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# Scota, Egyptian Queen of the Scots

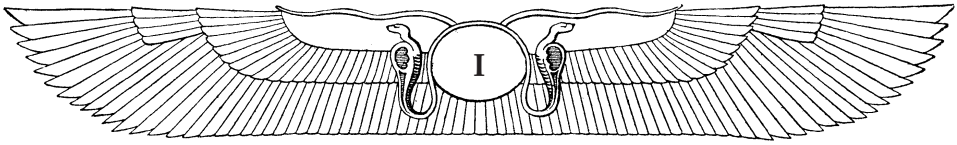
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Extract

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# Scotichronicon

*Scotichronicon* is a vast work set out in sixteen books. It was nominally written by Walter Bower, an Augustinian abbot of Inchcolm monastery in about 1430. Although it was largely his work, he drew extensively on John of Fordun's earlier chronicle of 1360, and quoted extensively from a host of other venerable historians and chroniclers, as was mentioned in the introduction. Of this vast work, only Book I deals with the saga of Gaythelos and Scota, and so the entire chronicle of their and their descendants' exploits are set out in about 80 or so pages.

The interesting part about the story, which has generated so much heated debate and speculation, is that the founding royal couple of both Ireland and Scotland were a Greek prince and an Egyptian princess, who became king and queen of Egypt for a short while. Such fantastic accounts are thought to be the stuff of legend, not historical reality, and so much of the early sections of *Scotichronicon* have been consigned to the fantasy or mythology shelf. It is not either probable nor possible that a royal couple from the eastern Mediterranean could or would embark on an epic journey all the way to the damp, emerald-green coastline of Ireland – especially if this story is supposed to be recalling events from the fourteenth century BC. They simply did not have the technology for such a journey, nor the imperatives to make it. Donald Watt, the translator of *Scotichronicon*, summed up the story in this fashion:

> The story begins with the mythical voyage of Scota, the pharaoh's daughter, from Egypt ... The land that her sons discovered in the Western Ocean was named after her: Scotland.
>
> It scarcely needs saying that none of this is history in the proper sense ... the name Scota is a back-formation from the name of the people ... She

> nevertheless incorporates some features of the mythological sovereignty who figures in Irish and other traditions – the divine partner of the king in a sacred marriage, the successful consummation which confirms his kingship. [SC1]

Here is the usual explanation for the opening chapters in *Scotichronicon* – that it is all mythology. In addition, Watt is making the argument that the Scots have donated their name to their mythological founding princess, rather than her name being the true origin of the Scots' name. In fact, the point being laboured throughout the notes on Watt's translation is that the whole story is a Middle Ages fabrication, designed to impress on readers the great antiquity and cosmopolitan origins of the Scots. However, the evidence that will be presented in this book will conclusively demonstrate that the story is actually a true history, and we shall eventually uncover the identities of all the major players in this ancient tale.

The story itself centers on the royal couple called Gaythelos and Scota, and it is from these two individuals that the Gaelic and Scots people are said to be named. Gaythelos is said to have been a wayward Greek prince who had a dispute with either his father or his brother and so left Greece to look for new opportunities. Being a precocious and fortunate individual, he is supposed to have arrived in Egypt and ingratiated himself with the royal family there. Against all the known customs of Egypt he is said to have married the daughter of the pharaoh, with a view to inheriting the throne of Egypt. However, his successful bid for the throne was not welcomed by the Egyptian proletariat and so he and his wife, princess Scota, were expelled from Egypt and embarked upon an epic voyage across the Mediterranean.

After many short stays and exploits, they are said to have landed on the river Ebro in Spain, where they set up a small fortified town called Brigantia. But, being constantly plagued with attacks by the natives, the new proto-nation looked again for less populated lands to emigrate to. The first of these islands was discovered relatively quickly, and may well have been Mallorca. Finally, after four generations or so, another island home was discovered, and this is more positively identified as being Ireland. It is recorded that both the son and great, great grandson of Gaythelos were called Hiber, and it is from this name that the countries of Iberia (Spain) and Hibernia (Scotland) are said to have been named.

Many of the, by now much larger, population of Brigantia then emigrated to Ireland, which was called Scotia after the name of the people's founding queen. That Ireland was originally called Scotia before the third century AD is fairly well known. Amongst others, Claudian, Orosius, Marianus Scotus, Isidore and Bede all mention that Ireland was called Scotia.

> Surelie very much, for Scotland and Ireland are one and the same ... Therefore yt cometh of some wryters, that Ireland is called Scotia-major, and that which nowe is named Scotland, is called Scotia-minor. [2]

Of course this name, like the parallel name Hiber, had a habit of moving on to new lands as the people moved to new pastures, and so it is not so surprising that when the Scots settled in Canada they called their new homeland Nova Scotia, or New Scotia. This is compelling evidence that the names of countries do move to new lands, as significant portions of the population emigrate.




