

‘the Kynge sent to the Qwene, by a  
Gentyllman, a grett tame Hart’  
Marriage, gift exchange, and politics:  
Margaret Tudor and James IV 1502–13<sup>1</sup>

Lorna G. Barrow

When John Younge, Somerset Herald, recorded the 1502 political marriage of Margaret Tudor, a young English princess, and James IV, a mature Scottish king, his intention was to have this momentous occasion remembered by future generations. The ceremonies and pageants associated with the royal wedding can be interpreted as a series of complex gift exchanges, including that of the princess as a supreme gift. Connected with the concept of the princess as a gift is the present of a hart the king sent her as she entered Edinburgh. Incorporating religious, mythical, historical, and literary views with anthropological ideas associated with that gift shifts the emphasis and the significance of the marriage onto the stage of sixteenth-century Anglo–Scottish politics.

The inherent disorder on both sides of the frontier between England and Scotland posed problems of control to both monarchs. Peace between the realms was a necessary step towards management of their respective borders so James IV and Henry VII negotiated periodically. This culminated on 24 January 1502 in a treaty known as ‘the Treaty of Perpetual Peace’. It was followed the next day by the marriage of the 12-year-old Margaret Tudor and the 29-year-old Scottish King on behalf of whom the earl of Bothwell stood proxy.<sup>2</sup> When John Younge, Somerset Herald, recorded this political marriage, his intention was to have this

<sup>1</sup> I wish to thank Dr Andrew Fitzmaurice, Associate Professor Sybil Jack, Dr Nicholas Eckstein, and my colleague Bronwyn Ledgard, who all read several drafts of this paper at various stages of its production.

<sup>2</sup> J. Leland, *Antiquarii De Rebus Britannicis Collectanea*, Vol. IV (London: 1774), re-published by Gregg International, Farnborough, 1970, p. 258.

momentous occasion remembered by future generations, and in particular, those of the English realm. He writes, ‘to th’ Entent to comfort the Herts of Age for to here it, and to gyffe Coraige to the yong to do thereafter in such Case to come...’.<sup>3</sup> Younge documents the ‘fyancell’s’, as the proxy wedding in England was known, Margaret’s procession through England into Scotland, her entrance and marriage in Edinburgh, and the feasts and spectacles that were part of celebrations in the days that followed.<sup>4</sup> Younge’s treatise is useful to scholars of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as it encompasses many aspects of royal weddings that are worth some attention.

One of the most interesting phenomena that surrounded early modern European royal weddings is the exchange of gifts between realms and indeed, the couple themselves. Engaging with Younge’s treatise, this article seeks to re-interpret Margaret’s marriage as a complex gift exchange in which the princess was herself a supreme gift. Connected with that concept is the present of a hart, the most majestic of stags, which James sent Margaret as she entered Edinburgh. Analysing the marriage from an anthropological perspective enables light to be shed on the complex relations of women, men, and politics, which prove to be some of the most impenetrable for the historian of the early modern era. The present of the hart was a demonstration of medieval chivalry. It should also be understood, within the context of gift exchange, as a significant political act. Incorporating religious, mythical, historical, and literary views with anthropological ideas associated with that ‘gift’ shifts the emphasis and the significance of the marriage onto the stage of sixteenth-century Anglo–Scottish politics.

Anthropologists and historians such as Marcel Mauss, Nicholas Thomas, C. A. Gregory, and Natalie Zemon Davis have long recognised the importance of the gift-exchange process, and their work illuminates some of the more intricate

<sup>3</sup> Leland, p. 265.

<sup>4</sup> Leland, p. 258.

details associated with the giving and receiving of a gift.<sup>5</sup> In the early sixteenth century, the realms of England and Scotland were both Catholic. The Church provided the theological structure that was pivotal to concepts of early modern gift exchange. As Natalie Zemon Davis points out, religious teaching espoused that ‘The Lord was a party to all gifts, as the original supplier of everything humans have, as a spectator to all gift transactions, and sometimes as a recipient’.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the Catholic gift system was one in which sacred things, that is the gifts of God, could not be sold. Both the theological instruction and the Canon law viewed the Church as an ‘institution in which gifts flow’.<sup>7</sup> Church doctrine encompassed all aspects of early modern life and in this light gift exchange became central to the way in which all manner of business was undertaken.

Gift exchange was an essential component of the patronage system, the mechanism for getting matters of state undertaken, which was exercised throughout the royal courts of Western Europe. Furthermore, gifts fostered allegiance to any given patron and ultimately, by extension, to the reigning

<sup>5</sup> Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2000); C. A. Gregory, *Gifts and Commodities* (London: Academic Press, 1982); M. Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Function of Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. I. Cunnison (London: Cohen and West, 1996); Nicholas Thomas, *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonisation in the Pacific* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991). See also Jane Fair Bestor, ‘Marriage Transactions in Renaissance Italy and Mauss’s Essay on the Gift’, *Past and Present*, 164 (1999), 6–46; P. Fumerton, ‘Exchanging Gifts: The Elizabethan Currency of Children and Poetry’, *English Literary History*, 55(2) (1986), 241–78; B. Malinowski, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific: An Account of Native Enterprise and Adventure in the Archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea* (London: Routledge, 1922); M. Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (Chicago: Aldine-Atherton, 1972); A. Weiner, *Women of Value, Men of Renown: New Perspectives in Trobriand Exchange* (Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1977); A. Weiner, *Inalienable Possessions: the Paradox of Keeping-While-Giving* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

<sup>6</sup> *The Gift*, p. 100.

