

Under the Hammer: Edward I and Scotland, 1286-1307

Fiona Watson

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War truly begins when the invading army, conquest complete, goes home. It is the relationship between the native population and those remaining behind as part of the new administration which holds the key to our understanding of not only the mechanisms of conquest, but also the fundamental elements of government desired by societies. Nowhere is this more convincingly demonstrated than in the attempted annexation of Scotland by Edward I of England, already conqueror of Wales. The Scotland of Wallace and Bruce nearly succumbed, having wrestled with contradictory desires for independence, and for stability and united government, for nearly a decade. The fact that, ultimately, she did not give in illustrates that patriotism does indeed play a central role in discussions of war and conquest. Fiona Watson examines the process of conquest and attempted colonisation of one medieval kingdom by another, concentrating on that most vital aspect of conquest: the maintenance of garrisons. She shows how the kingdom of Scotland was able to marshal its resources and create a coherent and cohesive national front to deal with a more powerful enemy. Under the Hammer provides a much clearer picture of medieval Scotland - its varying component parts; its sense of self, its strengths and weakness. Much of this will surprise.

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