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Laura S Harrison

'That famous manifesto': The Declaration of Arbroath, Declaration of Independence, and the power of language

Abstract

In 2012 Graeme Dey, MSP for Angus South, told the Scottish Parliament: 'The signing of the Declaration of Arbroath at the [Arbroath] Abbey and the American Declaration of Independence might be separated by more than 450 years, but the connection between those documents and therefore our two nations is beyond challenge.' In order to promote American tourism in Scotland, Dey was calling to emphasise a popular notion that the idea of the sovereignty of the people, enshrined in the Declaration of Arbroath, heavily influenced the writing of the American Declaration of Independence. There is a significant amount of scholarship denying any link between these documents, yet this association is constantly referenced on both sides of the Atlantic. This article is not concerned with once again proving this association incorrect, but rather considering where it may have come from and why it continues to be propagated despite being categorically untrue. By examining the naming practices of the Declaration of Arbroath in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, this article will show that the connection between the documents likely stems from an issue of terminology.

Keywords: Scotland, America, Declaration of Arbroath, Declaration of Independence, politics, tourism, Tartan Day

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Introduction

The Declaration of Arbroath is perhaps the best-studied document in Scottish history. As Grant Simpson (1977) famously queried nearly forty years ago, 'Can anything new conceivably be said about a document apparently so well known in Scotland as the Declaration of Arbroath?' Scholars have considered the document's creation in 1320, its immediate influence (or lack thereof), and the growing significance and sentiment that has become associated with the Declaration in the past three hundred years (See: Cowan, 2003, Duncan, 1970, Barrow, 2003). Despite this breadth of literature, there is virtually no scholarship devoted to the naming history of the document. What is now commonly known as the Declaration of Arbroath has been identified by many names since the fourteenth century, including many new variations over the past two hundred years. The first half of this article considers said changes in the naming practices of the Declaration between 1800 and 2012. In the second half, the naming customs are used to consider a new perspective on the ongoing, though entirely false, association between the Declaration of Arbroath and the American Declaration of Independence. In doing so,

I am suggesting the Declaration of Arbroath has become associated with the Declaration of Independence, and gained increasing global recognition, partially through terminology.

The Declaration of Arbroath dates from 1320, by which point King Robert I, better known as Robert the Bruce, was struggling to legitimise his kingship outside of Scotland. Pope John XXII refused to acknowledge Bruce as king since he had previously been excommunicated from the Church, mainly for his murder of rival John Comyn at a church in Dumfries (Barrow, 2005). Various monarchs in Scotland and England had been battling for control of Scotland for nearly twenty-five years, but the Pope was calling for an end to this conflict, hoping that both groups would join his most recent Crusade, as evidenced by the numerous references to crusading in the document (Fergusson, 2003). The Pope began sending a number of letters asking Robert to negotiate peace with Edward II of England. What has become known as the Declaration of Arbroath is one of a series of three letters; one each from the King, the Clergy, and the Barons and Nobles of Scotland, of which the latter survives as the Declaration. They were sent to the Pope in an attempt to explain Scotland's position in the conflict with England. The letter asserted that the King of Scotland is only such when he is looking out for the best interests of Scotland, rather than his own. If this were not the case, the Community of the Realm could remove him from the throne and find a suitable replacement. The most blatant assertion of this, and now the most famous section of the document, is, '...for, as long as but a hundred of us remain alive, never will we on any conditions be brought under English rule. It is in truth not for glory, nor riches, nor honours that we are fighting, but for freedom – for that alone, which no honest man gives up but with life itself' (Fergusson, 2003).

There is no evidence the letter from Arbroath had any significant impact on the Pope. The records from Avignon show little mention of it, aside from a note that replies were sent for each of the three letters. Following receipt of the letter the Pope did request that Edward II end the war with Scotland, but again this was more likely motivated by his desire for more soldiers to join his Crusade. There is also scarcely any evidence many people within Scotland knew of the existence of the letter from Arbroath in 1320 and the years following, including the forty-seven Barons and Nobles whose names and/or seals appear on the document. The letter disappeared from written sources for 350 years until an English translation of the original Latin text appeared in 1689. Proper examination of how and why an English translation appeared at this critical point in the Revolution of 1688 would be a study unto itself. The vital point here is that the Declaration was essentially unknown in Scotland until 1689, when it slowly began to gain recognition and, eventually, fame.