<sup>7</sup> Davis, *The Gift*, p. 101.

monarch.<sup>8</sup> The protocol demanded that the donor should appear to give without anticipating a return, while the recipient was required to accept the gift gratefully and to feel a compulsion to ‘give in turn’.<sup>9</sup> The role of the queen consort was a critical part of all patronage systems.<sup>10</sup>

Exchange relations are the basis of all social, political, religious, and economic transactions. In this regard, Nicholas Thomas writes ‘exchange is always, in the first instance, a political process, one in which wider relationships are expressed and negotiated in a personal encounter’.<sup>11</sup> This Pacific Island anthropological paradigm is suggestive of the complexities underlying all aspects of gift exchange. In both public and private senses, the Tudor-Stuart marriage was primarily a political tool that would form closer associations between the realms of England and Scotland. Every gift held political, social, and religious connotations, and each was reciprocated with a counter-gift of the same or greater value.

<sup>8</sup> See Davis, *The Gift*; Paul E. J. Hammer, ‘Patronage at Court, Faction and the Earl of Essex’, in *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade*, ed. J. Guy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Paul E. J. Hammer, ‘Absolute and Sovereign Mistress of her Grace?’ Queen Elizabeth I and Her Favourites, 1581–1592’, in *The World of the Favourite*, ed. J. H. Elliot and L. W. B. Brockliss (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 38–53; A. L. Hernan, ‘The Language of Fidelity in Early Modern Europe’, *The Journal of Modern History*, 67(1) (1995), 1–24; Mack P. Holt, ‘Patterns of *Clientèle* and Economic Opportunity at Court during the Wars of Religion: The Household of François, Duke of Anjou’, *French Historical Studies*, 13(3) (1984), 305–22; Sharon Kettering, ‘Clientage During the French Wars of Religion’, *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 20(2) (1989), 220–29; Sharon Kettering, ‘Patronage Power of Early Modern French Noblewomen’, *The Historical Journal*, 32(4) (1989), 817–41; Sharon Kettering, ‘Gift Giving and Patronage in Early Modern France’, *French History*, 2 (1988), 131–51; K. B. Neuschel, *Word of Honour: Interpreting Noble Culture in Sixteenth-Century France* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989).

<sup>9</sup> Davis, *The Gift*, p. 71.

<sup>10</sup> See for example, Anne Crawford, ‘The King’s Burden?: the consequences of Royal Marriage in Fifteenth-Century England’, in *Patronage, the Crown and the Provinces in Later Medieval England*, ed. Ralph A. Griffiths (Gloucester: Alan Sutton Press, 1981), pp. 33–56; Barbara Harris, ‘Women and Politics in Early Tudor England’, *The Historical Journal*, 33(2) (1990), 25–81; Barbara Harris, *English Aristocratic Women, 1450–1550: Marriage and Family, Property and Careers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Kettering, ‘The Patronage Power of Early Modern French Noblewomen’, pp. 817–19; Retha M. Warnicke, *The Marrying of Anne of Cleves: Royal Protocol in Early Modern England* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

<sup>11</sup> Thomas, *Entangled Objects*, p. 7

It should be noted that the exchange of commodities entails a very different arrangement from that of gift exchange. C. A. Gregory suggests that the difference between commodities and gifts is that the former have prices and the latter have rank.<sup>12</sup> The exchange of commodities is based on items in a business transaction that should normally leave those involved in that transaction independent at the conclusion: ‘Commodities are classed as *alienable* objects and are transacted by aliens’.<sup>13</sup> A gift, however, is quite different. As Gregory states, gifts ‘are *inalienable* objects transacted by non-aliens’.<sup>14</sup> Hence, to exchange gifts of rank in royal marriages implied a desire either to have a more intimate knowledge of, and/or a closer relationship between, the parties involved. In this sense, princes were not usually aliens to each other; they often had existing ties of kinship or marriage and at the very least, political connections. In most cases, gifts consolidated a pre-existing relationship.

There are two sorts of gift exchange – one where one party outranks the other and one where both are of equal rank. In the case of the Tudor–Stuart relationship, both James IV and Henry VII were kings and therefore of equivalent rank. In this exchange, the donor acquires superiority over the receiver and therefore a relationship of indebtedness is established. This idea underlies the early modern European practice of marrying men and women of royal bloodlines of one realm into that of another, thereby preserving their regal status. This precedent was essentially a gift exchange that was supposed to foster allegiances between the two participating kingdoms. F. E. Williams suggests that ‘the exchange of girls in marriage falls into line with ... other exchanges. The unmarried girl is, so to speak, the supreme gift.’<sup>15</sup> This is true for the royal marriages of early modern Europe where it was usually men who organized their children, particularly daughters, into marriages that suited their own political, financial, social, or dynastic ends. A female can be viewed as a supreme gift for two reasons: she is given, for the most part, firstly as an integral component of a political manoeuvre, and secondly, because she is the vessel through which the ruling house to which she is given is to be perpetuated. As a usurping monarch, Henry VII was particularly concerned to secure his dynasty by making suitable marriages for

<sup>12</sup> Gregory, *Gifts and Commodities*, p. 109.

<sup>13</sup> Gregory, p. 43. Note: An *alien* in this context is simply somebody who usually has no other relationship with the person they conduct business with outside of that transaction itself.

<sup>14</sup> Gregory, p. 43.

<sup>15</sup> F. E. Williams, *Papuans of the Trans-Fly* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1936), p.168, cited in Gregory, *Gifts and Commodities*, p. 63.

his children. Arthur received Catherine of Aragon as his wife, and Margaret was given to James IV. Females most often left their countries of birth at quite young ages to fulfil marriage obligations, whereas males usually inherited lands and titles in their homelands. This was certainly the case with Margaret Tudor, who was indeed the highest ranking or the supreme gift that England was able to offer at this time. Significantly, the gift is the physical object that symbolizes the inherent human emotions associated with the social, economic, political, and personal aspects of its exchange and as such, as Natalie Zemon Davis suggests, gift exchange ‘persists as an essential relational mode, a repertoire of behaviour, a register with its own rules, language, etiquette, and gestures. The gift may expand or shrink somewhat in a given period, but it never loses significance’.<sup>16</sup> Margaret Tudor was, by the time of her formal marriage in 1503, second in line to the English throne after Prince Henry.<sup>17</sup> If he died without issue, and Margaret became Queen of England, Scotland would have received not only Margaret as a supreme gift, but the kingdom of England as well.

