

**Uniting Enemies through Holy Matrimony: Anglo-
Scottish Dynastic Marriages as Political Instruments of
Peace and National Progress**



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Summary:

Dynastic unions between rival states were one of the most common practices in medieval times. This had the aim of not only favouring friendship and reducing hostility between rivals, but also contributing in to each side's national development. This article aims to put forward the dynamic role played by dynastic marriages in favouring peace among warring nations during medieval times and in promoting national progress by casting light on the economic and cultural foreign contributions one side had on the other. Based on the findings, it is clear that the royal union between the two opposing sides had an impact, deeper than the one military intervention had. On the one hand, it contributed in setting the ground for a long-lasting friendship and assistance between both counterparts, and on the other hand, it also promoted bringing progress in various aspects of life, such as economy and culture.

Keywords: Dynastic unions, rival states, medieval times, national development, economic contribution, cultural contribution

INTRODUCTION

History is full of events when states conquered other states for the sake of increasing their territories. Many examples arise as proof of how man's greed for lands drove him to assault neighbouring states and claim lordship over the conquered people. For centuries, this had been a "common practice" among kingdoms, especially during medieval times, as with the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes of modern-day Germany and Denmark, who invaded and ravaged post-Roman Britain in an attempt to make the island theirs. Or, when in 1066 William of Normandy conquered England at the Battle of Hastings, turning the Anglo-Saxon kingdom into an Anglo-Norman one. Besides, when under the Angevin dynasty, England invaded Ireland.

However, military intervention, though considered very effective, was not the only option imperialistic states had in hand to grow larger. In fact, there existed other options that were as efficient as military interventions, yet they were more subtle and had far better impacts. One of them was royal marriages. Indeed, dynastic unions proved to be effective political instruments, mostly set to seal peace treaties among nations, but also to add to national progress.

Hence, this article intends to highlight the subtle role played by such dynastic marriages in not only bringing warring nations together but also in setting the ground for economic and cultural developments. For the sake of this study, England and Scotland are taken as examples due to the long-term rivalry both neighbours had, particularly from the English side, whose hunger for lands led them to invade Scotland in many occasions across the centuries.

1. Dynastic Marriages and Their Impact on Anglo-Scottish History

To reach the expected result of expanding territories, military conquest was traditionally the most common practice. In fact, history has shown in many instances how man was ready to appropriate lands that were not his, just for the sake of satisfying his greed. In this vein, the Roman Empire for example had expanded geographically by curtailing lands from Europe, Africa and Asia, and similarly Britain was famously known as the land where the sun never set due to the much land the Empire had conquered across the globe. Thus, owing to such imperialistic policies the Roman, British and many other imperial powers had adopted; kingdoms expanded at the expense of others and became larger while weaker kingdoms shrank or disappeared.

Military conquest had indeed proven its worth in many occasions and to a greater extent, which justifies its frequent use. However, one cannot also neglect the fact that there existed other ways that had an impact on enlarging territories as deep as military conquests – more particularly when an invader failed to conquer a particular land. One common way was dynastic marriages. The latter revealed to be another, yet a more convenient way of potentially achieving the expected goal of expanding territories and avoiding bloodshed. Such marriages were actually “primarily motivated by political interests. They were indeed largely arranged marriages” (Jallinoja 25) and so they were notably appreciated because of the direct impact they had on the political scene. Nonetheless, their contribution was not only limited to politics, for, they also influenced other aspects such as economy, military, language, religion and many more. For that, dynastic marriages were much appreciated.