Today the Declaration is often discussed alongside apparent traditions of democracy and popular sovereignty. Due to its assertion of the role of the people in the sovereignty of the King, it is often referred to as the basis of modern democracy. Medieval scholars know this is not the case; the Declaration is one of a number of documents with similar themes produced in this period, though it happens to be a particularly skilful example (Broun, 2003). This article focuses not on the debate of the historical 'truth' of the significance of the Declaration in the time of its creation, but rather the popularity this document has gained since people began attributing importance to it in later years, including the myths of global importance that surround it today, which lend it a level of significance far beyond that found in its fourteenth century origins.

A Declaration, a Letter or a Grand Remonstrance?

What we now call the Declaration of Arbroath has been referred to by a variety of names in the past two hundred years. This includes terms, such as 'letter' or 'acknowledgement', as well as titles, including 'Scottish Declaration of Independence' and 'Letter of the Barons of Scotland'. To consider the various names the Declaration has been known by, I completed a study that traces the terminology used in sources written between 1800 and 2012. Fifty-two such sources were surveyed (see Appendix). The criteria for this selection was based primarily on timescale – I was looking for a representative sample that spanned the period of study and included both some of the seminal works on the document, but also those that are more obscure. Since I was not choosing from a concrete body of literature, this sample is necessarily diverse and superficially random, though every effort was taken to obtain a representative image. I also only included works that specifically mention the document in some capacity, and excluded sources that are not concerned with it at all, as my methodology is not based on the volume of references but rather the type. A study of the changing numbers of texts that mention the document over this period would be a complementary next course of inquiry. This study, however, is focused on the shifting name changes over time, and thus is concerned only with sources that do mention the Declaration.

The sources surveyed engaged with the document in a variety of ways. In some the document is the central focus, such as A.A.M. Duncan's *The Nation of Scots and the Declaration of Arbroath (1320)* (1970). In others there is only a single sentence devoted to it, such as in *The Edinburgh Encyclopaedia* from 1832, 'A parliament was held at Arbroath in 1320, when the barons of Scotland under king Robert Bruce, in a celebrated and energetic manifesto, addressed to the pope, asserted the independence of their kingdom' (Brewster, 1832). That there is no further information about this 'celebrated' document in such an early source leads one to believe that readers must have already been somewhat familiar with it. Given that English translations had already existed for almost 150 years, this is entirely conceivable. However, there is a great deal of variety in the amount of space afforded to discussions of the document in these early texts. There is just one mention in *A Topographical Dictionary of Scotland* from 1813, when the author is discussing the career of Abbot Bernard, '...in 1320 he convened the Scottish Barons, at his Monastery of Arbroath, (of which he became Abbot, about the year 1303), where they subscribed that famous Manifesto addressed to Pope John...' (Carlisle, 1813). However, in Walter Scott's *The History of Scotland* from 1830, there are two full pages devoted to a discussion about the document. Of particular interest is when Scott quotes the most well-known section of the document, but he, perhaps unsurprisingly, fails to include the 'English rule' part. Scott said, "'for," say the words of the letter, "while an hundred Scots are left to resist, they will fight for the liberty that is dearer to them than life.'" (Scott, 1830).

This is a good opportunity to discuss the relationship between Scotland and England throughout the period of this study. Of course, space does not allow for a full consideration, but it is worthwhile to explore the changing relationship very briefly here. Colin Kidd (2008) has argued historians often forget that for much of the previous five hundred years the focus for Scotland has not been on independence, but rather respect and autonomy within the existing relationship. Graeme Morton's term *Unionist Nationalism* (1999) has often been taken to typify the Scottish view of their own place within the Union during the nineteenth century. For most of the century much of the

interest in Scottish history aimed to promote the importance of the Scottish past, for Scotland to take a more equal place within the Union. This is likely why Walter Scott left out the part of the quotation about ‘English rule’ in 1830, particularly given his own positive views on the Union. This began to change in the later years of the nineteenth century with the rise of calls for Home Rule, and this change from unionist-nationalism to more overt nationalism is partially discussed in H. J. Hanham’s classic work, *Scottish Nationalism* (1969). Of course, these lines are often blurred and there have always been people both supportive and not supportive of the Union in Scotland, the complexities of which are shown in Ewen Cameron’s *Impaled Upon a Thistle* (2010). Robert Anderson (2012) has added an important distinction between cultural and political nationalism, both of which will be evident in the subsequent discussion of the uses of the Declaration of Arbroath. Though this brief summary is an oversimplification, keeping in mind the general shift from unionist-nationalism to independence-based nationalism is necessary when considering the uses of the Declaration of Arbroath.

Turning back to the collection of sources, Figure 1 illustrates all the sources considered, separated by the various names used to describe the document. For categorization purposes, sources that use either ‘Declaration of Scottish Independence’ or ‘Scottish Declaration of Independence’ were put under ‘Scottish Declaration of Independence’, ‘Arbroath Declaration’ was placed under ‘Declaration of Arbroath’, and any reference to a letter was categorised as ‘Letter from Arbroath’.