Virtually all royal marriages were associated with political manoeuvres. Marriages such as that of Margaret and James were the outward expression of the inherent obligations between two kingdoms when a treaty or alliance was signed. While a wedding ceremony appears to be a formal occasion in which each party is seemingly giving themselves freely, this is not always the case with royal weddings. As Marcel Mauss states:

*prestations* in theory appear voluntary, disinterested and spontaneous but are in fact obligatory and interested. The form usually taken is that of the gift generously offered; but the accompanying behaviour is formal pretence and social deception, while the transaction itself is based on obligation and economic self-interest.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Davis, *The Gift*, p. 9.

<sup>17</sup> A. F. Pollard, *The Reign of Henry VII from Contemporary Sources*, Vol. 1 (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1913), p. 231. Margaret’s mother died in childbirth on 11 February 1502. Margaret’s position also depended on her father not remarrying and producing further male heirs. Prince Arthur died in April 1501.

<sup>18</sup> M. Mauss, *The Gift*, p. 1; Note: italics are mine. There is no equivalent word for *prestation* in English. Ian Cunnison, who translated *The Gift* from French into English, states in the preface that *prestation* ‘is used to mean any thing or series of things given freely or out of obligation as a gift or in exchange; and includes services, entertainments etc., as well as material things’, p. xi; See also, *The Kula: New Perspectives on Massim Exchange*, ed. J. W. Leach and E. Leach (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Annette B. Weiner, *Women of Value, Men of Renown*.

The presents given at the Tudor-Stuart royal wedding, including both Margaret and the ‘hart’, were most certainly accompanied by varying degrees of pomp and ceremony, which on the surface appeared to be lighthearted but were, in fact, pregnant with great political, dynastic, and religious meaning.

Although this marriage was arranged by royal men for their own political and dynastic purposes, Margaret’s mother, Elizabeth of York, and paternal grandmother, Margaret Beaufort, the countess of Richmond, wielded their influence when a suitable time for Margaret’s procession to Scotland was being arranged. She was to be allowed to remain in England until 1 September 1503, by which time she would be approaching her fourteenth birthday.<sup>19</sup> These royal matriarchs were quite insistent on this point.<sup>20</sup> Henry VII told the Spanish ambassador when the possibility of marriage between the King of Scots and his daughter was initially proposed that there were difficulties:

besides my own doubts, the Queen and my mother are very much against this marriage. They say that if the marriage was concluded we should be obliged to send the princess directly to Scotland, in which case they fear the King of Scots would not wait, but injure her, and endanger her health.<sup>21</sup>

The political and maternal concerns of the Queen and Countess were no doubt warranted after rumours of James’s amorous liaisons and illegitimate children reached England. Don Pedro De Ayala, the Spanish ambassador, reported on his visit to Scotland in July 1498, that James ‘was keeping a lady of rank with

<sup>19</sup> *The Exchequer Rolls of Scotland*, Vol. XII 1502–1507, (*ERS*), ed. G. Burnett (Edinburgh: H. M. General Register House, 1889), p. li.

<sup>20</sup> Maria Perry, *Sisters to the King: the Tumultuous Lives of Henry VIII’s Sisters – Margaret of Scotland and Mary of France* (London: André Deutsch, 1998), pp. 10–11. It was rumoured that the duchess’s womb had been ‘damaged’ while giving birth to Henry VII, when she was just 12 years old, whereby she was ‘spoiled’ and could have no more children. This is a disastrous state of affairs for a queen whose primary task was to provide heirs to perpetuate the reigning dynasty. When one considers her very young age it is quite plausible that her reproductive organs were far from fully developed, and therefore at risk of irreparable damage.

<sup>21</sup> *Calendar of Letters, Despatches, and State Papers Relating to the Negotiations Between England and Spain, Preserved in the Archives at Simancas and Elsewhere*, (*CSPSp*), Vol. 1, ed. G. A. Bergenroth, (London, 1862), reprinted Kraus-Thomson Organization, Liechtenstein, 1969, p. 176

great state in a castle. He visited her from time to time ... He did the same with another lady by whom he had a son'.<sup>22</sup>

It was common knowledge that James had a mistress by the name of Margaret Drummond, by whom he had a daughter. This lady died mysteriously, along with her sisters, presumed poisoned, after a meal at Drummond Castle.<sup>23</sup> Margaret Tudor's female relatives must have had more than a few concerns regarding the effectiveness of the princess as a gift. Nevertheless, the wedding went ahead after a papal dispensation for the marriage was obtained by Henry VII in 1500, as Margaret and James IV were distant cousins.<sup>24</sup>

Celebrations began in England following the proxy marriage in January 1502, and finally concluded 19 months later in Edinburgh in August 1503, when Margaret made her entry as Queen of Scotland.<sup>25</sup> Marriage festivities in both England and Scotland were accompanied by immense displays of pageantry and chivalry that included masques, plays, tournaments, music, religious ceremonies, feasting, and hunting rituals. For James IV and Henry VII, the wedding celebrations were a display of their individual grandeur, as well as their willingness to abide by the new 'Treaty of Perpetual Peace'.<sup>26</sup>

The marriage marked the peace, at least for a time, between the two old enemies of Scotland and England. It was a marriage that signified change. This change was to alter the history of Anglo-Scottish relations profoundly for it provided the ancestry which would in future bring about the unification of the Scottish and English thrones at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Margaret Tudor's marriages initially to James IV, and secondly, as the widowed queen, to Archibald Douglas, sixth earl of Angus, provided two surviving

<sup>22</sup> *CSPSp*, p. 170.