Being married to someone from one’s own class has always been a common practice in all societies across the centuries, to this day. The reasons behind such practice differ, yet regarding dynastic marriages, it has always been mainly for strategic diplomacy for national interest. On the matter, Margaret Schaus’ stressed out that:

Another affective form of diplomacy that routinely involved women was negotiating marriages to build or secure a political alliance. Women were the brides as well as the principal negotiators, if not instigators, of many marriages, and were intimately involved in the high-stakes negotiations between kings, princes, dukes, and counts. (211)

These arranged marriages were of great importance when it came to politics mainly because of the prominent role they played in securing peace between friends or foes. However, and despite the delicate role a bride played in such union, her place in the decision making was inexistent. In fact, as long as she constituted an important asset, her role was crucial and had a say in negotiations, but as far as her future was concerned, she had no say when it came to deciding who she would or could marry; she was a political asset and that was the role she had to remain focused on as stated by Schaus: "Brides could be unwilling participants, pawns, or virtual hostages to guarantee compliance with treaties ..." (211). Thus, whether they were willing or unwilling, brides had no say regarding their future husband, as long as they could play a role in politics, even if the dynastic marriage could cause controversy, all that mattered was national interest.

Often seen as a diplomatic tool used as a means to ensure allies, increase lands; strength and wealth, import or export new cultures, and more importantly bring 'new bloods' and secure heirs, royal marriages were central in many ways. When citing a few examples of the positive roles of dynastic marriages, Margaret Schaus highlighted that

In the twelfth century, Eleanor of Aquitaine's carefully arranged marriages of her children linked England with the major European royal houses, as did those of her contemporary, Alfonso VII of Castile. In 1371, John of Gaunt, seeking the crown of Castile during the Hundred Years' War, married Constanza, daughter of King Pedro I of Castile. The marriages of their daughters Philippa, to João of Avis, King of Portugal, and Catalina, to Enrique of Trastámara, king of Castile, created an Anglo-Castilian alliance that continued into the early modern period with the marriage of Katherine of Aragon to Arthur and Henry Tudor (later Henry VIII). (211)

Thus, owing to their multi-faceted role, such events have always impacted the history of all nations in a number of respects. In general, the prime goal of any dynastic wedlock was, and still is, to secure heirs to the throne to prevent the royal line from extinction. Yet, providing the crown with an heir was not the sole aim behind organizing such events, as mentioned above. In fact, these types of arranged weddings between rulers had a much greater impact on kingdoms involved in the marriage which could go beyond the limited borders of securing

heirs only. Such impacts ranged from a variety of advantages that can hereby be summarized.

2 Economic and Technological Contributions

To start with, royal marriages were a good means to promote prosperity and wealth through the facilitation of the exchange of goods, services and technologies leading partners to increase their trade and commerce. As an example, the marriage of King Edward III of England and Philippa of Hainault in 1328 is a clear evidence of how a royal marriage could be a good asset given the commercial and technological importance it had for both parties, but for the most part for England. As noted by John Swann Withington and R. Abercrombie, "ever since the arrival on (their) shores of Philippa of Hainault, consort of Edward III, England has been a manufacturing country,"(395).

At the time of the marriage, England was struggling with an economy that was still confined to the limits of its borders, and possessed a technology that was too outdated compared to the one owned by the other nations. England was poor and this did not go unnoticed by Philippa who:

could not fail to be struck with the comparative poverty of England as contrasted with her own small but flourishing country; and it was easy to gather that this was chiefly the consequence of the deplorable state into which all trade had been allowed to fall. (Hardy 73)

Therefore, to be able to prepare the grounds for England to be on equal footing with the other nations, the kingdom had to open its markets internationally and modernize its industry. This was only possible with some help from the outside. Queen Philippa was the one to initiate such process and eventually lead England to become less 'local' and be more 'international'.

As a result, owing to the marriage between Edward III and Philippa trade significantly increased between his kingdom and the Low Countries (Hardy 73). More particularly, the English wool industry witnessed a remarkable revitalization due to the boost brought by Philippa into the English wool market. What the queen did to such industry was of great importance as she opened up the English wool market internationally. In fact, the queen had knowledge of the excellent quality of the English wool and how it was well-appreciated in the European market. Yet, having the best wool in the market necessitated having a good marketing strategy to commercialise it and gain more profits from its sales. Unfortunately for the Anglo-Saxons this was not the case because England did not have the appropriate technology to work the wool and provide more refined material. Instead, the product was mostly sold in its raw version. (Hardy 74)