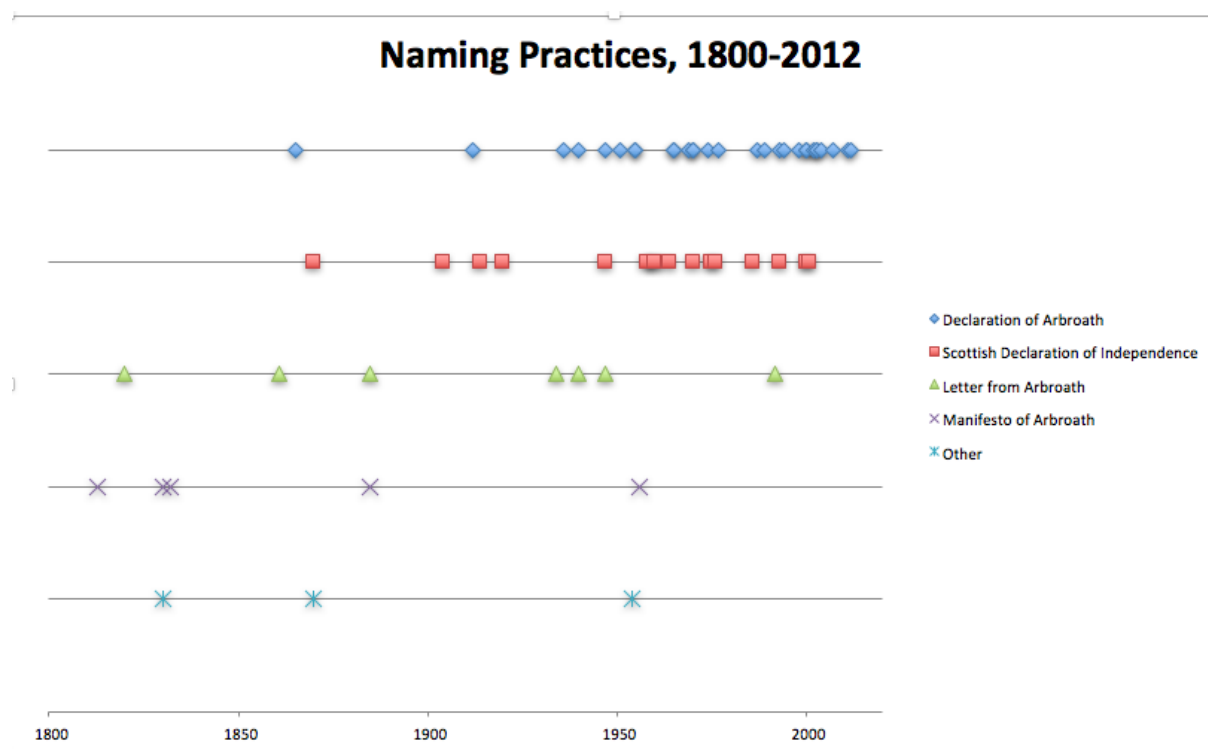


Figure 1: see Appendix for source list

Several points immediately become clear when examining Figure 1. There was relatively little mention of the Declaration by any name prior to 1920. This could reflect the unavailability of older sources, whether they are out of print, have newer editions, or have been lost. There are several explanations for the lack of early references to the document. One possibility may be the strong language used against the English Crown in the document. In the early-mid nineteenth century, it was hard to fit the document

into the 'unionist-nationalism' narrative being applied to many of the other events and people of the Wars of Independence, particularly William Wallace (Morton, 2014). Alternatively, it may be illustrative of a growing interest in the Declaration as the century progressed. The explanation is likely a combination of both. The early-mid twentieth century saw a rise of nationalist sentiment, as seen with the initial formation of the Scottish National Party in 1934 (Mitchell, Bennie and Johns, 2011), but among the sources considered for this study there is no strong evidence contemporary nationalists were making much use of the Declaration of Arbroath at this time. This certainly changed at the century progressed.

Figure 1 also illustrates the clear popularity of the terms Declaration of Arbroath (DoA) and Scottish Declaration of Independence (SDoI), particularly in the period following 1940. Indeed, between 1940 and 2012 only five of thirty-nine references, just 13%, were not SDoI or DoA. During this same period there is also a noticeable move away from the term SDoI, while references to DoA increase. This is particularly evident after 1980, when the DoA is mentioned fourteen times as opposed to SDoI only four and, of these, two are in sources that also call the document DoA. Therefore, in less than fifty years the term SDoI was almost entirely eclipsed in popularity by DoA in all the sources.

