

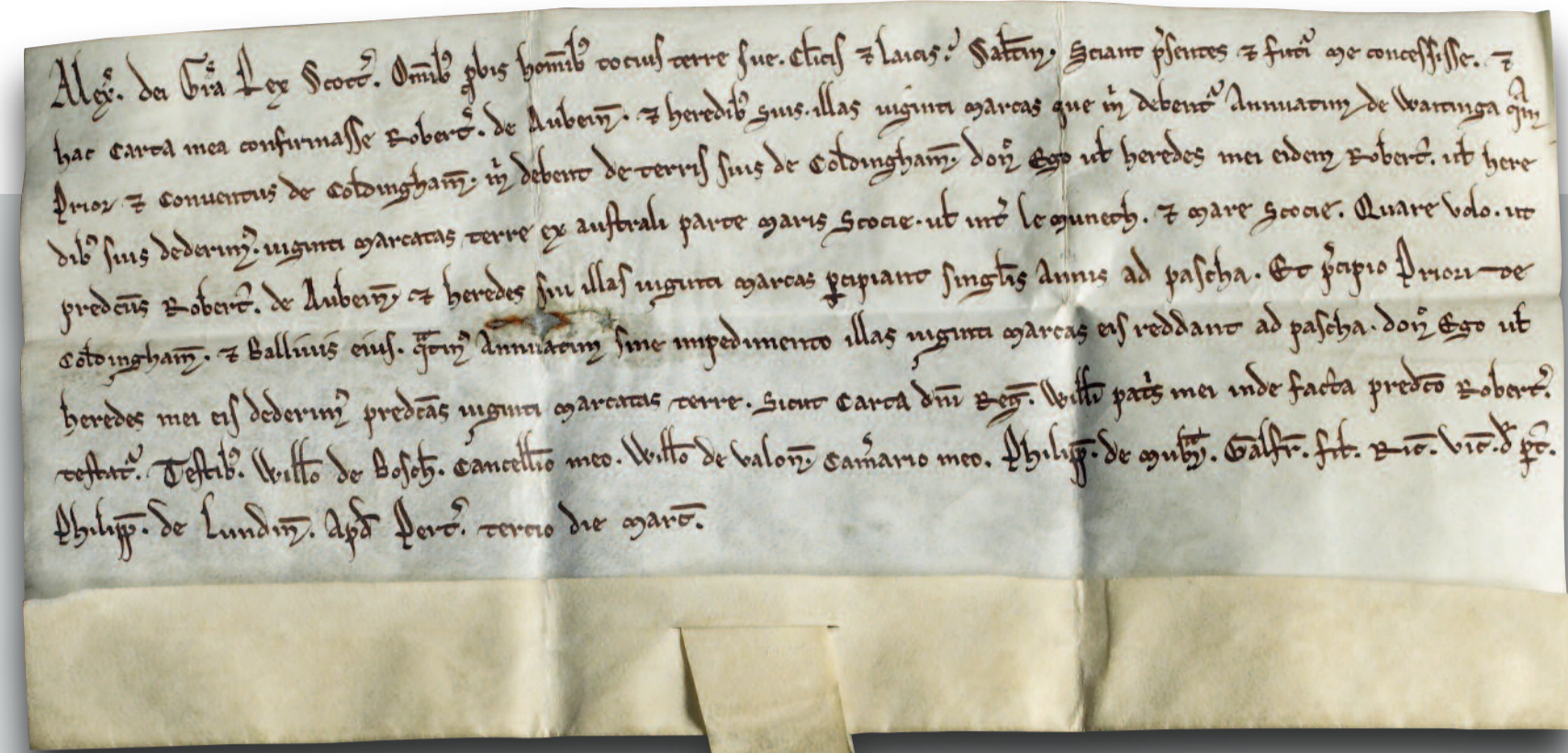
SCRIBES AND ROYAL AUTHORITY

Scotland's Charters 1100–1250

ROYAL GOVERNMENT

Government as we recognise it today first emerged in Western Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. As well as depending on the king in person, government was becoming increasingly institutional.

The emergence of government in medieval Scotland has recently been brought to light by Dr Alice Taylor of King's College London in her book *The Shape of the State in Medieval Scotland, 1124–1290* (published in 2016). She has revealed that it was a gradual process involving cooperation between the king and aristocracy. It was only by the 1180s that there was an expectation that law and government would follow a standard pattern throughout the kingdom.



“...only from the 1180s can we talk about the kingdom – and still only stretching from Dumfries in the west to Inverness in the north – having a uniform smattering of local administrative districts in the form of sheriffdoms.”

Alice Taylor, *The Shape of the State in Medieval Scotland, 1124–1290* (Oxford, 2016), p.210.



OUR RESEARCH

Rather than looking at the emergence of government as the development of institutions and the product of politics, our research focuses on understanding and interpreting these fundamental changes from the perspective of scribes between 1100 and 1250. Our main surviving sources are documents called ‘charters’ kept by monasteries. Most of these were written by monastic scribes. This project is investigating these scribes’ awareness of royal government by analysing the handwriting and prose of charters. This exhibition is an introduction to Scotland’s earliest charters and their scribes.

The digital tool created in this project for analysing charters can be accessed at www.modelsofauthority.ac.uk



This project has been funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and runs from 2014 to 2017. It involves collaboration between academics at the University of Glasgow, King's College London and the University of Cambridge.

To read more about the project and its findings, visit: www.modelsofauthority.ac.uk

PROJECT TEAM

Dauvit Broun, Principal Investigator (*University of Glasgow*)
Peter A. Stokes, Co-Investigator (*King's College London*)
Teresa Webber, Co-Investigator (*University of Cambridge*)
Alice Taylor, Co-Investigator (*King's College London*)
John Reuben Davies, Research Associate (*University of Glasgow*)
Stewart J. Brookes, Research Associate (*King's College London*)
Geoffroy Noël, Lead Analyst Developer (*King's College London*)
Joanna Tucker, Project PhD student (*University of Glasgow*)

Images reproduced with the kind permission of the Chapter of Durham Cathedral, His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch, the National Library of Scotland, and the National Records of Scotland.