In Philippa's view, such source of wealth was unwisely used since it could have brought more capital to England, had it been sold in a better state. Therefore, with her help the queen managed to convince Flemish weavers to leave their country and settle in Norwich (Norfolk) in England in 1335. It was

crystal clear that by so doing, the queen was aiming for the Flemish weavers to bring the weaving technology to England and establish it there. In consequence to such strategy, England started witnessing an influx of weavers and progress in the wool industry which impacted the production of the woollen cloth becoming a source of stable and real wealth to the people of Norfolk and England, too. (Hardy 75-75)

In addition to the opportunity England was offered to enter the international market at the hands of Queen Philippa, the second massive impact her marriage to King Edward III had on England was the importation of the iron industry into the kingdom of the Anglo-Saxons. As noted in the Belford's Monthly and Democratic Review, prior to the royal marriage, domestic iron-made utensils were rare and could only be found in the royal household (Belford 370). Nonetheless, owing to the union with the princess of Hainault, it was no longer difficult for the English to benefit from such technology. Like with the Flemish weavers, King Edward III invited Flemish and French iron workers to come to England and establish their own businesses in the kingdom. Consequently, England soon became home for Flemish and French skilled workmen who contributed in giving a fresh stimulus to the English newly-born iron industry. Cities such as Surrey, Sussex and Kent were among the ones that benefited massively from such impetus. (Belford 370)

In the same vein, when St. Margaret of Wessex married Scottish king Malcolm III, she did not come empty handed, and securing heirs to the throne was not the only 'achievement' she would be accredited for. In fact, St. Margaret brought much to Scotland and her achievements went far to affect a lot of aspects of the Scottish life.

Economically speaking and similar to Edward III and Philippa's marriage, the union of the Scottish king and the Saxon princess had brought much to the economy of Scotland. In fact, according to Bishop Turgot of St. Andrews', in his Biography of St Margaret, Queen of Malcolm III (1058-1093), he asserted that:

It was due to her that the merchants who came by land and sea from various countries brought along with them for sale different kinds of precious wares which until then were unknown in Scotland. And it is at her instigation that the natives of Scotland purchased from these traders clothing of various colours, with ornaments to wear. (qtd. Donald n.p)

In Turgot's view, it was the innovations introduced to Scotland by foreign merchants, aided by the new queen, that contributed to the improvement of trade. St. Margaret is regarded as the one who "introduced the Scots nobility to continental fashions, which in turn promoted trading links with the European mainland" (Panton 321). This opened up Scotland to international commerce, similar to the marriage of King Edward III and Philippa.

Along with trade, the Saxon queen was also interested in education which was part and parcel of the many innovations she had brought with her. She was “known for giving much importance to education,” (Knappett n.p) and this remains as one among the many important contributions the queen had in Scottish history. “All her life, she loved books and encouraged learning”, as claimed Thomas J. Craughwell (192). That she gave much interest in education reflects how great her impact was on Scotland. As a queen, she could have been a mother and a companion to her husband. Yet, by marrying the Scottish king, St. Margaret endorsed the role of a queen, but with responsibilities which encompassed opening her new home to international commerce and spreading literacy among her people.

3 Territorial Expansion

Another major role dynastic marriages played in politics, was territorial expansion and power increase. Many were the royal families who benefited from such asset in an attempt to stretch the borders of their lands, or increase their military power and gain a place among the other peer kingdoms. In Ingrao’s view “before 1500 and occasionally still in the 1500s, marriages were brokered with real political interests in mind, above all annexations of territories, as in fairy tales where the hero marries a princess and gets half the realm.” (Quoted In Jallinoja 25)

Many examples might be cited in order to highlight the importance of dynastic marriages in expanding territories, and one best case to mention was the marriage of the king of England Henry II with Eleanor of Aquitaine. The latter was the heiress of the House of Poitier in France whose territory stretched to include large estates that were the County of Poitou and the Duchy of Aquitaine. Furthermore, she was previously married to the king of France Louis VII and who soon after their divorce, she went on marrying the English King Henry II.