Another point of interest is how early the titles DoA and SDoI appear, as opposed to when they gained popularity. In the sample the name DoA first appears in 1865 (Abertay Historical Society), then not again for nearly fifty years. It is often assumed that DoA did not appear until the latter part of the twentieth century when it gained popularity, however this data suggests it was a known term a century before. SDoI is first used in 1870, though within the text itself the document is only referred to as a 'Grand Remonstrance' (Creasy, 1870). SDoI appears in the index, where it is listed under 'Scotland' as 'Scottish Declaration of Independence, or Grand Remonstrance addressed to the pope'. As it is referred to as a term, the author must not have invented it for this publication, but rather referenced it so people would know where to find it. There is then a gap of nearly twenty-five years until the second mention of SDoI. It seems that both DoA and SDoI were just two of several expressions used to describe the document in the nineteenth century, but they became the dominant titles in the twentieth century. Given the significance the document gained in the twentieth century, perhaps this is a reflection of the grandeur of DoA and SDoI in comparison to other nineteenth century terms such as letter, though that would be the most accurate term.

Further insight can be gained from looking at the sources by type. Figure 2 shows them separated into three categories - academic, political, and heritage. Only sources published after 1900 were included due to the lack of nineteenth century sources. Separating sources into categories is not without its limitations. In this case, however, it is worthwhile in order to consider trends in how different groups used the Declaration to meet their own ends. Academic sources refer to those that are by academics and intended for a scholarly audience. Political sources include government minutes and records, campaign speeches, or any other source that makes conscious use of the Declaration to achieve a particular political end. Heritage sources refer to those intended for the general public, which include a conscious construction of sentiment and significance that leads to the often-unconscious consumption of these ideas by the consumer.

