**

Susannah Ferreira, Peter Goddard

Jane Dawson

**Edinburgh University  
External Examiner**

Elizabeth Ewan

**Advisor**



This dissertation examines the formation of marriage in Scotland between the mid-fourteenth century and the late sixteenth century. In particular, it focuses on betrothals, marriage negotiations, ritual, and the place that these held in late medieval Scottish society. This study extends to the generation following the Reformation to examine the extent to which the Reformation influenced the marriage planning of wealthy Scots. It concludes that much of the social impact of the Reformation was not reflected in family life until at least a generation after reform. Scottish society and culture was influenced both by contemporary literature, which discussed the role of marriage formation, and by concurrent events involving high-profile marriages. These helped to define the context of marriage for society as a whole.

This work relies heavily on the pre-nuptial contracts of lairds (the Scottish gentry) and nobles, which reflected certain aspects of their marriage patterns and strategies. The context and clauses of an extensive group of 272 Scottish marriage contracts from published and archival collections illuminate aspects of the formation of Scottish marriage, such as the land and money that changed hands, the extent to which brides and grooms were influenced by their kin, and the timelines for betrothals. This study is the only comprehensive work that has been done concerning the formation of marriage in medieval Scotland. The Campbells of Glenorchy and the Carnegie family both provide excellent case studies in which to examine the process of the choice of marriage partners, negotiation of marital arrangements, and the solemnizing of the unions. They also demonstrate the extent to which families were upwardly mobile through marriage. Although, until now, there has been a focus on the political potential of arranged marriage in Scotland, it is clear that there were social and financial advantages to kin groups that carried out careful marriage planning.