In consequence and owing to the union between Henry II and Eleanor, the English king became master of a large estate in France that included his domain of Normandy in addition to his wife’s. This contributed massively in increasing the English king’s land holdings estimated to more than half of the lands of the kingdom of France. To make matter worse, owing to his marriage, King Henry II became the holder of lands in France that exceeded in size the ones the French king himself possessed. This consolidated the position of England in Europe, but on the other hand, it also widened the gap first created by the marriage of the former wife of Louis VII with his English rival.

Then, as though all the French territory he was holding was insufficient, King Henry II went further to attempt to have complete control over the remaining lands of the kingdom of France by marrying his eldest son, Henry the Young King, to Margaret of France, daughter of King Louis VII from his second marriage. The union could have been intended to lead both sides to come to

terms with their problems, but for England the union was in fact meant to put the kingdom in the front rank of the contenders to the throne of France as put forward by Aidan Norrie et al.

Henry II, who was ambitiously contemplating territorial expansion in the late 1150s, had reason to hope that through the marriages of his sons he would increase his power. If his son Henry married Margaret, the daughter of the King of the Franks, and if King Louis died without a male heir, he or his son would have a claim to the French throne. (141)

Therefore, that England coveted the French crown was simply a way of claiming their right to the throne through the dynastic marriage between Henry the Young King and Margaret. On the French side, King Louis VII was still unable to secure a male heir and for that, in case he died without having fathered a son, then there was a greater chance that England could grow larger southward through the complete annexation of the kingdom of France.

In a similar way and tackling the same topic of the crucial role of dynastic marriages in stretching territories or even creating kingdoms, Ingrao put forward that:

The marriage between Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile in 1469 was such an alliance which, by combining Aragon and Castile through a personal union, laid the foundation for the Kingdom of Spain. The next expansion by marriage in this royal dynasty took place in 1496, when Ferdinand and Isabella agreed to wed their daughter Juana, the future queen regnant, to the Habsburg Philip ('the Handsome'), the heir of the Duchy of Burgundy and the Burgundian Netherlands. This advantageous marriage converted the Habsburgs from German territorial princes into a European dynasty of the first rank. Moreover, the marriage between Juana and Philip's son, Ferdinand, and Anna of Bohemia and Hungary bore fruit in 1536, when, after the death of Anna's brother, the King of Hungary and Bohemia, Ferdinand was elected as his successor. This prompted the annexation of Hungary and Bohemia to the conglomeration of the Spanish-Burgundian territories under Habsburgian rule ((Ingrao 2003, 2-6) qtd. In Jallinoja Riitta 25)

Finally, in the Anglo-Scottish case, one example to mention was the marriage of the king of Scotland David I to the Anglo-Saxon Countess of Huntingdon, Matilda (Maud). The marriage was arranged by no one other than England's King Henry I who was also David I's brother-in-law through his marriage with Scottish Princess Matilda. As claimed by Leigh Clarke "In 1115, Henry I, King of England, David's patron, arranged his marriage to Maud (Matilda), 2nd Countess of Huntingdon, allowing him to become Earl of Huntingdon." (178). Hence, owing to the union between the royal house of Scotland with the Anglo-Saxon royal bride and by right of marriage the Anglo-Saxon Earldom of Huntingdon became a land administered by Scotland through its King David I. This added more

lands to Scotland, but at the same time, it also won England an ally who, when David became king of Scotland, he contributed in bringing a massive change in his kingdom by adopting the feudal system used in England, along with the bringing of Norman lords to settle and administer his Kingdom of Scotland.

Later, unfortunately for both Scots and English the earldom of Huntingdon became a source of quarrel between the heirs to the title of Earl of Huntingdon, leading to clashes between the kings of England and those of Scotland. Yet, what remains central to highlight is that Royal marriages between England and Scotland had for long been coveted by royal families owing to the positive role they played in stretching borderlines and increasing power and wealth. This would become crucial when time would come for both Scotland and England to reclaim what was once theirs, or expect a favour from the other side. But eventually such marriages would in the near future become a source of trouble that would escalate to the point of triggering wars between neighbours.