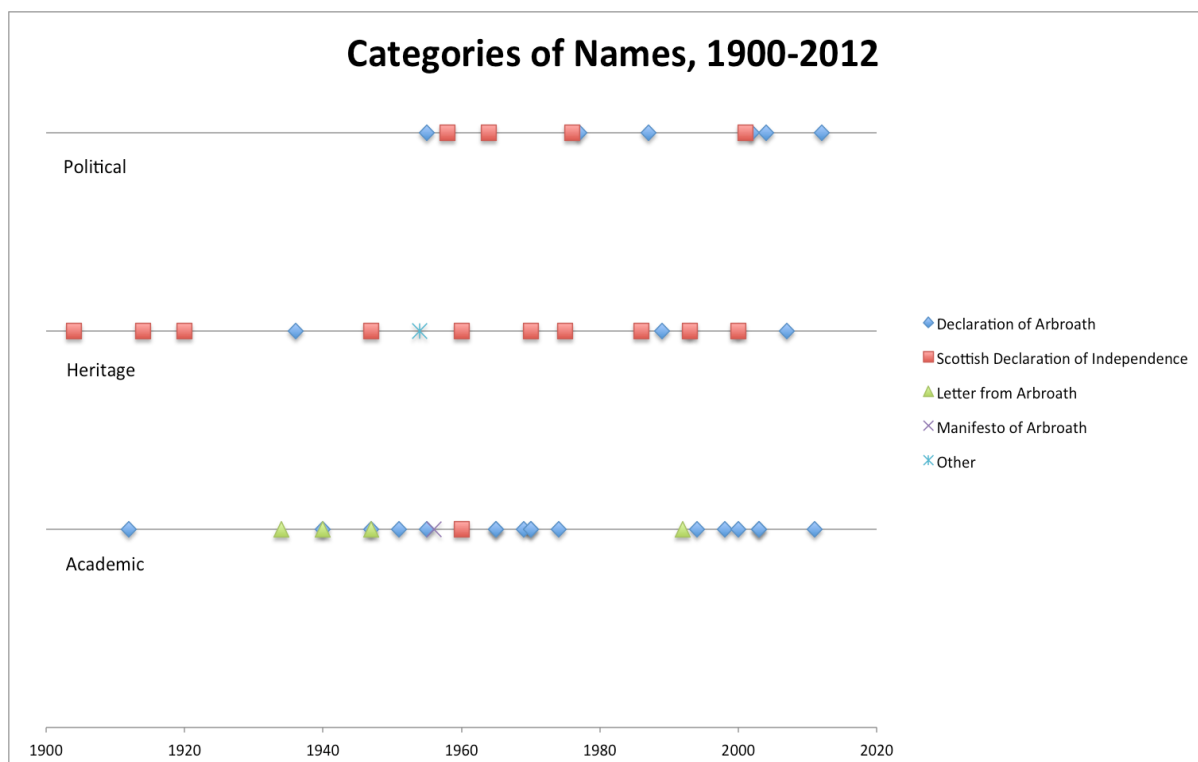


Figure 2: see Appendix for source list

Perhaps most conspicuous is the notable lack of early political sources. There are fewer political references in general due to the nature of the source material; speeches and pamphlets are less digitised and therefore less searchable. The majority of the sources, consequently, come from the Hansard and minutes of the Scottish Parliament. The lack of early sources could also, however, be indicative of the growing political capital of the document in the twentieth century. The fact that political references to the document rise at the same time that nationalism was becoming a driving force in Scottish politics should not be overlooked. Indeed, as will be discussed below, all the references to the document in political sources, both at the parliaments of Westminster and Holyrood, are by Scottish politicians.

There is also a noticeable difference in the split between the three types of sources in their use of the terms DoA and SDoI. As the chart illustrates, the term DoA has generally been favoured by the academic sources, especially after about 1950. In contrast, all of the SDoI references after 1950, bar one, were in the political or heritage sources. This suggests both the political and heritage sectors generally wanted to keep the SDoI name. It would be in the best interests of both groups to use whichever term was most familiar to the public, and therefore perhaps this late shift to DoA is indicative of a lack of public acceptance of the term. SDoI is also rather more emotive as a phrase, as there are Declarations of Independence from a number of countries, and thus it is a known term. The academic sources, on the other hand, perhaps adopted the term earlier as they were more focused on finding a historically accurate term, as scholars have often expressed concern over the significance attributed to the document by calling it a declaration, particularly one of independence. The academic source group also contains nearly all the terms other than DoA and SDoI, likely in an attempt to popularise a more appropriate term, before the dominance of the term DoA was accepted by the end of the twentieth century.

For the remainder of this article the term Declaration of Arbroath will be employed, as it is the most commonly used today. Historically the term 'letter from Arbroath' would be more appropriate, but since the focus of the remainder of this study is on the document in the twentieth century, 'declaration' is fitting since it was by far the most prevalent term.

In sum, the analysis of the naming practices has illustrated how the document underwent a significant name change in the twentieth century. I would suggest this is because the various groups making use of the Declaration, namely academic, heritage, and political, all had different agendas and used whichever name best suited these. Academic authors focused on not translating the present significance onto the past, and therefore were hesitant to call the document a declaration in any sense, not least a 'Declaration of Independence', as that in no way reflects the history of the letter. Politically, the document was used as an example of an ancient tradition of democracy in Scotland. The heritage sector was focused on generating tourist interest in the document, and therefore continued with the popular public name long after other groups adopted another. By the 1990s, however, the term Declaration of Arbroath was by far the most widely favoured, and it continues to be so today.

Two Declarations

The remainder of this article will be devoted to considering one of the most significant uses of the Declaration – its continued association with the American Declaration of Independence. The prevailing link between the documents is the myth that Thomas Jefferson was influenced while writing the Declaration of Independence by the central theme of the importance of the sovereignty of the people, which is enshrined in the Declaration of Arbroath. This connection has been perpetuated in both the United States and Scotland in rather different ways. In order to consider where it came from, I will first consider representative case studies of the various uses of the connection on both sides of the Atlantic.

The connection has appeared multiple times in government proceedings in the United Kingdom, though most such mentions are quite recent. Reference to the Declaration of Arbroath has appeared more in the seventeen years since the opening of the devolved Scottish Parliament than in the previous one hundred years at Westminster. The only two mentions appearing in the Hansard were both from MPs of Scottish seats, and only mention the document itself, rather than the connection with the Declaration of Independence. The first mention, from J. Bruce-Gardyne, Conservative MP South Angus, in 1964, does call the document the 'Scottish Declaration of Independence' (Hansard, 24 Nov 1964). As has been established above, however, this is still well within the time when both 'Declaration of Arbroath' and 'Scottish Declaration of Independence' were popularly being used, so it was likely not a significant choice.

Since the opening of the Scottish Parliament, there have been ten specific mentions of the Declaration of Arbroath, of which seven also refer to the Declaration of Independence. These mostly consider how to use the connection to attract American tourists to Scotland. For example, on 1 February 2012, MSP Graeme Dey asked, 'Does the member agree that, in seeking to promote Scotland's culture in the US market in particular, we should actively highlight the significant historic links between our countries?' (Scottish Parliament, 1 February 2012). The connection has been also used

to further political agendas in Scotland. On 26 January 2012, during debates about whether a referendum on Scottish independence should be held, Gil Paterson, MSP for Clydebank and Milngavie, tried to show the relevance of the Declaration of Arbroath today, 'That document was the basis of the American Declaration of Independence. Things have moved on, but the principles of the declaration live on. In all democracies it is accepted that the rights of the people rest with the people and not with a few unelected lords' (Scottish Parliament, 26 January 2012). Paterson was arguing in favour of the referendum by explicitly relating the historic relationship between Scotland and England with contemporary parliamentary questions.