<sup>23</sup> Whether these deaths/murders were as a result of worried nobles who wanted the alliance between Scotland and England to work and therefore needed to remove the lady whose affections James held dear, or the work of the Kennedy family, whose kinswoman Lady Janet, daughter of John, Lord Kennedy, had borne the amorous king a son, is still unknown. P. Tytler, *Tytler's History of Scotland, a New and Greatly Enlarged Edition*, Vol. III, ed. Rev. Professor Eadie (London: William Mackenzie, 1873-77), pp. 124-25.

<sup>24</sup> *ERS*, Vol. XII, pp. xlix, l. Margaret's great-grandfather John, Duke of Somerset, was the brother of Joan Beaufort who had married James I of Scotland.

<sup>25</sup> Note: Margaret's coronation was performed in March 1504, the time of parliament's first meeting following the formal marriage. Her morrowing gift of the castle and lands of Kilmarnock was confirmed at this time also. See *Lives of the Princesses of England*, Vol. IV, ed., Mary Anne Everett-Green (London: Colburn & Co., 1852), pp. 108-09.

<sup>26</sup> *ERS*, pp. l-liv.

children, James V, who was James IV's son, and Margaret Douglas, Archibald Angus's daughter, the future Countess of Lennox. James V's daughter, Mary Queen of Scots, married her cousin, the countess's son Henry, Lord Darnley, from which union came James VI of Scotland. He inherited Elizabeth I's throne in 1603.<sup>27</sup>

Much of the display that surrounded James IV's introductions to Margaret Tudor and her entrance to the city of Edinburgh was marked by behaviour peculiar to hunting. Both the Stuart and Tudor families were familiar with the language of the hunt. Somerset Herald writes that Margaret had partaken of the sport while en route to Scotland at the earl of Northumberland's park at Alnewyk 'where she killed a buck with her bow'.<sup>28</sup> Further on at Berwick, the captain of the castle provided 'to the pleasur of the said Qwene, gyffen Courses of chasse within the said Town, with other Sports of bayrs and of Doggs togeder'.<sup>29</sup> Embedded in the sport of hunting is the metaphorical conception of love as a hunt. Much of the literature of the late medieval and early modern period promoted this particular idea. Reading matter such as Malory's Arthurian legends, Chaucer's *The Book of the Duchess*, and French allegorical poems, would have been familiar to Margaret, James, and their contemporaries.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> J. Guy, *Tudor England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. xiv; Note: this is a much-summarized account of the lineage of the Stuart and Tudor dynasties. It is meant only to indicate the actual outcome of Margaret and James's union. Suffice it to say that the reigns of both kingdoms were fraught with dynastic and political difficulties that are beyond the scope of this paper. For overviews of these difficulties see for example, S. Brigden, *New Worlds, Lost Worlds: The Rule of the Tudors 1485–1603* (London: Penguin, 2000); G. R. Elton, *England Under the Tudors*, 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 1991); Guy, *Tudor England*; M. Lynch, *Scotland: A New History* (London: Pimlico, 1998); N. Macdougall, *James IV* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1989); J. D Mackie, *A History of Scotland*, 2nd ed. (London: Penguin, 1991).

<sup>28</sup> Leland, *Collectanea*, p. 278.

<sup>29</sup> Leland, p. 279.

<sup>30</sup> See *Caxton's Malory. A New Edition of Sir Thomas Malory's Le Morte Darthur based on the Pierpont Morgan Copy of Caxton's edition of 1485*, ed. James W. Spisak, based on work begun by William Mathews (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983); Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Book of the Duchess*, ed. Helen Phillips (New Elvet: Durham and St. Andrews Medieval Texts, c.1982); For French Allegorical poems, see Marcelle Thiébaux, 'An Unpublished Allegory of the Hunt of Love: *'Le Dis Dou Cerf Amoreus'*', *Studies in Philology*, 62(4) (1965), 531–45; Marcelle Thiébaux, *The Stag of Love: the Chase in Medieval Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), especially Chapter 4, 'Medieval Allegories of the Love Chase'.

James first appeared to Margaret on the second evening after her arrival in Scotland.<sup>31</sup> This was an unscheduled visit, but not entirely unexpected as it followed the accepted rule of courtship in the early modern era. The King, eager to see his young bride, arrived in true chivalric fashion, leading a mock hunting party of some 60 mounted nobles who included his brother, the Archbishop of St Andrews, the Bishop of Caithness, the earls of Huntly, Argyle and Lennox, and the King's cousin, Lord Hamilton.<sup>32</sup> James was armed with a lyre strung across his back in place of the traditional bow.<sup>33</sup> He had come gently at first to pursue his virgin quarry, but his chase became more intense in the couple of days leading up to the wedding itself. The second time the King came to visit Margaret, Somerset Herald tells us that 'the Kyng flyng as a Bird that syks hyr Pray, tuke other Waye, and cam prively to the said Castell'.<sup>34</sup> He left the castle that evening in much the same manner as he arrived. The King leapt onto his courser without putting his feet in the stirrups – a feat required of knighthood – and galloped off at a tremendous pace, leaving those behind to catch up, much like the hunter who has sight of his quarry.<sup>35</sup> But like any good deer stalker, whenever he got within the close range of his prize, he dismounted and approached her with the greatest of caution and respect, for he always greeted her with bare head and very courteously. With impeccable manners, gifts, and a love of pleasurable pursuits that included music, dancing, and feasting, James artfully, and with practised skill, gently lured Margaret into his confidence and realm.<sup>36</sup> The hart, a lover's gift, not only for the pun on its name, but also for its magical healing qualities and religious and literary significance, was the gift of choice that James sent to Margaret.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Leland, *Collectanea*, p. 283.

<sup>32</sup> Leland, p. 283.

<sup>33</sup> Leland, p. 283.

<sup>34</sup> Leland, p. 284.

<sup>35</sup> Leland, p. 284.

<sup>36</sup> Leland, pp. 283–87.