*Fig 1. Map demonstrating that Ireland was called Scotia. Waddell, The makers of Civilisation, 1929.*

The people stayed many generations in Ireland, and it is possible that their primary necropolis, or burial ground, was either at the megalithic site at Newgrange or the sacred site of Tara; both of which reside on the river Boyne to the north of Dublin. After many generations, probably in the sixth century BC, the Picts came to Ireland from an unknown location. The venerable Bede has them coming from Scythia (Ukraine and towards the Caspian Sea), a location which has been amended in recent times to Scandinavia. However, *Scotichronicon* variously places the Picts in either

Aquitaine (southwestern France) or the Basque country. In fact, the southern portion of Aquitaine lies in the Basque region, and an old dialect of Easkal, the Basque language, was called Aquitaine; so it is likely that both of these accounts were referring to the Basques.

The chronicles indicate that the Scotian people were not impressed with these unwelcome (but possibly related) newcomers to their shores; and that the Basques had come with no (or too few) women. A deal was therefore struck whereby the Scotian people of Ireland gave the Basques (Picts) some of their women and advised them to go to Scotland instead. This they did, and the new Scotian/Pictish colony there became rather successful – so much so that many of the Scotians later emigrated to that region by choice. It was through this process that the name Scotia became transferred from Ireland to what we now call Scotland. Likewise, Iberia, the name for Spain that had been derived from the son of Gaythelos called Hiber, was also donated to Scotland, which became known as Hibernia.

### *Lebor Gabala*

This is the story of Gaythelos and Scota, as given by the ancient Scottish chronicles. The task now is to sift through the evidence and try to discover how much of this is a true history and how much is mere fable. However, we might initially start with a few broad-brush assumptions. Firstly, one might observe that the Scots did not exactly have much reason to trace their history back to an obscure Greek prince and an equally obscure Egyptian princess.

Had the Scottish chronicles related that the Scottish people were directly related to Moses of the Torah, Jason of the Odyssey or Ramesses the Great from history, one might have immediately dismissed the story as a complete fabrication. The fact that the proposed Scottish ancestors are so obscure, and the fact that evidence for the pharaoh mentioned in these texts was only rediscovered in the nineteenth century AD, suggests that there is likely to be an element of truth in this ancient history; the only trouble with this suggestion being that none of the other characters involved in the story are easily identifiable within the historical records of Egypt or Greece.

In regard to Prince Gaythelos, it might seem unlikely that we could ever find evidence for this character, as the fourteenth century BC lies in prehistoric times so far as Greece is concerned. We know next to nothing about this pre-Iliad era of Mycenaean Greece, and even the events detailed in the later accounts of Homer are far from certain. With regard to Princess Scota, the records of ancient Egypt do, of course, stretch back much further than in Greece. Unfortunately, however, the name Scota is not known from any Egyptian history, nor is there anything remotely similar. What, then, can

be done about this situation? By what method can we start to investigate the traditions of the *Scotichronicon* account?

The first avenue of research might be the origin of the text. *Scotichronicon* is a Scottish chronicle, based upon much older texts that have come from many locations including Ireland (the *Lebor Gabala* from the *Book of Leinster*) and Wales (the *Historia Brittonum*). But this diverse range of chronicles is obviously not the original source, so where did the story originate?

One possibility is given to us by Nennius, the monk who penned the *Historia Brittonum*. He indicates that he used Roman and Ecclesiastical documents to compose his history of Britain, and this seems likely as some of the work appears to be taken from the *World Chronicle*, by Bishop Eusebius. It will be demonstrated in a later chapter that the chronology of Egypt used in *Scotichronicon* was taken directly from Eusebius, so he is definitely a likely source for the Scota story. But, as ever, Eusebius was only quoting others, and it would appear that some of his inspiration was taken from Euhemerus, a Greek historian who wrote a philosophical romance called *Sacred Scripture*. Although it embedded features of the Scota story, Euhemerus' story was largely fictional and what we are really looking for is a true history. So from where and from whom did Eusebius and Euhemerus obtain these details? Since the Gaythelos and Scota story is deeply embedded in Egyptian history, it is there that we must look for the original sources.

It is said that the trail goes cold at this point, but actually there is a very good candidate for the next link in this literary chain back into history. Since Euhemerus lived around 300 BC, there is a very likely candidate for the Egyptian end of this story, and he is the Egypto-Greek historian known as Manetho. Not that much is known about the life of Manetho, but it is thought that he was a priest of Heliopolis, Egypt, who lived at around 300 BC and wrote a long history and chronology of the nation called *The History of Egypt*. The original text has unfortunately been lost to us; however, snippets of his history were copied by other historians, and one of those happened to be Eusebius. Furthermore, since we know for certain that Eusebius' chronology of Egypt was taken directly from Manetho, perhaps the other details about Scota and Gaythelos and their flight from Egypt were copied from the same text. Again this is likely, as a close similarity between the Scota story and Manetho's *The History of Egypt* will be shown later in this book.