In the lead-up to the referendum in 2014, the SNP specifically, and the Yes campaign more generally, made a conscious move away from making explicit links with the historical past in Scotland (Morton, 2014). An article from *The Herald* says this was made explicit to SNP members at 'a series of referendum roadshows', when the word 'freedom' was identified as particularly problematic (*The Herald*, 8 Jan 2012). This no doubt harks back to the criticism the SNP faced after their use of the 1996 film *Braveheart* to canvass. Campaigners followed this advice, and the Declaration of Arbroath was not used in the campaign in any significant way, except once in August 2014. First Minister Alex Salmond appeared at Arbroath to deliver his 'Declaration of Opportunity', which outlined opportunities independence could bring (*The Herald*, 17 August 2014). Although he did not specifically refer to the Declaration of Arbroath, the location and title of his speech were intended to bring it to mind.

Therefore, the connection between the two documents did not come up in either Scotland or the U.S. in any significant way during the referendum. The Yes campaign was consciously not referring to the Declaration of Arbroath, and it is generally agreed that much of the American mainstream media did not take a lot of interest in the referendum (Hague and Mackie, 2014) until the Yes vote surged ahead in some polls at the end of August (*The Atlantic*, 15 September 2014). Generally, the focus in both countries was on future implications of the referendum, rather than past justifications for independence, likely because of this criticism the SNP had received in the past.

Turning towards the heritage industry, in the exhibit on the Declaration at Arbroath Abbey the connection with the American Declaration of Independence is mentioned. Though the exhibit does not state that one document definitively influenced the other, it does note that two of the American signatories were raised in Scotland. The implication is that both were, therefore, likely to be familiar with the Declaration of Arbroath: 'Neither specifically mentions the letter in their writings, however their ideas do seem to echo certain passages' (Historic Scotland, 2014). Given the importance of tourism to Arbroath Abbey – half of the mentions of the document in the Scottish Parliament have been by Graeme Dey, MSP for Angus South, and they are effectively all about attracting tourists to the area – this mention of the Declaration of Independence is very likely for the partial benefit of U.S. tourists. If the focus is on attracting tourists because of a supposed connection, then that connection should be mentioned when tourists arrive.

This link has also appeared in a number of popular history books, particularly in the U.S. In Duncan A. Bruce's *The Mark of the Scots* (1997), he claims not only that the Declaration of Arbroath influenced the Declaration of Independence, but also that the National Covenant is similar to the beginning of the United States Constitution. He concludes by saying, 'That their [the Founding Fathers'] philosophy was basically Scottish is certain' (Bruce, 1997). In *The Scottish World: A Journey Into the Scottish Diaspora* (2006), Billy Kay acknowledges both sides of the argument, but eventually

says there is a connection, which he was partially convinced of because, ‘...over a third of those who actually signed the Declaration were Scots and Ulster Scots.’ The authors of *The Scottish Invention of America, Democracy and Human Rights* (Klieforth and Munro, 2004) link the documents as part of a ‘democratic revolution’ that began in Scotland. Though many scholars have argued against these notions, it is important to remember the effect these books supporting a connection can have. The idea is presented as historically accurate, and the reader is not given any indication that there is significant evidence denying any link between the documents.

Perhaps the body most responsible for the perpetuation of this myth is the United States Government. In 1998, the U.S. created a national holiday called Tartan Day. The Resolution explicitly stated the Declaration of Independence was ‘modelled on’ the Declaration of Arbroath (Congressional Record – Senate, 1998). This tradition of celebrating Scottish heritage by the diaspora began in Canada in the mid-1980s, and has since been adopted in America, New Zealand, Australia, Argentina, and even Scotland. It is celebrated each year on 6 April, the date of the Declaration of Arbroath, which was chosen over the more popular Scottish holidays of St Andrew’s Day and Burns Night (Armitage, 2007). Upon the passing of the resolution in the U.S., Senator Trent Lott (1998), the man responsible for its introduction, said, ‘National Tartan Day is about liberty. It is about the demand of citizens for their freedom from an oppressive government...By honouring April 6, Americans will annually celebrate the true beginning of the quest for liberty and freedom...Arbroath and the declaration for liberty.’ There has been a certain amount of scepticism about Lott’s intentions behind the holiday. Both Ascherson (2002) and Fry (2003) have remarked on how the bill would appeal to his constituency in Mississippi at a time when he needed some political capital. As Fry (2003) outlined, ‘Senator Lott is a Southerner. His campaign for National Tartan Day may well have been meant to please the moderate end of the constituency which, back home in Mississippi, likes to support the Confederate tartan.’ As this reasoning was not something that was likely to please the Senate, the connection between the documents was a more acceptable motivation for the celebrations. Euan Hague (2002a) and Duncan Sim (2011) have both discussed how Lott has said *Braveheart* influenced his interest in the Scottish historical past. Scottish historians across the world have seen the effect this film had on the popularity of Scottish history, and it certainly meant many people in 1998 were open to the idea of celebrating historical connections with Scotland.