<sup>37</sup> *The Book of Beasts*, trans. and ed. T. H. White, from *A Latin Bestiary of the Twelfth Century*, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1954), pp. 37–38. Venison was supposed to promote longevity and make one immune to fevers. When areas of the heart (known as a cartilaginous membrane, gristle, or heart bone) were mixed with wines and spices, it was thought to be beneficial to pregnant and labouring women. Following a dinner of snake, a hart was said to shed its skin and its old age with it; it could renew its youth. See also, Marcelle Thiébaux, 'The medieval Chase', *Speculum*, 52(2) (1967), 273–74. The heart bone, sometimes known as the *croix de cerf*, was also thought to assume the shape of the cross on 3 May, Holyrood day.

The stag, and in particular the ‘hart’, was a much written about, revered and symbolized animal in early modern Europe. Religious significance was attributed to it because the number of tines on its antlers must be at least ten, a reminder of the Ten Commandments and, it was said to have an ability to repel snakes and their venom, which is synonymous with being able to conquer Satan.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, medieval commentators and writers symbolized penitent man with the thirsting hart demonstrated in the psalms: ‘As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee O God’.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, a popular medieval legend of the conversion of the virtuous Roman soldier Placidus (St Eustace, the patron saint of hunting) while out hunting, is associated with his vision of the crucified Christ set between the antlers of a hart. Placidus watched in wonder as the sign of the cross appeared brighter than the sun and then transformed into an equally brilliant image of Christ on the cross standing between the antlers of the hart. The hart then spoke to him in a man’s voice:

Ah Placidus, why do you persecute me? It is for your sake that I have come now, to reveal myself to you through this animal. I am the Christ whom you worship unwittingly; the alms which you give to the poor lie before me.<sup>40</sup>

Placidus was converted and baptized in due course. Like the woodland hunter tracking and snaring his game, and the heavenly Christ hunting and capturing his lost souls, so too was James IV, an earthly king, out to hunt and trap his bride. Moreover, virtuosity and faith were not only important aspects of marriage but also of political treaties between different kingdoms.

The image of the hart, particularly the white hart, is significant in Arthurian tales. In Book Seventeen of ‘The Achieving of the Grail Quest’, Sir Galahad, Sir Bors, and Sir Percival followed a white hart in the company of four lions into the chapel of a hermitage.<sup>41</sup> While mass was in progress, they saw the hart turn into a man, sit upon the altar in a rich seat, and the four lions transform into the evangelists’ symbols of a man, lion, eagle, and an ox. They took the

<sup>38</sup> From Aelfric, *Lives of the Saints*, Vol. II, ed. W. W. Skeat (London: Early English Texts Society, 1881–1900), p. 192, cited in John Cummins, *The Hound and the Hawk: the Art of Medieval Hunting* (London, 1998), pp. 68–69.

<sup>39</sup> Psalm 42:1.

<sup>40</sup> J. Cummins, *The Hound and the Hawk*, p. 69–70.

<sup>41</sup> Spisak, *Caxton’s Malory*, p. 490.

seat of the hart, which went out through the glass window and ‘there was nothyng perysshed nor broken’. They then heard a voice say ‘in suche a maner entred the Sone of God in the wombe of a mayd, Mary, whos vyrgynyty ne was perysshed ne hurte’.<sup>42</sup>

Theatrical displays surrounded the wedding of James IV and Margaret Tudor. One of the pageants that was performed in the streets of Edinburgh as Margaret made her entrance was that of the ‘Salutation and Marriage of the Virgin’.<sup>43</sup> This was a popular late-medieval pageantry theme, which underlined Margaret’s value. She was likened to the Virgin Mary in that her untainted womb would provide the next heir to the throne of Scotland; she was in a sense the mother of the saviour of the Scottish monarchy. Margaret hailed from the land of Scotland’s oldest enemy and, therefore, was symbolically seen as the conveyer of peace between the two nations. In this instance, she is both the bearer of a gift and the gift itself.

Also based on Malory’s Arthurian tales, much in vogue at that time, was the event of the hart loosed at the entrance to the town of Edinburgh, chased by a greyhound. At the legendary wedding of Arthur and Guinevere, proceedings were enlivened when

...ther came rennyng in a whyte hert into the halle, and a whyte brachet [hound] next hym, and xxx couple of black rennyng houndes cam after with a greete crye, and the hert went aboute the Table Round. As he went by other boordes, the whyte brachet boot hym by the buttok and pulled oute a pees, wherethurgh the herte lepte a grete lepe and ouerthrewe a knyght ...<sup>44</sup>

It was quite likely that the hart of the Edinburgh pageant was allowed to escape in order to establish a symbolic connection with the Arthurian myth.

As Margaret, accompanied by a huge entourage, made her first and most important entrance into the city of Edinburgh as the new Queen of Scotland, ‘the Kynge sent to the Qwene, by a Gentyman, a grett tame Hart for to have a Corse’,<sup>45</sup> which is an example of courtly love. Allegorically speaking, James represented the hunter, which is love, Margaret the pursued, which is the hart,

<sup>42</sup> Spisak, p. 491.

<sup>43</sup> Leland, *Collectanea*, p. 289.

<sup>44</sup> Spisak, *Caxton’s Malory*, p. 83.

<sup>45</sup> Leland, *Collectanea*, p. 286.

and the greyhound that chased it could be seen as love.<sup>46</sup> However, the earl of Surrey, leader of the English contingent, realizing that the King was close by, suggested that the hart should be kept until the bridal couple could pursue it together. When the King did arrive, he did so at his usual energetic pace. Somerset Herald wrote that he was ‘mounted on a Bay Horse, rennyng as he wolde renne after the Hayre’.<sup>47</sup> Quite clearly, the pursuit of Margaret is still in motion. Later that day, about half a mile from Edinburgh, the king had the hart released and ‘put a Greyhond after hym’ that made a fair chase, but the hart ‘wanne the town’ and was allowed to go to its rest.<sup>48</sup> This is a symbolic act in two ways. Firstly, Margaret was that hart. As the hart was a gift to Margaret, so too was she a gift not only to the Scottish king but also to the Scottish people themselves. If Margaret could win the town as the hart did, then she would be accepted as the precious gift that was intended. The reciprocation of the people to receive her as one of their own, that is, as their queen, would support the alliance that had been ratified the day before her proxy wedding in January 1502. Secondly, on a more romantic note, it was not yet time for the capturing and slaying of the hart by both the King and Queen. The final submission of the hart is analogous with the consummation of the final and imminent marriage service. As this had yet to take place, then metaphorically the hunt was still in progress and could not be honourably terminated at this time. The capturing and killing of the hart were synonymous with the absolute submission of a woman to her lover. The hart was the gift to Margaret, and following the formal marriage ceremony she would reciprocate as the honourable lady she had been portrayed to be, by relinquishing to James her most precious gift, her virginity.<sup>49</sup>