4 Cultural Contribution

One other contribution of royal marriages is the cultural exchange between parties, and the most notable example to cite was again the marriage of Scottish king Malcolm III and Saxon princess St. Margaret. The latter is well-known for the profound influence she had, not only on her family, but on the royal court and her people, too. Owing to her active role as a queen of Scotland, St. Margaret is famously known to have contributed in importing Anglo-Norman culture into her new home. In the matter, Clayton Roberts, et al. stated that St. Margaret “brought English culture to the court and the country. She promoted commerce with foreign lands, decorated the palace with silk hangings, and introduced a new refinement to the court.” (Roberts & al. n.p)

Her first influence was visible in her family with King Malcolm III being reported to have “bent to his queen’s wishes in most things.” (Worldhistory.org) Later, with the birth of their eldest son, Margaret’s influence was even more apparent through the naming of her first son Edward, an Anglo-Norman name. Then, this continued to spread among all her other children who she named Edmund, Ethelred, Edgar, Alexander, David, Edith and Mary. All names embodied the pure Anglo-Norman influence the queen was exercising over her husband and Scotland as none of the children was named according to Scottish traditions. This remains the biggest success she had accomplished over the existing and persistent Scottish tradition of naming royal members mostly in Gaelic style.

In addition to her great success in bringing Anglo-Norman influence over her family, Queen Margaret was known to have expanded such influence to reach the Scottish court where English became the language used at the king’s court. Actually, the queen is reported to have never spoken or learnt the Gaelic language (Kumar 79). As odd as it might seem, what was supposed to be a logical behaviour from the side of the foreign queen; to learn the language of her people, it was her

people who had to learn their queen's language. In consequence, a whole class of Scottish nobles of Pictish, Gaelic and Norse origins had to adopt a new language, which was unprecedented given the Scots' animosity towards English intrusion in their affairs. The new queen's endeavour was unparalleled because no one before her had succeeded to impose English as the language of the Scottish court. Even Malcolm III who was reported to have spent much of his lifetime at the English court and where he had learnt English never tried to change the language of his ancestors with English at his court, but Margaret did.

Moreover, the queen's endeavour in the Scottish court did not stop at the level of the English language only, her achievements continued even further through the bringing of Englishmen and their establishment at the Scottish court. As noted in Krishan Kumar's words, Margaret "filled the Scottish court with her English friends. She was responsible for partly Anglicizing the Scottish monarchy." (79) Such group of people were foreign to Scotland, yet with the help of the Scottish queen, they found themselves acting as people holding power as it was noted by Richard Oram claiming that the Anglo-Saxon guests "did, however, exercise great influence over the Scottish court, where Margaret was their most significant ally..." (29).

Hence, bringing the English language into the Scottish court was not enough for the queen; she had also to bring her English friends and make her kingdom their new home. Eventually, with their presence at the court of Scotland, and the power they had been delegated with from St. Margaret, Scotland was inclined into turning into an extension of the kingdom of England as noted by Richard Oram:

Their [Anglo-Saxons] presence changed the whole ethos of royal power, turning the style of Malcolm's kingship culturally towards the south and away from the Gaelic and Scandinavian traditions that had been established in Scotland since the early 900s. (28)

Furthermore, as a princess born and raised in England, then in Hungary, Margaret grew up with a lifestyle completely different from the Scottish one. For that, and following her first achievement with regard to the language used at the court of Scotland, the new queen kept on pushing forward by bringing more changes in Scotland where she introduced "the sophistication of the Old English and Hungarian courts." (28) Eventually, the fashion and new style brought by her gained ground in the Scottish court where, "gold and silver plate, fine foods and wines, English and Continental fashions in clothing and hairstyles, wall hangings, and so on" became the new fashion of the Scottish court (28).

Furthermore, religion was yet another cultural constituent that was affected by such royal marriage. In fact, in the case of Malcolm III and St. Margaret's marriage, religion took the lion's share from the Saxon queen's interest. Widely acknowledged for her piety and devotion to the Roman Catholic

Church, winning her the title of saint on June 19th, 1250, the Saxon queen of the Scots had been active in bringing changes to the Celtic Church of Scotland. The latter stemmed its doctrines from the Catholic faith but was blended with some of the old Celtic religious customs. The Celtic cross is the best representation of such religious union between what was indigenous and what was Catholic. The Saxon queen's zeal for her faith had no limits and though her efforts did not affect the Celtic cross, the results of her endeavour finally culminated in succeeding to rid the Scottish church from much of the Scottish Celtic 'residues' and bring the Celtic Church in line with the Roman Catholic.