An Invented Tradition

What makes all the above examples particularly intriguing is that there is no historical evidence to back up the claim the Declaration of Independence took any inspiration from the Declaration of Arbroath. In fact, several scholars have devoted extensive time to disproving it (See: Cowan, 2003, Cowan, 1998, Hague, 2002a, Mason, 2014, Brotherstone and Ditchburn, 2000). For example, Hague (2002a) examined the sources used by the compilers of the Declaration of Independence, as well as records of their personal libraries, and concluded, ‘...the Declaration of Arbroath is conspicuous only by its total absence from historical assessments of the concepts enshrined in the Declaration of Independence.’ Roger Mason (2014) has looked at the use of the Declaration of Arbroath in Scotland and concluded, ‘...there is precious little evidence that the Declaration exerted any direct influence over early modern Scots, let alone

colonial Americans.' Fry (2003) doubts any of the Founding Fathers had even heard of the document and, 'Even if they had, it would have been hard to imagine a place or time less relevant to the aspirations of the Thirteen Colonies in 1776 than the Scotland of the fourteenth century.' There is not a single academic historian who is comfortable saying there is evidence of a direct link between the two documents. Perhaps the best-known battle surrounding this issue occurred in this journal, when Bruce (2002) wrote a comment directed at Hague's (2002a) article about Tartan Day, and Hague replied to this (2002b). Bruce was disparaging of Hague's criticism of his side-by-side comparison of the two documents (Bruce, 1997). However, Hague was certainly correct in his scepticism of Bruce's methodology. Bruce's very act of translating the original Latin text of the Declaration of Arbroath to modern English leaves much room for author bias based on word choice, which Bruce fails to mention in his book. Despite what academic authors might prefer, Bruce's book has been incredibly influential to the notion of a connection, and therefore should not be underestimated.

Since the notion of a connection between the documents continues to be widely circulated, despite the best efforts of scholars, many people consider it a fact. Therefore, it is useful to study what effect this origin story of the Declaration of Independence has on the popularity of, and levels of significance ascribed to, the Declaration of Arbroath, as well as what motivations are behind this association. There are two key questions: where did this association come from and why does it continue despite the lack of evidence? It stands to reason the association would be both started and continued because it benefits that person, group or nation. If so, both the United States and Scotland could be the potential source.

If the connection was born in America, it helps create a link between the Declaration of Independence and an ancient constitutional/popular sovereignty tradition. This seems likely as in much of the rhetoric about Tartan Day in America there is much evidence of romanticising the origins of the country – it is not just a celebration of medieval Scotland, but also of colonial America (Hague, 2002a). Several historians have cited Senator Lott as the inventor of the idea of a connection between the documents (Ascherson, 2002, Fry, 2003). Lott, however, did not entirely invent the myth. It has been around since at least 1975, when the magazine for the Clan Fergusson Society of North America (1975) stated that the Declaration of Arbroath, '...provided inspiration to Thomas Jefferson for some of the wording of the American Declaration of Independence.' Even Bruce's *The Mark of the Scots* (1997), which certainly says there is a strong connection, was published the year before Resolution 155 was tabled. Instead, it seems that Lott merely used the connection to his advantage, and greatly popularised it in the process. Instead of inventing a myth, both Sim (2011) and Hague (2002a) refer to Lott inventing a tradition. Now, many who wish to 'prove' the connection between the documents point to Resolution 155 to bolster their argument.