It is significant that James had exchanged his magnificent courser for a lady’s horse, an animal less imposing, of a more humble nature, and of a quieter temperament, so that Margaret might ride with him not only on the hunt, but also into the town of Edinburgh itself.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, the King and Queen rode

<sup>46</sup> See also, Marcelle Thiébaux, *The Stag of Love: The Chase in Medieval Literature*, pp. 144–46. See also the picture on p. 150 of this text. This illustration depicts the hart with a woman’s face. This illumination is from *Li Dis Dou Cerf Amoreus*, ms. 25566, fol. 220 v (o). *Bibliothèque Nationale, Département des Manuscrits*.

<sup>47</sup> Leland, p. 287.

<sup>48</sup> Leland, p. 289.

<sup>49</sup> Cummins, *The Hound and the Hawk*, pp. 79–81.

<sup>50</sup> Leland, *Collectanea*, p. 287.

together in quest of the hart because their hunting was representative of their chase for fidelity. A fifteenth-century tapestry – part of the Burrell Collection – depicts a courtly hunter with his lady behind him on a small horse, galloping after a hart that appears to be heading for nets. The words that accompany the scene read ‘I hunt for fidelity; if I find that, a more pleasant time I will never have lived’.<sup>51</sup> Although the hart pursued by the Scottish royal couple was not trapped by nets, it might have been easily caught if they chose, as it was tame. This moral attribute of fidelity was a most important ingredient in any marriage, but more so in a royal marriage where the ruling dynasty was at stake, and especially in light of the colourful reputation that James had acquired as a result of his previous amorous intrigues. William Dunbar hints at this in his poem ‘The Thrissill and the Rois’ (thought to have been created for the occasion of this royal wedding), particularly in lines 141–42. The poem suggests that James IV should not hold another flower in such high esteem as the fresh rose of ‘cullor reid and quhyt’, namely Margaret Tudor.<sup>52</sup> Although it was common for kings to keep mistresses, and an act of treason to commit adultery with a queen, it was nevertheless desirable, at least at the outset of a marriage, to pursue the ideal of fidelity. Furthermore, for the ‘Treaty of Perpetual Peace’ to remain viable, a high degree of fidelity was required between the realms. Thus, in a metaphorical sense, Margaret and James are representative of those realms and the ‘hart’ they pursued is synonymous with the ‘treaty’.

Ideals of fidelity were reinforced by aspects of faith. These were displayed initially in the tournament that took place on the royal entry into Edinburgh. As Margaret and James approached Edinburgh, riding together on their palfrey, they came across a pavilion from which issued a knight in full regalia with his lady riding behind him. A second knight appeared and abducted the lady and a chase ensued. The issue of their conflict as stated by the wronged knight was the power ‘of outrage to break secure bonds’.<sup>53</sup> The bonds at risk were those of faith, for the caller cried, ‘syre he has taken from me my lady paramour, whereof I was insurte of her by faith’.<sup>54</sup> At stake here were matters of honour. Faith was worth fighting for, just as Margaret’s love was worth hunting for.

<sup>51</sup> Cummins, *The Hound and the Hawk*, p. 79.

<sup>52</sup> William Dunbar, ‘The Thrissill and the Rois’, in *The Makars: The Poems of Henryson, Dunbar and Douglas*, ed. J. A. Tasioulas (London: Canongate, 1999), p. 276.

<sup>53</sup> Leland, p. 288.

<sup>54</sup> Leland, p. 288.

These ideas were melded together in chivalric code, for it was not land and riches for which knights risked their lives, but the love and faith of a woman. This tournament reasserted the vulnerability of faith and indeed the efforts needed to sustain it. Symbolically, this important aspect of marriage was also a necessary element of the treaty between the two realms of Scotland and England. The spectacle itself was a stark reminder that faith cannot be taken for granted; just as the faith of a woman needed to be won, so too did the faith between kingdoms, albeit through marriage. Significantly, it was the king who brought order and Margaret who called for peace.<sup>55</sup> This chivalric display in Scotland, like that which was held in England, expressed aspects of marriage and war as elements of sovereign power in which the preservation of the bonds that secured ‘faith’ were essential.<sup>56</sup>

Following the marriage, Somerset Herald tells us that ‘after supper, the king had the queen apart and they went together’.<sup>57</sup> As the celebratory fires burned in the streets of Edinburgh, the hart that embodied love, fidelity, faith, virtue, peace, and hope not only in the marriage, but in the treaty between the two kingdoms of England and Scotland, submitted to the hunter. The marriage was consummated, and symbolically, as the rose and thistle became entwined, the ‘Treaty of Perpetual Peace’ became a reality, at least for a time.

Margaret performed every aspect of the supreme gift that she was supposed to be, but as Somerset Herald’s treatise reminds us, the Queen was indeed very youthful. As the English party departed homeward, the young Margaret had to face the realities of being a queen. Her husband was a king and although he was always mindful of her, the time for acting out courtly love games became secondary to matters of state. Margaret slowly adjusted to the Scottish court with its own peculiarities. A letter to her father reveals that she was insecure, scared, and homesick.<sup>58</sup> She entrusted not only the keeping of the letter, but her

<sup>55</sup> Leland, *Collectanea*, p. 288

<sup>56</sup> Louise Olga Fradenburg, *City, Marriage, Tournament: Arts of Rule in Late Medieval Scotland* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), pp. 98–110. Tournaments were very much a part of the English proceedings in which honourable knights, in chivalric fashion, clad in finely wrought armour, mounted on beautifully caparisoned warhorses and bearing lances of tremendous proportions, jostled on Margaret’s behalf. The display not only attested to her honour but to her beauty as well, *Collectanea*, 163–64.