5 Peacemaker

Last but not least, what remains the most positive contribution of dynastic marriages was the establishment and maintaining of peace between states as remarked by R. R. Davies who claimed that marriage "could be used to defuse tension and build up amity"(51). Such role was crucial in the international political arena during the Middle Ages when warfare was common between kingdoms. On the matter, historian Christine Carpenter noted, "marriage was the most powerful and long-lasting treaty that medieval rulers could make with one another" (15). These marriages were considered as a means of securing peace and alliances between different kingdoms, be them rivals or foes, especially in wartimes. In particular, brides were the ones with the most delicate task of sealing peace and safeguarding it. And though in these types of marriages, the groom and the bride were both entrusted with the responsibility of securing peace by living together 'in holy matrimony, till death do them apart', the bride, in most cases, was the one on whose shoulders peace between sides was resting. A view shared by Diana Dunn who commented that: "Potentially, she (the queen) could help maintain peace and stability or, alternatively, create division and cause tension." (143)

In fact, what many would consider as objectifying a woman to become a tool used to seal a deal, others would see it as a key character in either maintaining peace or ending friendship. From Diana Dunn's perspective and given the important role of the bride in a dynastic marriage, the future queen, was indeed key in such unions as she pointed out that:

Contemporaries, and later commentators, have often judged the success or failure of a queen on her ability to influence events in such a way as to sustain harmony, regarding the role of peacemaker and intercessor, whether in the context of the household, the court or the wider diplomatic stage, as being particularly appropriate for a queen. (143)

She added:

Many royal marriages were arranged specifically for the purpose of sealing treaties after a long period of negotiation, those 'of Edward II and Isabella of

France, Henry V and Katherine of Valois, and Henry VI and Margaret of Anjou, being obvious examples. (143)

Furthermore, Royal marriages could be credited for the economic well-being of states since they contributed in avoiding costly wars and promoting greater stability within kingdoms, as historian John Van Engen remarked, "marriage alliances...could provide the basis for an enduring, peaceful relationship between two previously hostile powers" (58). Thus, by marrying off royal children to the royal children of other rulers, the worst could be avoided through the establishment of long-lasting bonds of friendship and cooperation between realms. In this respect, Rina Walthaus added:

Royal marriage is, moreover, a most important political event, arranged to secure the perpetuation of the royal dynasty – the queen's main role being that of royal child bearer – as well as to consolidate the power of the dynasty and the state, to corroborate peace and to strengthen political relationships with other nations. (283)

To bring more evidence to the point highlighted regarding the vivid role of dynastic marriages in politics in general and in uniting kingdoms and nations in particular and in establishing peace, Scottish history has still much to tell. One example was the marriage between a Pictish princess and a Dalriadan king, which eventually led to the first permanent unification of their respective kingdoms in 843. Indeed, long before their first permanent political union, both Pictland and Dalriada were known to have celebrated the political marriage of a Pictish princess and the Dalriadan king. Such event would later become the first step into the unification of Pictland and Dalriada at the hands of the princess' grandson Kenneth MacAlpin.

One other major example standing as yet another proof of the crucial role of dynastic marriages in the Scottish history more specifically was the marriage between the Scottish royal House of the Stuarts and the English royal House of the Tudors. The marriage was part of a treaty ratified on October 31, 1502 meant to end the conflict between both neighbours for over 170 years. It was the Treaty of Perpetual Peace between England and Scotland signed at Westminster by King Henry VII and King James IV. Accordingly, it was agreed to end the conflict between the neighbours. To seal the deal, it was also agreed to marry the Scottish king with the English king's daughter Princess Margaret Tudor, and in 1503, the marriage took place.