On the other hand, Scotland could be the source of the myth as there is a lot to gain in terms of the tourism benefits of an association. As discussed above, almost all the discussion of the Declaration of Arbroath in the Scottish Parliament centres on how to highlight the connection with the Declaration of Independence to entice visitors to the country. To give another example, on 15 March 2001 George Reid, MSP for Mid Scotland and Fife, suggested that the connection between the documents could be, '...a vehicle for strengthening economic, social and cultural links between our two countries' (Scottish Parliament, 15 March 2001). Despite not playing a major factor in the 2014 referendum, Scottish politicians have still been willing to highlight the connection. Then-First Minister Alex Salmond famously appeared at Arbroath Abbey on a May 2012

episode of the American television show *The Late Late Show with Craig Ferguson*. In response to Ferguson's question on whether the Declaration of Independence was 'modelled on' the Declaration of Arbroath, Salmond replied, 'That's right. In fact, there is a senate resolution that says that from 1998, and I think that is a pretty fair guess' (Ferguson interview with Salmond, 5 May 2012). It is noteworthy that he used the Senate resolution as his first justification. He goes on to mention the number of Scottish signatories of the Declaration. Both (as has been shown) are poor sources from which to judge whether the documents are connected. In addition, as was shown in reference to Arbroath Abbey, the heritage industry in Scotland seldom seeks to dispel the myth, particularly because tourists are being encouraged to visit based on an association.

Clearly, stakeholders in both Scotland and the U.S. have reason to promote a connection between these documents. In Scotland, the focus is primarily on attracting American tourists. In the U.S., it has become a part of the national consciousness about ideas of popular sovereignty and ancestral connections to Scotland, which have become increasingly popular with recent interest in genealogy. Looking at the evidence, however, it is clear the connection is highlighted more in the United States. Scotland has been much slower to make use of the association, particularly in regards to Tartan Day. Sim (2011) has discussed how the Scottish Government still tends to refer to the celebrations as 'Scotland Week', not mentioning the tartan aspect. They also have only been intermittently involved in the celebrations, beginning in 2001 when then-First Minister Henry McLeish, then-leader of the SNP John Swinney, and Sean Connery attended celebrations in Washington (Ascherson, 2002). Since then Scottish politicians has been less involved in the annual events than Scottish actors have.

Significantly, all of the references to a connection between the documents are relatively recent. The above 1975 reference from the Clan Fergusson Society of North America is the earliest I have found. As one of the first mentions of this association, if not the first, it adds to the notion that the myth did indeed begin in the U.S. There are only patchy references for the next several decades until the 1990s, but once the myth became popular through events such as Tartan Day, it was appropriated by groups in Scotland to promote tourism. Despite this reference from 1975, the vast majority of other examples of this association can be found between 1990 and today. There were also increasing links between Scotland and the U.S. in this period, including the post-*Braveheart* interest in Scottish history, the rise of personal genealogical studies, and the popularisation of the internet, which created both a space for discussing interest in Scottish history and assisted with personal genealogical research. Therefore, the popular opinion that a direct link exists between the two documents only came to fruition at some point in the latter part of the twentieth century, with references to this claim only becoming prevalent in the last twenty-five years or so.

The naming practices covered in the first section of this article suggest a possible origin of this association between the Declaration of Arbroath and the Declaration of Independence. The popular public notion of a connection between the two documents comes down to an issue of language. As was shown earlier in this article, the Declaration of Arbroath was more often called the Scottish Declaration of Independence until at least the middle of the twentieth century and this term was still in use, especially by the heritage sector, until this century. There are two possible explanations for how this relates to the connection between the documents. First, the name Scottish Declaration of Independence was used in the early twentieth century because people already believed the two were connected or, alternatively, the documents became equated in the public's mind because the names were so similar. Since all of our documentary

evidence relating the two comes from near the end of the twentieth century, I am suggesting the latter, that the two became associated due to similar names. It has so swiftly come to be taken as truth in public opinion because, once this association had been made, it benefited all stakeholders (except historical accuracy) to have it continue.

In conclusion, nearly four decades after Grant Simpson rhetorically asked about future studies of the Declaration of Arbroath, this article has aimed to show even this well-studied document can be approached from a new perspective. I argued the Declaration of Arbroath underwent a significant name change in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to suit the needs of various interested parties, and in doing so potentially led to a connection with the Declaration of Independence. This association has now become 'fact' in both Scotland and the U.S. as it benefits stakeholders on both sides of the Atlantic. This is an excellent example of how historical truth is generally not a pre-requisite for truth in public opinion, and this question of how much impact scholars have on public knowledge of history needs to be explored more in the future. In his article on Tartan Day, Hague (2002a) said, 'Arguably, therefore, Tartan Day is neither as minor nor as apolitical as it perhaps initially appears.' Clearly, the same could be said of the Declaration of Arbroath, the on-going use of which is an example of how a document with relatively little impact during the time of its creation in the Middle Ages can take on delusions of grandeur in a later period.

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Appendix: Source List for Figures

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