The possibility that Manetho was the original author of the Scota and Gaythelos story is interesting, because it gives the whole story much greater credence. It is known, from comparisons with the archaeological record, that Manetho's history of Egypt was quite factual; indeed, his royal

chronology of Egypt, and the dynastic separations that he indicated, are still the basis for the modern chronology of Egypt. If the ultimate author of *Scotichronicon* had been Herodotus, one might have been justified in being highly skeptical, but with the originator being Manetho, there is every possibility that there is a great deal of truth in the story.

This hope is considerably bolstered by the constant discovery of small, obscure details from *Scotichronicon* that are known to be correct. Even aspects that are generally unknown today, let alone in a cold and drafty monastery in fifteenth century Scotland, can be shown to be correct. Take, for instance, the general history of Egypt. This is described as:

> The kingdom of Egypt (the name of which was originally Etheria) is the most ancient of all kingdoms except for the kingdom Scythia... [SC3]

Egypt is indeed a very ancient kingdom, as we all know, but that is not the interesting element here. The fascinating aspect of this quote is the unusual name that was given to Egypt – Etheria. Surprisingly enough, Egypt was indeed known as Etheria, and the true spelling of the name in the Egyptian was actually Aturti or Eturti (Ethurti) . The name relates to water and to the flooding of the Nile, and the 'ia' on the end of Walter Bower's version is simply a typical Greek rendering of an Egyptian name. In addition, Geoffrey Keating, the venerable historian of Ireland, indicates that this name for Egypt was reduced down to the name 'Aeria' in later generations, and used for the island of Ireland. It is from Aeria that the modern name of Eire was derived. Thus the current name for Ireland is actually a corruption of an original pharaonic name for Egypt. Interestingly, Keating states that this was also the original name for Crete, and we shall be looking at some Cretan connections both with Egypt and Ireland in later chapters.

Perhaps the most important element of this potted history is the fact that the ancient Scottish chronicle is correct, and it accurately records a little-used and very ancient name for Egypt. If this small detail, which is only mentioned in passing, can be seen to be correct, how many other names and events within this ancient chronicle may also be historically correct?

However, while this snippet of information is interesting, we could go one step further than this because it has been suggested that the spelling of Aturt needs rearranging very slightly. If we were to maintain the 'th' in Bower's version of this word, then the original name for Egypt becomes A-th-u-r-t-i, or the land of Arthur. The meaning of Aturti  is closely linked with the river Nile, as are the legends of Arthur himself and his protective goddess known as the Lady of the Lake (Isis, the 'queen' of Egypt). While this particular paragraph is complete speculation, it is

nevertheless interesting that Arthur's city of Camelot translates directly as Kama-ret (Kama-let)  meaning 'People of Egypt'.* (The Egyptian 'r' invariably becomes a Greek/Latin 'l', just as Pharaoh Ptoremy was actually Pharaoh Ptolemy.)

If Gaythelos and Scota came from Egypt, as Walter Bower and others maintain, then much of Celtic mythology may have once had an Egyptian flavour. And if the prospect of a heroic Egyptian royalty was not about to excite the Middle Ages populous, what better deception than to dress up this very ancient history in the more contemporary clothes of knightly chivalry. That this was an effective method of maintaining an ancient history is implicit in the success of the Medieval Grail Romances; however, when using propaganda so effectively, one always runs the risk of the story being so successful that it eclipses the true history that lies beneath it.

Was this what happened all those millennia ago? Did an Egyptian queen and her consort arrive in the greater British Isles some thirteen centuries before the Common Era, and establish a society based upon Egyptian culture and principles. If this did occur, one might initially suppose that this would manifest itself in an overtly 'foreign' culture being present in Ireland during the Bronze Age. However, this is not necessarily so.

The author has already demonstrated that Judaism was based upon the creed and culture of the Amarna regime of Pharaoh Akhenaton, and that many of the Old Testament verses have been copied verbatim from ancient Egyptian texts – including large segments of Genesis, the exodus story, Psalms, Proverbs, the Song of Solomon and the Lord's Prayer. We tend to think of our present culture as being a mix of Celtic, Roman and Anglo-Saxon societies that have been heavily influenced by a later blanket of Judaism (Christianity). However, had early Celtic culture been founded upon Egyptian principles (Amarna principles), we would hardly notice the difference, because the Amarna culture of Pharaoh Akhenaton *is* our Judaeo-Christian culture – whether this was derived directly from Egypt or via the indirect transmission route of Israel and Rome.

* It is also probably worth mentioning that Jesus was called the Egyptian 'False' Prophet in both Acts and Josephus' *Antiquities* and, in addition, I have independently demonstrated that he was a prince of Egypt. However, by using this ancient name for Egypt, Jesus would then become known as the Athurti Prophet (Arthur) and, since I have already identified Jesus as the leader of 600 rebel soldiers ('rebel fishermen' according to Josephus), the New Testament accounts seem to have many similarities to Arthurian legend. In other words, 'Arthur' may simply have been a Templar name for Jesus, derived from information that these warrior knights had gathered during the long years of the crusades.