<sup>57</sup> Leland, p. 296.

<sup>58</sup> A. F. Pollard, *The Reign of Henry VII from Contemporary Sources*, Vol. 1 (London, 1913), letter 166, pp. 232–33. (Ellis’s Original Letters 1st series, i, 41)

real thoughts, to a noblewoman returning to England. Margaret wrote ‘and give credence to thys good lady the bearer her off, for I have showde hyr mor off my mynd than I will wryght at thys tyme’.<sup>59</sup> Margaret also worried that the Earl of Surrey spent too much time with the King and hoped that it would be

for my poor hartts ease in tyme to come. They canlot my Chambrlayne to them, whych I am sur wull speke better for my part than any of them that ben of consell. And iff he speke any thyng for my cause my lord of Surrey hath such words unto hym that he dar speke no furder.<sup>60</sup>

Margaret finished the letter with a ‘wishse I would I wer wyt your Grace now, and many tymes mor, wan I wold andsyre’.<sup>61</sup> Nevertheless, James attempted to ease her insecurities by showering her with gifts. A few days after the marriage he presented her with jewellery that consisted of a heart of gold, an image of the virgin, three little rings of gold, and a fourth ring decorated with a ruby. He also gave her a crimson velvet robe and a velvet riding dress. Margaret provided a counter gift, a purse that she had embroidered herself.<sup>62</sup> As Patrick Geary reminds us, the central tenet of gift-giving was not ‘the acquisition of commodities but the establishment of bonds between giver and receiver, bonds that had to be reaffirmed at some point by counter gift’.<sup>63</sup>

Margaret’s continued role as a supreme gift was not without its trials. Firstly, James and the Scottish people, in return for their gifts, attentions and indeed, for the title of Queen, expected Margaret to produce a healthy male heir to the throne. William Dunbar alludes to this in his poem ‘Gladethe, Thoue Queyne of Scottis Regioun’, where he writes, ‘Gret Gode us graunt that we have lang desirite—/ A plaunt to spring of thi successioun’.<sup>64</sup> Margaret suffered several

<sup>59</sup> Pollard, p. 233.

<sup>60</sup> Pollard, p. 233.

<sup>61</sup> Pollard, p. 233.

<sup>62</sup> Everett-Green, *Princesses of England*, pp. 100–01.

<sup>63</sup> P. Geary, ‘Sacred commodities: the circulation of medieval relics’, in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. A. Appadurai (London: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 169–91 (p. 173).

<sup>64</sup> ‘Gladethe, Thoue Queyne of Scottis Regioun’, ll. 29–30. in Tasioulas, *The Makars*, pp. 279–80.

disappointments<sup>65</sup> before her son James V was born in April 1512, nine years after the marriage.<sup>66</sup>

Margaret's second great concern was her finances. Her income as agreed upon in her marriage contract was, for several reasons including her very youthfulness and the poverty of the Scottish kingdom, in the hands of her husband.<sup>67</sup> Coupled with this financial aspect was her inexperience in Scottish politics. Thus, unlike other queens of her time, Margaret was unable to establish herself as a politically powerful patron with the ever-important ear of the king. This was particularly so in matters relating to England. Her path as the new Queen of Scotland was to be, at the very best, difficult. As Margaret matured and became more politically aware, she did her best to support the interests of both Scotland and England in their endeavour for peace. However, for reasons beyond her control, the bonds that secured the 'Treaty of Perpetual Peace', those which Margaret and the gift of the hart embodied, became strained. Over the next ten years (1503–13), many political and domestic incidents revived the animosity between the two realms, including a prospective war by Henry VII on the Duke of Guelders, and a debacle over the death of the Scottish admiral, Andrew Barton. The renewal of Scottish ties with France further inflamed Anglo-Scottish relations, which culminated in the battle of Flodden in August 1513. The English slaughtered thousands of Scots, including the Scottish King, Margaret's husband.

English antagonism directed at the duke of Guelders in 1506 was abated by the intervention of James IV. As a gift never loses its significance, James called upon aspects of honour associated with two royal bride gifts, one past and one present, to appeal to Henry VII. His grandmother, Mary of Guelders, wife of James II, had herself been a supreme gift to the realm of Scotland. The political and dynastic alliances that had been secured through that marriage in the mid-fifteenth century were still significant enough for James to write in that vein to Henry:

<sup>65</sup> Margaret's first child was not born until she was 18. This was a boy named James, who died at one year of age. This death was followed by the birth of a daughter in 1508, who died almost straight away. Then a boy, Arthur, was born in 1509 and died nine months later. Everett-Green, ed., *Princesses of England*, pp. 123–30, 136–38.

<sup>66</sup> Everett-Green, p. 148.

<sup>67</sup> Everett-Green, pp. 62–63.

