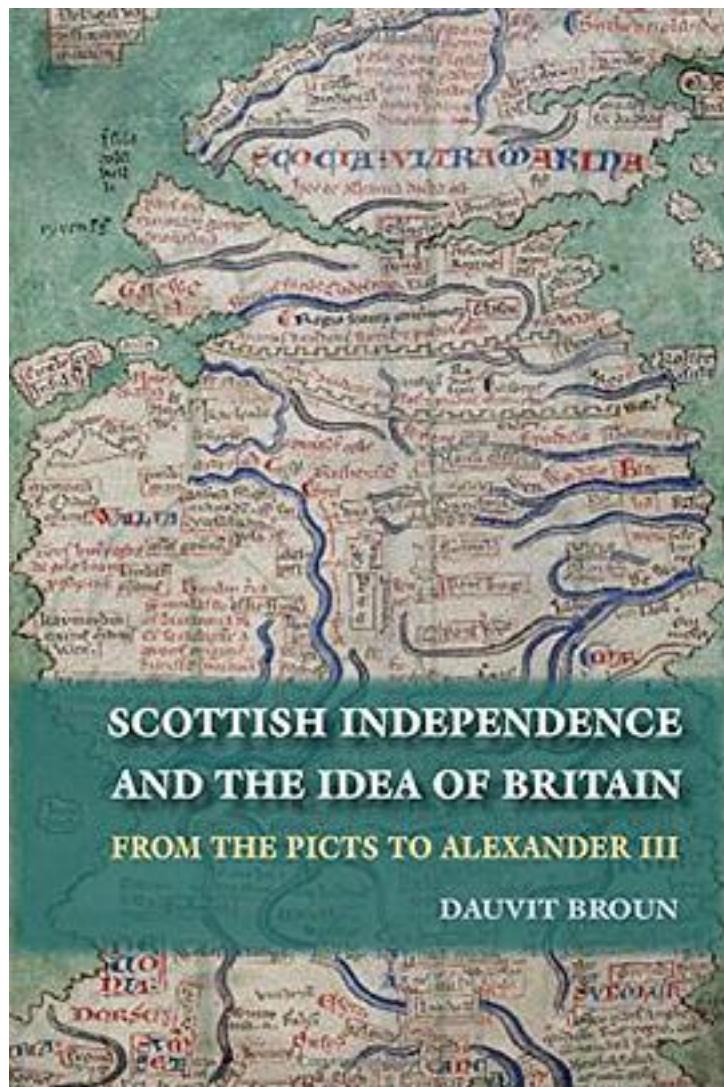


Scottish Independence and the Idea of Britain



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When did Scots first think of Scotland as an independent kingdom? What did they think was Scotland's place in Britain before the age of Wallace and Bruce? The answers argued in this book offer a fresh perspective on the question of Scotland's relationship with Britain. It challenges the standard concept of the Scots as an ancient nation whose British identity only emerged in the early modern era, but also provides new evidence that the idea of Scotland as an independent kingdom was older than the age of Wallace and Bruce. This leads to radical reassessments of a range of fundamental issues: the fate of Pictish identity and the origins of Alba, the status of Scottish kingship vis-a-vis England, the papacy's recognition of the independence of the Scottish Church, and the idea of Scottish freedom. It also sheds new light on the authorship of John of Fordun's chronicle, the first full-scale history of the Scots, and offers an historical explanation of the widespread English inability to distinguish between England and Britain. All this is placed in the wider context of ideas of ultimate secular power in Britain and Ireland and the construction of national histories in this period. The book concludes with a fresh perspective on the origin of national identity, and the medieval and specifically Scottish contribution to understanding what is often regarded as an exclusively modern phenomenon.

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