The royal union, as expected, brought virtual peace among the former enemies, yet, what could be retained from such dynastic marriage was actually its long-run outcome. Indeed, it is impossible to deny the direct positive impact this marriage had on both sides, but in the long run, it also set in motion a long process of union between both kingdoms that became permanent in 1603 with

the accession of King James VI of Scotland, grandson of James IV and Margaret, to the throne of England. Such unprecedented result did not require any sword to be withdrawn, and any blood to be spilled, all it required was a dynastic marriage to take place a century earlier and wait for the mixed royal bloodline to do the rest.

In fact, given the tensions that had existed between the two parties for centuries, the union of both enemies was certainly not meant to take place, let alone to take place peacefully. Against all odds, the unexpected happened and the union between Scotland did take place with King James Stuart IV marrying Margaret Tudor, ushering a succession of crucial events that eventually led to the permanent union of Scotland and England. The first one was their great grandson King James VI uniting Scotland and England through the Union of Crowns in 1603 where both kingdoms had their crowns united under the same monarch. The last one was the Act of Settlement signed in 1701 by Queen Anne Stuart of Scotland and England, descendant of the marriage of King James IV and Margaret Tudor. The act merged both kingdoms' parliaments into one single parliament. In consequence, this put an end to Scotland and England being separate political entities and sealed their fate in a political marriage that would last to the present day in the 21st century.

The union of parliaments was the final episode of both Scotland and England's open quarrels and fights, set in motion almost 150 years before with the marriage of King James IV and Margaret Tudor. And although it is a true fact that King James VI was the one to be remembered as the great architect behind the setting in motion of the process of unification between Scotland and England, the merits first have to go to his great grandparents whose marriage was the one that paved the way for his future success as claimed by Larkin and Hughes:

... James [VI] achieved unification peacefully, as the result of an earlier marriage between the two kingdoms' ruling dynasties. The result was a union "not enforced by conquest and violence ... but naturally derived from ... right and title" that both nations freely recognized. (95)

Thus, it was King James VI's Anglo-Scottish mixed royal lineage that bound him to the English crown and helped him have access to the throne of England when time came in 1603. What James VI was then able to achieve was purely due to his pedigree inherited from his great grandfather, and more importantly from his English great grandmother. Owing to such trait, he thus succeeded to become the first Scottish king to ever rule over the English.

All in all, it is quite hard to deny the role played by royal marriages in making a change in the political arena. They were and still are means used in most cases to alleviate tensions between rivals and as history has proven, they certainly did end feuds and favour friendships. Their role as an important political protocol

adopted throughout the middle Ages by many monarchs made them essential to maintaining the stability and security of kingdoms. And given their impacts, their significant role cannot be neglected especially in shaping the political landscape of the time. For that, dynastic marriages were double-swords, they could 'injure' and cause clashes and wars, or they could 'heal' and strengthen bonds.

However, it is also worth noting that despite the positive contribution such events had in politics, they also impacted the latter negatively. One of the problems that emerged was securing heirs and the repercussions it had on the relations between sides in addition to the time such unions took before they could reach the expected goal of ending feuds or leading to unions. Furthermore, there were times when these unions led one side to interfere in the other one's affairs ending up into tensions to rise between both sides.

Finally, as another negative impact of dynastic marriages on peacekeeping between former foes, if, in the worst-case scenario, the marriage broke up, there were greater chances that this would bring clashes to the surface. This might also lead to wars as with the Anglo-Scottish wars of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century.

6 Conclusion

To conclude, royal marriages had been pivotal in medieval times owing to the subtle impact they had in favouring peace among states, and more particularly among warring nations. This had been the case between the long-term enemies, namely England and Scotland, where such unions did not only pave the way for peace between them, but also promoted both sides' national development. This article has shed light on such involvement by putting forward both the economic and cultural contributions such dynastic unions between England and Scotland had. It is therefore clear that royal unions between both counterparts had an immense effect on both sides where economy and culture had benefited from the foreign impulse brought by the other side which, not only did it add to the nation's national development, but also lifted up the nations in the international political arena.

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