If you, unmindful of any ties of blood, affinity, and alliance with him, should endeavour to prostrate my cousin, the Duke of Guelders, or should take up arms against him, and contrary to law and justice, expel him from his paternal seat, I, who believe that in war justice will prevail over wrong, shall be sorrowfully compelled to esteem you, my illustrious father, as an enemy...<sup>68</sup>

Furthermore, James used Margaret's position not only as Queen of Scotland and a princess of England, but also as the human expression of the friendship between the two realms, to drive home his point to Henry:

Moreover, public safety admonishes that no offence shall be committed against a confirmed friendship; and if it happen otherwise, your paternal love may judge into what sorrow our dearest wife, your sweetest daughter, will be plunged.<sup>69</sup>

Regardless of whether it was James's letter that motivated Henry VII to abandon the scheme, the fact remains that royal women as supreme gifts retained their significance in matters of foreign policy, both while alive and even decades after their deaths.<sup>70</sup>

Matters became more complicated when Henry VII died at Richmond Palace on 22 April 1509.<sup>71</sup> Henry VIII succeeded to the throne and although the Treaty of Perpetual Peace was renewed,<sup>72</sup> he was indeed a very different style of king from his father. John Lesley, Bishop of Ross, described him as 'being ane young man left be his fader with greit welth and riches', who 'wes varray desierous to haif weiris quhairin he mycht exerce his youthed, thinking thairby to [dilate] his dominions'.<sup>73</sup> Henry VIII's activities on the European political stage continually jeopardized the 'treaty' and his sister's position as a supreme gift along with it.

<sup>68</sup> Everett-Green, p. 131.

<sup>69</sup> Everett-Green, p. 131.

<sup>70</sup> Tytler, *Tytler's History of Scotland*, Vol. IV, pp. 130–31.

<sup>71</sup> J. Lesley, *The History of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Bannatyne Club, 1830), p. 79.

<sup>71</sup> Tytler, Vol. IV, pp. 132–33.

<sup>72</sup> Lesley, p. 83.

<sup>73</sup> Lesley, p. 83.

Admiral Andrew Barton of Scotland, while seeking retribution from the Portuguese, ‘aganis quhome he had ane lettre of mark’,<sup>74</sup> for the death of his father, extended this to include seizure not only of the Portuguese ships, but also those of Savoy and England.<sup>75</sup> In June 1511, the English, without considering it an act of war, therefore equipped and sent two ships under the command of lord Admiral Edward Howard and lord Thomas Howard, in pursuit of Barton. A violent battle ensued and many Scottish sailors, including Andrew Barton, were slain. The Scottish ships were impounded by the English at Blackwall on 2 August 1511.<sup>76</sup> James IV considered this a breach of the Treaty of Perpetual Peace and demanded some explanation from Henry VIII. This proved unsatisfactory and a Franco-Scottish alliance was undertaken.<sup>77</sup> Simultaneously, preparations were also underway in England for war with France.

Margaret laboured tirelessly to support a peaceful resolution, but without success. Her efforts were thwarted by the French Queen, Anne of Bretagne, who appealed to James IV’s chivalric nature by ‘styling him her knight’. Furthermore, she sent him not only a ring from her own finger, but a gift of 14,000 French crowns to help defray the cost of taking up arms in the French cause.<sup>78</sup> James, in accepting these gifts, was obligated by the protocols that governed gift exchange to respond in some way. Thus, he called his realm to war against England, a task made all the more palatable to his nobles following the bloody skirmish on the borders, which left much of Lord Holm’s forces cut to pieces.<sup>79</sup> James ignored all Margaret’s pleas to stop the impending war and remain at home. She was still upholding her obligations as a gift to the Scottish king, but her brother’s disrespect for the protocols that were attached to the ‘Treaty of

<sup>74</sup> Lesley, p. 82. Note: a letter of reprisal was granted in 1476 as a consequence of the Bartons having been plundered by the Portuguese. The Bartons more than recouped their losses and the Portuguese responded by attacking them again. This time, they captured and imprisoned John Barton, father of Andrew. A letter of marque upon the Portuguese was then reissued by James IV to Andrew Barton in 1507. Tytler, Vol. IV, p. 133.

<sup>75</sup> Tytler, pp. 148–49; N. Macdougall, *James IV* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1989), pp. 242–43.

<sup>76</sup> A. Spont, *Letters and Papers Relating to the War with France 1512–1513*, Vol X, printed for the Navy Records Society (1897), pp. viii–ix.

<sup>77</sup> Everett-Green, *Princesses of England*, p. 150; *Letters of James the Fourth 1505–1513*, calendared by Robert Kerr Hannay, eds. R. L. Mackie and Anne Spilman, (Edinburgh: Scottish History Society, 1953), Nos. 445; 450.

<sup>78</sup> Everett-Green, p. 161.

<sup>79</sup> Everett-Green, p. 162.

Perpetual Peace' forced James IV to act in the best interests of his realm, something he was obliged to do to protect his people and lands. In this particular case, it was foreign policy and the French gifts associated with it, that overrode Margaret's importance as a gift. However, the price for this decision was indeed high, for James met his end at Flodden Field, and Margaret, the mother of the infant king and bearing another child, was left in charge of the realm.

Margaret, as Regent of Scotland, was in an extremely delicate political position. She was the most important person in the Scottish realm after her infant son, James V. He was not only King of Scotland, but also the closest male heir to the English throne at this time. During the ten years of her marriage to the Scottish king, Margaret had attempted to uphold all the special qualities of a supreme gift. In the short term, these crucial elements sustained both the royal marriage and the peaceful continuity of the 'Treaty of Perpetual Peace'. However, when she became regent she ceased either by her own will, or because of circumstances beyond her control, to comply with the tenets of the gift-exchange process. Although in the long term the gift was not sufficient to establish a permanent *rapprochement* between England and Scotland, it had helped maintain the peace for a decade.

Regardless of the success or otherwise of the supreme gift, the vital political significance of the gifts of the hart and of the princess is greatly enriched by an anthropological reading of the symbolism that accompanied their exchanges. The gift of the 'hart' to Margaret is synonymous with her being a supreme gift to the Scottish king. Furthermore, the 'hart', when considered from various perspectives, metaphorically demonstrates the desirable qualities that Margaret, as a royal bride, should possess. Margaret and the 'grett tame hart' were given and received with varying degrees of protocol. Both were pursued with the energy of a knightly quest, and each embodied the essential traits of love, fidelity, faith, virtue, peace, and hope, the very same qualities needed to maintain the royal marriage, and, most importantly, the Anglo-Scottish treaty.

*Department of History  
University of Sydney*